

7 CHARACTERISTICS OF A DISCIPLE

Adapted with permission from Steubenville Discipleship Quads Guidebook,
<https://steubenvilleconferences.com/discipleship-quads/>

Take a look at the 7 Characteristics of a Disciple and identify where you, your catechists (or leaders), youth, and families are at in regards to each Characteristic.



Identity

Our identity is rooted in being a child of the Father, redeemed by the Son, and alive in the Holy Spirit. We are loved because of who we are, not what we do.

“See what love the Father has lavished upon us, letting us be called children of God. For that is what we are!” (1 John 3:1). This characteristic is at the heart of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. It is an entirely different way of understanding who we are and why we are valuable. The world would have us base our identity on how successful we are, the numbers in our bank account, or the numbers on a scale (just to name a few). Scripture tells us that our “value” is not based on any material thing, but on the love that God the Father has for us. The depths of that love can be seen on the cross, for “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son” (John 3:16). Having our identity rooted in the love of God changes everything. Our decisions, our relationships, our values, our actions...everything. It opens our eyes to a spiritual reality about the meaning of life and the dignity of others. Though the numbers assigned to the characteristics aren't meant to imply that one is better than the others, this one can rightly be called first.



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Prayer

We have an active, daily life of prayer, both individually and communally, where we glorify God and seek His will. It becomes the air we breathe.

The Catechism describes prayer as our “vital and personal relationship with the living and true God” (2558). Our life of prayer manifests itself in different ways: the silent time we take each day to be present to Jesus, the sufferings we offer up, the opportunities to pray with others in need, and the celebration of the Mass are all examples of how we live out St. Paul’s exhortation to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17).



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Sacraments

We prayerfully encounter Jesus on a regular basis through the sacraments of the Church and live in the power of the grace we have received through them.

A Catholic disciple of Jesus Christ understands that sacraments aren't just "a" way of receiving God's grace, they are "the" way! We are made children of God through Baptism. We are forgiven of our sins through Reconciliation. We receive the Body and Blood of Jesus through the Eucharist. Jesus instituted seven sacraments for the sake of our salvation so that the power he displayed in his public ministry would continue through the sacraments he gave to the Church. A disciple of Jesus frequently receives and calls upon the graces he or she has received through the sacraments.



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Obedience

We seek to understand and obey the teachings of Christ as passed on to us through the Apostles and now living in the Magisterium of the Catholic Church.

The Church is our mother and she shares with us the revelation of Jesus. The disciple understands there is not a difference between what Jesus taught and what the Church teaches, just as a head cannot be separated from the body. He or she humbly seeks to learn more about what God has revealed through the Church and live in obedience to it.



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Community

We participate in our parish community and foster deeper relationships with individuals with whom we can share and grow in our faith.

A disciple knows that one's faith is not meant to be lived in isolation. We are a part of a family. "We must consider how to rouse one another to love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24). Disciples of Jesus actively seek each other out and look for opportunities to celebrate the love of God together, whether that be at Mass, on retreat, at a restaurant, at work or school, or even at a football game.



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Service

We devote our time, talent, and treasure to our parish, our community, and to those in need, encountering Jesus in "the least of these."

Jesus could not be clearer: He is present in the poor and needy, and we will be judged by how much we loved Him through them. St. James wrote, "If a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well,' but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it?" (James 2:15-16). A disciple actively serves those in need.



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Sharing

In both words and action, we share the Good News of Jesus Christ, and we commit ourselves to helping others be His disciples.

Pope St. Paul VI wrote, "it is unthinkable that a person should accept the Word and give himself to the kingdom without becoming a person who bears witness to it and proclaims it in his turn" (Evangeli Nuntiandi, 24). A disciple takes the command of Jesus to "make disciples of all nations" (Matt 28:19) seriously, knowing Christianity is not just a philosophy, but a matter of eternal salvation. Jesus said, "A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy; I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). The Good News is not just life changing but life saving, and a disciple is eager to share that message with others.



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