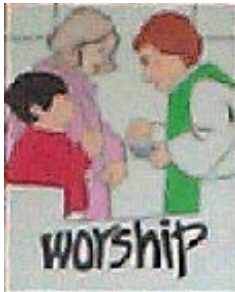


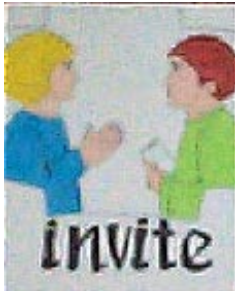
Our congregation's Worship task force decided last summer (2000) that we would do something throughout the following school year to highlight the 7 discipleship practices. We chose one practice to emphasize each month which seemed to fit with the time of the year. Here is the schedule we came up with:

September: Kickoff Sunday to introduce the theme of Discipleship Practices

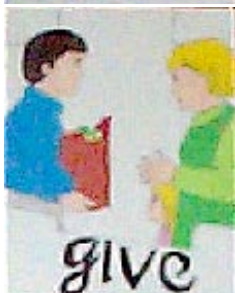
October: *Worship* (*We felt worship needed to head the list.*)



November: *Inviting* (*We asked others to come to worship with us.*)



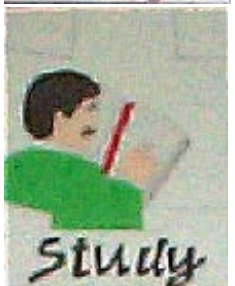
December: *Giving* (*It seemed appropriate in December since people were buying gifts to celebrate God's gift of Jesus. Our youth did their local mission project buying gifts for needy families in our community. They also wrapped and delivered them. All were invited to contribute.*)



January: *Praying* (*We chose to highlight the less active practices during the cold months. Some of the Epiphany themes fit well. We also began making a congregational prayer book, inviting people of the congregation to share their prayers with others. These we published and passed out on Easter Sunday.*)



February: *Studying*





March: Encouraging (*We needed it after a long winter. Children in our congregation made get well cards with their own art to be sent to the sick and shut-ins of our congregation. They were, needless to say, well received. Some of the children are still making the cards for us.*)



April: Serving (*The text of Jesus washing the disciples' feet came up at this time.*)

May: Celebrating and rededication

On the second Sunday of each month, we focused our worship service on the discipleship practice of that month and added a new picture to our **Discipleship Cross**. Various groups did skits during worship that related to the theme on some of the Sundays. We found skits on the Internet and with some of the evangelism material sent out by the ELCA.

The ELCA web site had these graphics on the [Teach the Faith: Call to Discipleship](#) web site.

The pictures we adapted for our cross were taken from the ELCA web site. Donna Engen, a member of our congregation volunteered to draw and color the pictures for our cross when we found that the web site pictures were not detailed enough to blow up to size. The Cross was made with a colored cloth background to which the 22"x28" poster-board pictures were added each month. People of all ages participated in one way or another in the variety of special projects we did during the year.

The following article was published in our church newsletter, summarizing the events and themes we studied.

Discipleship Cross is Complete!

All seven of the discipleship faith practices are now on the Discipleship Cross in our sanctuary. The cross is complete. But as we continue to worship

during the Easter and Pentecost seasons we will see, from the biblical story, that the doing of the practices is never done. They are the actions that mark our life together as the body of Christ.

On Sunday, May 13, the children of the congregation will be invited forward for the children's sermon at worship to see if they can remember all of the discipleship practices without looking at the cross. There will be a surprise for those who are successful (*a laminated cross bookmark - shown actual size to the right*). Perhaps parents will want to help their children remember by using the picture and the parts of their own bodies that correspond to the cross.

Many of you have commented on the meaning of the cross and how to remember the practices. Here are some of the thoughts that you shared:

Worship:

It is the center of our life as a people of God and the center of the cross. Like the heart which is the center of the body and pumps life-giving blood to the body, worship is where we share the body and blood of Christ which gives life to all the rest of the practices.

Study:

Just as studying is at the head of the cross, we are to "love the Lord...with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength."

Studying the word of God is an expression of how we love God.

Pray and Give:

We use our hands to pray and give. Pray and Give also form the arms and hands of the discipleship cross.

Invite:

Invite is next on the cross just below worship. This reminds us that Jesus isn't for us alone but wants

us to invite others to receive abundant life from him and to be welcomed in our community.

Encourage:

Encourage forms the legs of the cross. -

Encouragement is like strong legs that give us courage to move ahead in faithfulness.

- "Strengthen the weak hands and make firm the feeble knees. Say to those who are of a fearful heart, 'Be strong, do not fear! Here is your God.'"
(Isaiah 35:3-4) - "Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing."
(1 Thessalonians 5:11)

Serve:

Serving forms the feet of the cross. - Jesus washed the disciples feet as an example of the loving service that is to mark the lives of Jesus followers. This reminds us that humblest act of service done out of love for Christ and neighbor is blessed by God.