

On your marks

This idea is taken from the Children's Kairos material written for the Diocese of Portsmouth. It explores the difference between disciples and mere hangers-on.

Get set

Find a copy of a picture from a children's Bible or off the Internet that shows Jesus on a hill out in the countryside. Very near him are his twelve special friends, his disciples, and the group of women who helped him and went round with him. All around them are crowds of people who have come to listen to Jesus and watch him heal sick people.

A retelling of the story can be found in The Barnabas Children's Bible page 243, story 275, 'Five rolls and two little fish'.

Go!

1. Begin by telling the story of what happened one day when crowds had been listening to Jesus for a long time (story 275 in The Barnabas Children's Bible). It is such a well-known story that the children, with some prompting, will be able to tell you what happened.
2. Explain that you want to find out the difference between what it's like to be a real disciple of Jesus and being someone who comes and listens to him just for a day.

Ask the children to choose one of the people in the picture.

Ask them to think of that person's name and what they might do as a job or during the rest of their time. (Make sure you have some who are disciples and some who are members of the crowd.)

If necessary, give out these questions beforehand. (Your group may not need the stimulus, and they may think of their own questions to ask)

- How old are you?
- What do you normally do?
- Why have you come to hear Jesus?
- What do you think of him?
- Why do you like Jesus / not like Jesus?
- What has he done today?
- Will you come and see him tomorrow?
- What would you do if Jesus asked you to do something difficult for him?
- How would you feel if Jesus asked you to give up everything and follow him?
- Do you think you would follow Jesus if you knew he was going to be killed in a few years' time?
- Would you like to get to know Jesus better? Why/why not?
- If you had the choice, how much time would you spend listening to Jesus?
- What do you think of the idea of hanging out with the rest of Jesus' disciples?



3. Try **hot seating** people from the crowd and the disciples.

In hot seating, a child sits in a chair and becomes a different character. The others ask her/him questions to try to discover something about this character. The child answers as if they are that character. It's not a guessing game - it's a framework to get to know a character better.

4. You might then like to hot seat the children as themselves about their relationship with Jesus, if your relationship is close enough - but this is quite a big thing to ask them to do honestly and you should only ask them to do it in front of you if you're prepared to do it in front of them!
5. You could finish by asking if your character was in Jerusalem a little while later and saw Jesus on his way to the Cross, do you think your character would care or not?