

## MARK OF A DISCIPLE

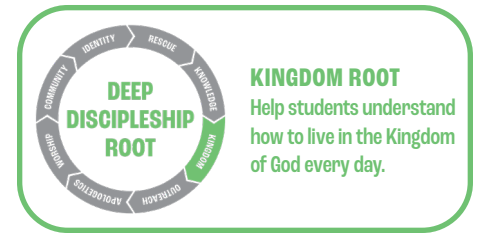
Disciples of Christ trust God with all their worries and troubles.

## SCRIPTURE

PSALM 77

## OVERVIEW

This second lesson in our When Life is Hard series focuses on the Kingdom Root. Stress and anxiety are common, but *disciples of Christ trust God with all their worries and troubles*. We can honestly come before God, bringing all our worry to him.



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** We've given you a lot of teaching material. Don't feel like you should cover everything here. You know your group better than anyone. Choose the material that will best fit your students and skip over the rest.

## OPENING

### PRAYER

1–2 minutes

Start your small group by asking the Lord to bless your discussion and time together.

### OPENING QUESTIONS

3–5 minutes

- How was the week? What's the best thing that's happened? Anything major going on?
- What are some things causing you and your friends worry and anxiety right now?
- How often do you feel like you deal with stress and worry?
- Who do you talk to about anxiety or stress in your life?



## EXPLORE

### EXPLORE GOD'S WORD

3–5 minutes

- Disciples of Christ trust God with all their worries and troubles.
- We all go through seasons of worry and anxiety. In Psalm 77, we see a great example of what to do when those seasons come. We know that we should take our stress to God while being honest with him and remembering who he is and what he has done. But knowing what to do and actually doing it are two different matters.

### Read Psalm 77:1–9 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- How do you see the psalmist's honesty with God in these verses?
- Why is being open with God so important?
- Why do we hesitate to take our worry and anxiety to God?



ASK INTENTIONAL  
QUESTIONS

*Say something like:* Take your anxiety to God and be honest with him. The writer of this psalm shows us that the first thing we should do when we experience stress is take it to God. The psalmist doesn't hide it or attempt to fight it on his own. He goes to God and is honest about his emotions. When anxiety comes, we often bottle it up and try to fight it on our own. We try to keep our struggle from others and even God. How silly is that! The God who created us, loves us, and desires to help us is there waiting for us to bring our anxiety to him.

## Read Psalm 77:10–20 and discuss 1–2 of these questions:

7–10 minutes

- How do you typically deal with worry and anxiety in your life?
- How does the psalmist deal with his anxiety?
- What truths about God can help you when you experience worry and anxiety?
- How can you remember what God has done when you face stress or worry?



ASK INTENTIONAL QUESTIONS

*Say something like:* Remember who God is and what he has done. After the writer of this psalm takes his anxiety to God, he turns his attention to who God is and what God has done. One of the best ways to fight stress is to remind ourselves of something bigger than our anxiety—God. He's a good and loving God who has done so many amazing things for us. When anxiety comes, turn your attention away from you and what you're anxious about. Instead, turn your attention to God and all he is and has done.

## CONNECT & APPLY

### CONNECTION

5–7 minutes

*Show your students how Scripture connects to their lives: Use the example below OR share a personal story of how you've run to God during or a struggle and been honest with him.*



SHARE PERSONAL STORIES

*Example:* Do you remember having nightmares when you were a kid? You'd wake up, jump out of bed, and run into your parent's room or maybe a sibling's room. Running to them made you feel safe. Maybe they talked to you for a bit or let you sleep on their floor for the rest of the night. Whatever happened, being with them made you feel better. In the same way, we have a heavenly Father who wants us to run to him when we experience things like anxiety and worry. He won't turn us away. Instead, he will welcome us in and help us calm down. It doesn't matter when it is or what it's about, you can always run to God.

- What does it look like practically to "run to God" when worry and anxiety come?
- How do you think it makes God feel when we go to him with our stress and fears?

### MARK OF A DISCIPLE

2–3 minutes

Disciples of Christ trust God with all their worries and troubles.

*Use the Mark of a Disciple to reinforce the lesson and challenge students to apply it to their lives.*

### APPLY IT

5–10 minutes

Create a list of truths about who God is and what he has done in your life or in the Bible. Next time you experience worry and anxiety, read that list. Be sure to share it with a friend and ask them to remind you about it when you start to feel anxious or worried.



MAKE LIFE APPLICATION



**Be specific:**

- What are you going to do?
- When are you going to do it?
- Is there someone who can keep you accountable?



**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Allow students who are comfortable to share their plans for application. This may encourage or spark ideas for other students, plus add a level of accountability.

## CLOSING

### PRAYER

2-3 minutes

Take time to let your students pray for each other's applications in the upcoming weeks.  
*Write down any prayer requests mentioned and ask your students about them at your next meeting.*

### MEMORY VERSE

*Send the memory verse graphic included in your download to your students later this week to keep the conversation going.*

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."

Philippians 4:6 (ESV)

**FACILITATOR NOTE:** Stress-induced anxiety is normal, but it becomes a mental health issue when a person feels anxiety all the time, regardless of the situation. Unfortunately, chances are high that one or more of your students have sought or are currently seeking professional help to manage anxiety. Remember, your job is not to diagnose your students or be their therapist, it is to disciple them. You cannot go wrong by urging your students to trust God's Word and pray. But if you discern a student may need more help, assure them that they are not alone, communicate your concerns with their parents, and don't be afraid to direct them to professional help and/or your church's counselor.

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