

Discussion Guide

Date: 1/18/2026

Sermon Title: How do I become like Jesus?

Scripture: Jeremiah 18:1-6

This discussion guide is a layout to be used with a group or class. We have included opening and closing prayers to start and end your group. The guide may be used for personal or family reflection as well.

OPENING PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, You are the Potter, and we are the clay. As we gather today, quiet our hearts and open our spirits to Your shaping work. Where we are resistant, soften us. Where we are cracked or worn, remake us. Form us by Your grace into people who reflect the life and love of Jesus Christ. We offer ourselves to You again today—minds, hearts, and lives. Amen.

Opening Question:

1. Share about a time when someone noticed a positive change in you. What caused that change?

Scripture Reflection: Formed in the Potter's Hands:

Jeremiah is invited to watch, not speak. To observe and be patient and watch the intentional work of the potter. When the vessel is flawed, the potter does not discard the clay but reshapes it. This image reminds us that formation is unavoidable. The question is not if we are being formed, but by whom or by what. In the Practicing the Way journey, becoming like Jesus is not about trying harder, but about placing ourselves intentionally in the hands of the Master Potter through grace-filled practices, community, and surrender. John Wesley spoke of this as “going on to perfection”; not flawlessness but growing in love of God and neighbor as the Spirit continually shapes us.

Digging into the Word:

Read Jeremiah 18:1-6 (NRSV). Consider reading it in other translations like the ESV, CEB or The Message.

1. What stands out to you in Jeremiah 18:1–6? Why do you think God asked Jeremiah to watch the potter rather than simply hear an explanation?
2. Why do you think God sends Jeremiah to a workshop rather than a temple or place of prayer?
3. What might God be teaching through ordinary, everyday labor? How does seeing faith lived out in ordinary life shape our understanding of discipleship?
4. What does the potter’s patience and willingness to reshape the clay reveal about God’s character?
5. The potter has full authority over the clay; yet handles it with care. How do you hold together God’s sovereignty and God’s gentleness? Have you experienced this in life?
6. What images of God does this passage challenge or correct for you? Where do you struggle more; trusting God’s authority or trusting God’s goodness?

first united methodist church

Richardson

7. Pottery is not rushed work. What does this passage teach us about patience in spiritual growth? How do we struggle with wanting quick change rather than slow transformation?
8. Where might God be inviting you to trust the process rather than control the outcome?
9. Verse 4 says the potter reshaped the clay “as it seemed good to him.” What emotions does that phrase stir in you; comfort, fear, resistance, trust? How do we discern the difference between God’s shaping and our own preferences? What does it mean to trust God’s vision for who we are becoming?

Other scriptures to consider:

Isaiah 64:8; Psalm 127:1; Romans 12:2; Philippians 1:6; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 6:9; James 1:2–4

Sermon Questions:

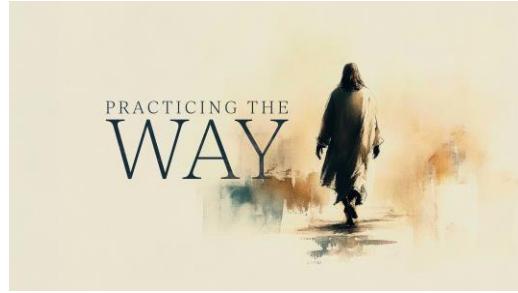
1. Pastor Clayton shared that everything in life shapes us. In what ways are you currently being formed more by the world versus being formed by Christ, and what specific influences are shaping your identity?
2. God is the potter we are the clay. How does understanding yourself as 'clay in the potter's hands' change the way you approach struggles and imperfections in your spiritual journey?
3. Spiritual formation is claiming your identity “in Christ”. What does it mean to be 'in Christ' in practical, everyday terms, and how might this identity reshape your decisions and relationships?
4. The sermon talks about the distortion of our true identity. How have you experienced the distortion of your identity as a child of God through personal sin, the actions of others, or systemic injustice?
5. The sermon quoted Martin Luther King Jr. who said, "injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." How does sin operate not just individually but systemically? Can you think of examples?
6. It's ultimately about surrendering. We must allow the Potter, God to shape us. We must let go of controlling and trying to shape God into what we want. What do you need to do differently in order to put God back into the role of the Potter and you the clay? What helps you stay there if you are?

Applying it:

1. How do habits, routines, media, work, or relationships form us for better or worse? Who or what do you think has had the greatest influence on who you are becoming?
2. Can you identify a time when God reshaped something 'spoiled' in your life into something beautiful, and what did that process teach you about grace?
3. What spiritual practices or disciplines could you incorporate into your daily life to put yourself in closer proximity to Jesus?
4. What would it look like for you to fully surrender your life to the Master Potter, and what fears or resistances might be holding you back from that surrender?

A Practice:

Invite group members or yourself to sit in silence for 1–2 minutes and pray quietly: “God, what are You forming in me right now?” What thoughts, actions, or distractions do you need to put down? What is God calling you to pick up and begin or return to in your daily following of Jesus?



CLOSING PRAYER

Faithful God, thank you for being a patient and loving Potter. For not discarding us when we are flawed. Instead gently reshaping us. As we go from this place, help us to remain open and responsive to Your Spirit. Form us into the likeness of Jesus; not just in what we believe, but in how we live, love, and serve. Keep us grounded in community and faithful in practice. In the name of Christ, who is still shaping us, we pray. Amen.

WAYS TO RESPOND

Choose one or more of the following practices this week.

1. On a scale of 1-10, how would you rate your current spiritual formation practices? What's working well? What needs attention?
2. Set aside 10 minutes each day for prayer. Use this simple framework: Thank God for who He is, confess where you need help, ask for what you need, listen in silence.
3. Read Jeremiah 18:1-6 each day this week. Journal about one new insight each day and Ask God: "How do You want to shape me today?"
4. Write "I am a child of God" on a notecard and place it where you'll see it multiple times daily. Each time you see it, pause and thank God for this truth.