

Next Steps: Growth

1. Opening

Start with a question:

- When you hear the phrase *"a closer walk with Jesus"*, what comes to mind?

Optional reflection:

- Think about the lyric: *"Just a closer walk with Thee... daily walking close to Thee."*
What does "daily" faith look like in real life?

Leader note:

Keep this light and accessible. This is about everyday discipleship, not idealised spirituality.

2. God is at Work - Even When You Can't See It

Read: [Matthew 13:31-32 \(Mustard seed\)](#) & [1 Corinthians 3:6-7](#)

Illustration recap from Gathering:

- Sunflower seeds planted
- Roots growing unseen
- Growth takes time

Discussion questions:

- Have you ever felt like nothing was happening in your faith?
- What might God be doing "under the surface" in those seasons?
- Why is it hard to trust God when we can't see results?

Key teaching to bring out:

- Growth often begins **invisibly**
- Roots come before fruit
- God's work is not dependent on what we can see

Anchor phrase to repeat together:

- Leader: "God is good"
- Group: "All the time"
- Leader: "All the time"
- Group: "God is good"

Leader note:

Encourage honesty here. Some may feel spiritually "stuck" - affirm that unseen growth is still real.

3. Everyone Has a Next Step

Read: [Mark 1:16-20](#) (*Jesus calls the first disciples*)

Key ideas from the illustration:

- Different people take different sized steps
- Some steps are comfortable
- Some require stretching or even a leap

Discussion:

- Why is it unhelpful to compare our spiritual journey with others?
- What's the difference between a *step* and a *leap* in faith?
- Have you ever felt God asking you to do something that felt "too far"?

Leader insight:

- Healthy discipleship includes both:
 - **small, consistent steps**
 - **occasional costly obedience**

Practical reflection:

- Which do you tend to avoid more - small daily steps or big costly ones?
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4. Case Study - Zacchaeus

Read: [Luke 19:1-10](#)

Walk through his steps, asking the group to identify them:

1. He wanted to see Jesus
2. He overcame obstacles (excuses, fear, reputation)
3. He acted (left his house, climbed the tree)
4. He welcomed Jesus into his home (despite ridicule from his peers)
5. He was transformed

Discussion questions:

- Which step do you relate to most right now?
- What obstacles might be holding you back from moving toward Jesus?
- What changed in Zacchaeus after meeting Jesus?

Key truth: Transformation begins with **small steps toward Jesus**, but leads to **radical change**.

Important observation:

- Zacchaeus' change was:
 - practical (repaying people)
 - costly (giving away wealth)
 - visible (others noticed and were impacted)
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5. Personal Reflection - Your Next Step

Give people quiet time to reflect.

Ask: What is your *next step* with Jesus right now?

Prompt categories if helpful:

- Time with Jesus (prayer, Bible)
- Obedience (something God has already said)
- Relationships (forgiveness, generosity, honesty, hospitality)
- Faith step (serving, sharing faith, trusting God in something, giving)

Optional prayer exercise:

Invite people to silently "cast their cares" on Jesus ([1 Peter 5:7](#) & [Psalm 55:22](#)).

Leader Guidance

Tone

- Keep it encouraging, not pressuring
- Emphasise grace over performance
- Celebrate small steps

Watch for:

- People feeling stuck or discouraged
- People overwhelmed by “big leaps”

Key reminders to reinforce:

- God is already at work
- Growth takes time
- Everyone’s journey is different
- The goal is not perfection, but **progress toward Jesus**

Summary Thought

A closer walk with Jesus doesn’t begin with a giant leap -

it begins with a **willing heart**, a **small step**,

and trust that God is already growing something beneath the surface.