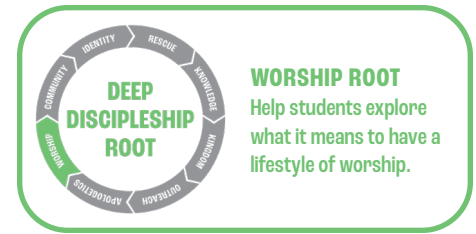


MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ keep their hearts open to God's leading.

SCRIPTURE

HEBREWS 3:7-15



OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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GAME or ICE BREAKER

Based on your group's size, choose a **Game** from the **Game Library** OR use the **Ice Breaker** prompt.

- **Game**—choose a screen game from the **Game Library**
- **Ice Breaker**—What's something you really wanted but was disappointing when you got it?

WORSHIP

Craft a time of worship with a live band or sing along to a playlist (e.g., YouTube, Spotify, etc.).

- Check out our curated Spotify list. We understand that every church has a different theological view of worship. These songs are suggestions, please pick what works best for your church.
- <https://open.spotify.com/playlist/2xmeIKGUjkEE7bJYSCbRwe?si=d254ec715a4749e5>

TRANSITION TO MESSAGE

MEDIA AS STUDENTS ARRIVE

1. Play background music (optional)
2. Display **SERIES Title Slide** and announcement slides in a loop or customize the provided **PowerPoint**.
3. Play a 5-minute Countdown Timer 5:00 minutes before you start.

GAME LIBRARY

Look in the **Intentional Programming** folder included in your download. View the game in advance in case you need supplies or slides.

SLIDES (optional)

Use **SERIES Background & Blank Slides** or **PowerPoint** to create lyric slides.

VIDEO

Show **SERIES Bumper Video** or **SERIES Intro Video** after the last worship song. This will give the students something to focus on while the band leaves the stage and you step onto it.

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

POINT 1: We follow our heart's lead

Read or have someone in your group read Hebrews 3:7-11

It's our hearts or desires that often determine the things we do and directions we go. If we love sports, we practice, play games, and tryout for teams. If we love Mexican food, we suggest Mexican restaurants for most meals. Our hearts can move us toward or away from God.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about using GPS. Whatever info you put into the GPS app sets the direction you'll go.

Whatever we allow into our hearts play a major role in deciding the direction we go or don't go. Filling our hearts with godly things will lead us closer to God.

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint** OR the **Background & Blank Slides** to create these slides to support your message:

- Hebrews 3:7-11
- Point 1

POINT 2: Today is the day to act

Read or have someone in your group read Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15

There is a sense of urgency underlining the tone of this passage. The word "today" is repeated multiple times. Putting off our spiritual growth and worship until later is a mistake.

SLIDES (optional)

- Hebrews 3:8, 13, 15
- Point 2

POINT 3: Disobedience and sin harden the heart

Read or have someone in your group read Hebrews 3:12-13

Having a soft heart—one that is moldable by obeying God's Word—helps us hear and recognize the Lord's leading. When we purposely rebel against God, our hearts grow hard.

ILLUSTRATION: Share a **personal story** about a bad habit or something you shouldn't do that was hard at first but got easier the more you did it. (Example: skipping class in college, telling lies, cheating on homework.) Or choose an **object lesson** from the Worship Root.

When we sin or do something we know we shouldn't, we feel it. We feel conviction from the Holy Spirit. But the more we do it, the less we feel bad about it. And disobedience to God is like taking a step away from him. The more steps we take in the wrong direction, the harder it is to hear and recognize God's voice. Our hearts become hardened, less sensitive to God's leading.

SLIDES (optional)

- Hebrews 3:12-13
- Point 3

OBJECT LESSON LIBRARY

Look for the **Object Lessons** in the **Transformational Discipleship** folder included in your download.



CLOSING

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ keep their hearts open to God's leading.

SLIDES (optional)

- Mark of a Disciple

FACILITATOR NOTE: DO YOU HAVE SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION RIGHT AWAY?

- If YES, then **STOP HERE**, divide into groups, and provide your Small Group Leaders with a copy of the **Small Group Break-out Questions** on the next page.
- If NO, then end your gathering with the **Reflect & Respond** questions and **Prayer** prompt below.

REFLECT & RESPOND

Give the students time to silently think through what they have heard and contemplate these questions:

- When have your heart or desires led you away from or toward God?
- What do you think it looks like to continually live with a soft heart?

SLIDES (optional)

Use the **SERIES PowerPoint OR** the **Background & Blank Slides** to display the **Reflect & Respond** questions.

FACILITATOR NOTE: Don't rush this part. Give the students a few minutes to really examine their hearts before the Lord.

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.



SMALL GROUP BREAKOUT (OPTIONAL)

Pick a few questions from each section to discuss. Close with prayer.

BREAKOUT QUESTIONS

Build Meaningful Relationships

- Share about a time someone encouraged you. What did they say and how did it affect you?
- What are your thoughts and attitudes toward worship?

Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- Why is the author of Hebrews warning readers against hardening their hearts?
- What characterizes a hard heart? What characterizes a soft heart?
- Would you consider your heart right now to be hard or soft? Why?
- How can you discern whether your heart is hard or soft?
- Why is having a soft heart important for worship?
- Why do you think encouraging and exhorting others helps guard against a hardened heart?

Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- How can you grow in softening your heart to worship God?
- What kind of heart check-ins might you need to make for yourself?

PRAYER

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.
Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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