

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

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

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 77



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**—Who do you know that gives the best advice?

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: God hears us when we call out to him

Read or have someone in your group read Psalm 77:1–3

Hard times can trick us into thinking that God is distant. But that's not true. Not only is he always with us, but he is also always available. Notice the different times the writer of this psalm calls out to God—"in the day of my trouble", "in the night", "when I remember God", "when I meditate." There is never an occasion when God is not available to his people. Not only is God present, but he's also listening.

ILLUSTRATION: Tell a **personal story** about a time you were in trouble and went to your parents for help. Mention the fact that your parents were available and willing to listen. They weren't mad that you thought of them when you were in need.

The Bible often describes God as our heavenly Father. Like all loving fathers, God is available and has compassion for his children (Ps. 103:13).

SLIDES (optional)

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

- Psalm 77:1–3
- Point 1

POINT 2: We can have hope now because God never changes

Read or have someone in your group read Psalm 77:11–15

To find comfort in his present struggles, the psalmist looked to past events where God had been faithful. He remembered several times that God had miraculously shown up for his people. Because God never changes (Heb. 13:8, James 1:17), we always have hope for today. Because God cared for and protected his people in the past, he will care for and protect us now.

SLIDES (optional)

- Psalm 77:11–15
- Point 2

POINT 3: God has supreme authority

Read or have someone in your group read Psalm 77:16–20

We go to God with our worries because there is nothing he can't do. There is nothing within creation that does not have to follow his commands. The deep seas, the sky, thunderstorms, lightning, earthquakes—they all submit to God's authority. Whatever worries we have, they are not beyond the authority of our God.

ILLUSTRATION: Pair people up and have them play Rock, Paper, Scissors. Depending on the size of your group, you can have the whole group play or pick several to play on stage. Crown a winner and have the students return to their seats.

In the game Rock, Paper, Scissors, every element beats one and loses to the other. Rock beats scissors but loses to paper. God is not this way. There is nothing that will ever get the best of him. He can handle any worries we face.

SLIDES (optional)

- Psalm 77:16–20
- Point 3



CLOSING

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

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

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:

- How do you feel knowing that God is always available to you and is listening to whatever you have to say whenever you need to say it?
- What is one specific time you know God was there for you in the past? How can that be an encouragement for you today?

SLIDES (optional)

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

FACILITATOR NOTE: Give the students a few minutes to pray silently to the Lord, turning over to him any worries they are facing. Then you or another leader can close by praying over your students.

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

- 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?

Share Personal Stories & Ask Intentional Questions

- Why do you think worry and anxiety are so common in our world?
- Who do you talk to about anxiety or stress in your life?
- How do you typically deal with worry and anxiety in your life?
- Why is being open with God so important?
- How do you think it makes God feel when we go to him with our stress and fears?
- What side effects have you experienced from stress or anxiety?
- What positive side effects could come from taking our worry and anxiety to God?

Make Life Application & Hold Students Accountable

- What does it look like practically to “run to God” when worry and anxiety come?
- What truths about God can help you when you experience worry and anxiety?

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.

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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