



Session 9: Looking and Acting Like Jesus – Together

Core Theme: Community covenant – We gather, covenant, and commit to support and bless each other in the power of the Spirit, not just for a program but for a season and even for life. This is the only way we can hope to live and love like Jesus in everyday life. What we do in small groups supports our faithful living as individuals, members of congregations, and members of society.

Core Scripture: John 14:15-17

Note about the last session: This is an excellent time to initiate a conversation about starting an ongoing group and to assess potential first steps for that process. If you've already begun this, blessings! Not every group needs to continue, but some groups might have developed a strong rapport and wish to commit to continue following Jesus together. You might also find that some people or subsets of the larger group want to be leaders and start their own groups. Given this extra content, facilitators should get everyone's agreement ahead of time to add 15 minutes to this final session.

Suggested Session 9 Schedule

1. Welcome and Opening Prayer (3 minutes)

2. Meal (30 minutes, including Check-in under #3)

Enjoy your last meal together, following earlier guidance around the meal. About 15 minutes in, welcome people to shift gears and gather round for the check-in. Continue to notice who builds relationships quickly and who might need a nudge to connect.

3. Check-in (20 minutes – if sharing meal, occurs during mealtime)

Following a brief review and reaffirmation of the covenant, offer **one** of the following questions for check-in:

- Offer one word or simple thought on how you feel about our last session together.
- Share your favorite commitment or intention from your rule of life. How did you feel about creating or revising it?
- How do you feel as you arrive here?
- What do you need to acknowledge before you can fully be present today?
- *Create your own check-in question.*

Heed earlier guidance around check-in, including using the talking piece, listening respectfully, and honoring each person's time to speak.

4. Content Engagement (52 minutes)

Once everyone has checked in, it's time to move into the next part of your small group meeting: content engagement. For the ninth session, we seek to know more about life with Jesus in community.

Show: Session 9: Part A Video

Note: To save time, participants can watch this video on their own before your gathering.

Discuss the following questions as a group, inspired by the Session 9: Part A Video. Remember: You need not cover all the questions in this relatively short time. If it would be helpful, break into pairs or trios for about 5 minutes to facilitate giving everyone a chance to speak. Then, come back to the larger group and share for the remaining 10 minutes. Use these questions or others, as appropriate:

Wondering Questions

- How can we as followers of Jesus gather, support, and bless each other, so we can center all parts of our lives on Jesus – not just for a season but for the long-term?
- How can your small group or faith community intentionally move forward, centered on Jesus, together?
- What in this video resonated with or challenged you?

Show: Session 9: Part B Video

Watch the video as a group then discuss the following questions together:

Wondering Questions

In the second video, we hear three leaders discuss how transformative it can be to commit to a rule of life in the context of an intentional, faith-based, small group of siblings on the way.

- As you listened to their conversation, what came up for you?
- How could your group continue to gather, support, challenge, and bless each other so that you can all be centered on Jesus moving forward?

5. Check-out and Closing Prayer (15 min)

Offer this question for check-out: *How has the group blessed you over the last nine sessions?*

If you have not addressed it earlier, confirm who would like to be part of an ongoing group or potentially serve as a leader for a new group. The session leader should follow up with the group of people who indicate interest so they can link and plan together.

Close with the [Way of Love Covenant](#), or create your own covenant together, one that will support your efforts to follow Jesus within the context of a small, intentional community.

Way of Love Covenant

Leader: Jesus' way is the way of love. In him, we find more love, freedom, and abundant life. You are invited to turn toward Jesus and commit to following his Way of Love in the context of Christian community, trusting in his power to change each of our lives and change this world. After each bidding, all who desire to make this commitment should join in proclaiming: *By the Spirit's power, we will.*

Leader: Will you turn and center your life on Jesus, falling in love with our Lord again and again and again?

People: **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Leader: Will you ground your life in the life and teachings of Jesus, as revealed in scripture? And will you pray and simply listen for God's voice in your life and in the world?

People: **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Leader: Will you gather together in worship, to break bread and to thank and praise God? And will you bless this world with your story, your resources, and your labor?

People: **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Leader: Will you cross boundaries and fearlessly become God's Beloved Community? And will you take rest, receiving God's gift of grace and restoration, and letting God be God?

People: **By the Spirit's power, we will.**

Leader: May the God who formed all things in Love draw you near to God's own heart, empower you by the power of the Spirit to live the Way of Love with fellow travelers, and send you to participate in the resurrection and healing of God's world. And may the blessing of our Lord – loving, liberating, and life-giving – be with us and remain with us forever and ever.

All: Amen.

6. Make It Yours: At-Home and Ongoing Engagement Opportunities

- For a deeper dive, encourage your group to review Session 9 in the Participant Guidebook.
- Make a plan for gathering again with members of this group, or pray about forming another group to continue on the discipleship journey. Be sure you ask for contact info for anyone you need to follow up with.