



IHM Associate Circles of Grace **Exploring IHM Discipleship**

**Go therefore
and make
disciples of all
nations ...**

- Matthew 28:19

Following the General Chapter of 2018, a series of twelve reflections were prepared for use in Associate Circle of Grace gatherings. This consisted of Scripture topics and verses related to the phrases in the Direction Statement. Questions for Faith Sharing were also included in order to delve more deeply into the meaning and significance of this Statement.

Hopefully, at some point, our new 2022-2026 Direction Statement will be a source of additional reflection, discussion, and sharing that will enable us to break open the significance of those inspiring and challenging words as they apply to our lives at this time.

This material is designed to provide another resource related to our IHM Congregation. Disciples and Discipleship are mentioned in our Mission Statement, Charism, and Core Values.

As followers of Jesus Christ and his mother Mary, perhaps it may be beneficial to explore Discipleship from these perspectives. We will reflect and share from the gospels those who encountered Jesus as individual disciples and communities of disciples. We will ponder the life of Mary, as the first disciple, and consider what it means to embrace a spirituality of discipleship.

These resources focus on our IHM Mission Statement (“we follow Jesus as a community of disciples”), our Charism (“we embrace Mary, the first disciple”) and our Core Value of Rootedness in God (“embracing a spirituality of discipleship”)

Material:

Discipleship Topics and Related Scripture Verses - Faith Sharing Questions - Additional Resources

Procedure:

Individual Circles of Grace may want to decide how to use this material and determine the number of gatherings that may be possible. Each part may be used separately, completing a certain number to be used for each session. Another option may be to use one or two resources from each part for the session. The hope is that Circles can assume leadership and decide what is best for their group.

The following IHM and Discipleship Information provides an overview.

**Gospels - Individual Disciples - Gospels - Community of Disciples - Charism - Mary-
Core Value - Rootedness in God - Commitment - IHM Renewal of Vows & Associate
Re-Commitment**



IHM & Discipleship

MISSION

Our mission, as Sisters, Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Scranton, Pa. is to follow Jesus as a community of DISCIPLES, aware that we are sent to be a clear and understandable prophetic witness to the presence of God in the world. (IHM Supplement)

We continually rely on Divine Providence as we respond to the changing needs of the times. We strive to serve God's people and all of creation in a spirit of love, joy and hospitality.

CHARISM

We embrace Mary, the first DISCIPLE as our model of a life rooted in God.

We strive to imitate St. Alphonsus and be passionate in whatever way we can to joyfully participate in the redeeming love of Jesus as we proclaim the Good News of God's unconditional love for all.

CORE VALUE

Rootedness in God - Embracing a spirituality of DISCIPLESHIP and intimacy with God nourished and sustained by Eucharist.

We commit ourselves to share in the redeeming mission of Jesus and confirm the additional Core Values of Community - Justice - Respect for Diversity and Wholeness.

COMMITMENT

- **Renewal of Vows (IHM Sisters)**

Sisters annually renew their vows stating that they have made a "lifelong commitment to the IHM community of **disciples**, who search for prophetic ways to live their vowed life in a world hungering for justice and meaning.

Our lives are rooted in God and in the gospel and steeped in prayer and contemplation."

- **Commissioning (IHM Associates)**

Associates demonstrate their call to live the mission of Jesus by following him as **disciples**, committed to the Charism and Core Values of the IHM Sisters in the context of their individual lives.

IHM & Discipleship

MISSION



As individuals, we follow Jesus as disciples.

The Gospels indicate that many people decided to follow Jesus as he fulfilled his mission. Some responded to the personal call to "Come, follow me." Some desired to grow in a relationship with him after a personal encounter. Some listened to his message and decided to follow him and learn more. Some were healed of illness or disease and wanted to seek more for their renewed life. Some were searching for a deeper understanding of what they were hearing and experiencing. Some left all and followed him, experiencing his passionate love and commitment, as well as the struggle of sacrifice, doubts, and lack of trust. Some returned to their homes and families with a new perspective on life and faith. As individuals, we also seek opportunities to encounter Jesus and deepen our relationship with him.

As IHM Sisters and Associates, we follow Jesus as a community of disciples.

We share presence, support, and commitment to our Mission, Charism, and Core Values. We have responded to the "call" to follow Jesus and carry on his mission in today's world. We pray and share insights with each other about ways to reflect God's presence to those in our midst and in our wounded world. We strive to be passionate about ways to share and proclaim the Good News of God's love. We seek ways to strengthen our spirituality in discovering relevance in our words and actions. We search to discover how to be prophetic witnesses to one another and those we serve. We embrace the holy qualities of Mary, our model, and Theresa, our founder, as a community of disciples carrying on the mission of Jesus. As a community of disciples, we desire to be a supportive presence for each other and offer ways to strengthen the bond of our discipleship community.

Resources: Gospel Disciples - Individuals and Community
(Scripture References and Faith Sharing Questions) - IHM Mission Statement

CHARISM

Mary, the first disciple!

As our model of a life rooted in God, Mary is truly a model for us, her Sisters and Associates of her Immaculate Heart. As a young woman, Mary listened, questioned, pondered, accepted, shared, suffered, and trusted in the ways of God. She was chosen to embark on an important and unknown mission of nurturing the human life of our Savior and Redeemer.

As Sisters, we have answered the call to come and follow Jesus in our life vocation. We, too, can relate to Mary, as our model of a life rooted in God. She offers us a deep awareness of what it means to be a disciple. Mary was asked to leave familiar territory and travel to foreign places. She experienced fear, faith, and friendship along the way, but she accepted the unfolding Will of God as she experienced her relationship with her son, Jesus, and her spouse, Joseph. We strive to be passionate about ways to participate in the redeeming love of Jesus in today's world as we follow the example of Mary.

As Associates, we are grateful for the call to join with the IHM Sisters in reflecting on Mary's life and discovering the many ways we can connect with her in our lives, in our families, in our call to be faithful to our vocation and to reach out in service to others. Just as Mary connected with the disciples and shared in their journey of faith, we are grateful to connect with the Sisters and explore with Mary a deepening of our relationship with Jesus.

Resources: Scripture References and Faith Sharing Questions

(Mary's life in Nazareth, Hill Country of Judah, Bethlehem, Egypt, Jerusalem, Cana, Calvary, Upper Room, Ephesus) - IHM Charism

CORE VALUE

Embracing a spirituality of discipleship . . .

As IHM Sisters, we "rejoice in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ and commit ourselves to share in his redeeming mission." Our Core Value of "Rootedness in God" impels and permeates our participation in that mission. To be rooted in God calls us to embrace a "spirituality of discipleship and intimacy with God, which is nourished and sustained by Eucharist."

We are naturally "rooted in God" in various ways in our individual and community lives. Prayer and contemplation are a vital part of our lives. A spirituality of discipleship can be an ongoing process of renewal and conversion as we search for more meaningful ways to share our lives with others. As we age and our ministries take on new perspectives, we are challenged to explore new dimensions of a discipleship spirituality. A life of discipleship nourished and sustained by Eucharist has become more relevant in our lives due to the impact of the pandemic.

Our journey with the IHM Associates is especially relevant as we explore the meaning of a spirituality of discipleship. The sharing of community and the gospel with each other enhances our rootedness in God. Discipleship calls us to this union with our loving Redeemer which we experience in the Eucharist. This Core Value challenges us to discover meaningful ways we can enhance our spiritual lives from a discipleship perspective. We also strive to deepen our appreciation of and need for the Eucharist.

Resources: Scripture References and Faith Sharing Questions

The Last Supper - Mass & Eucharistic Adoration & Daily Life Experiences

Images for Reflection and Sharing: Mother Theresa Carrying her Bible - Entrance to Chapel at IHM Center. Mary - Holding the Eucharist - Entrance to Our Lady of Peace

COMMITMENT

IHM Renewal of Vows / Associate Commissioning

Our commitment as Sisters and Associates is renewed annually on December 8 when the Sisters renew their vows. Associates also renew their commitment annually in November to commemorate Founder's Day. This is an opportunity to celebrate our IHM identity and focus on our role as disciples who, in varied ways, carry on the mission of Jesus in today's world.

Resources: Scripture References and Faith Sharing Questions

Sisters' Vow Renewal and Associate Commitment

Overview - Suggested Sessions



#1 Exploring IHM Discipleship - 1 Session

The group can review the topics and decide the order and number of sessions that will work best for their group. The number of sessions listed are suggestive and can be adapted.

#2 Individual Disciples- 4 Sessions

#3 Community of Disciples (IHM Mission Statement) - 4 Sessions

#4 Mary, the First Disciple (IHM Charism) - 5 Sessions

#5 Spirituality of Discipleship (IHM Core Value / Rootedness in God) - 2 Sessions

#6 IHM Commitment (Renewal of Vows/Associate Commissioning) - 2 Sessions

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