

Bible Story

Jesus Called Disciples • Matthew 4:4-22; 9:9-12; Mark 3:13-18

Bible Story Point

Jesus called disciples to follow Him.

Memory Verse:

“He must become greater; I must become less.” **John 3:30**

Big Picture:

Why did Jesus become human?

Jesus became human to obey His Father’s plan and rescue sinners.

FOR PARENTS ONLY: Bible Study

In the first century, *rabbi* was a title given to a respected expert in the law of Moses. A rabbi studied the Scriptures and taught through speaking and writing. Jews wanted to honor God in how they lived, and they looked to the rabbis to instruct them in their behavior.

The word *rabbi* translates “my master.” Jewish students would seek out a rabbi and ask to follow him. A rabbi would choose only a few highly-promising students to be his disciples. If a student was not accepted by the rabbi, he likely returned home to learn a trade. Those chosen to be a rabbi’s disciples followed him everywhere. They learned from the rabbi how to think and how to act. They trusted the rabbi, and the goal was to become just like him.

When Jesus chose His disciples, His strategy was unusual. Rather than waiting for students to come to Him, Jesus sought out His disciples among the people who followed Him. He found them working—fishing and repairing nets. Some of Jesus’ disciples were introduced to Him by their friends. He approached these ordinary men and said, “Follow Me.” Their response? “Immediately they left ... and followed him” (Matt. 4:20,22).

The Twelve—Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James, son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus; Simon; and Judas—spent time with Jesus during His ministry. Jesus taught them how to live in light of God’s coming kingdom. He commissioned them to teach others about Him. The good news about Jesus is too great to not share with the entire world.

The call to follow Jesus is not an easy one. Jesus said, “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me” (Matt. 16:24). Jesus calls us to do the same—to surrender our lives for His purposes and perhaps even to die. “For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of me will find it” (Matt. 16:25).

Opening Activity: Disciples Concentration

What You Do:

Print or create (with the information for each disciple) two copies of the “Disciple Cards.”

Note: you could have kids help create these cards to use in the game. This will reinforce who the Disciples were and information on each of them. Save and use periodically to play the game over and over.

Pass out cards to kids. One player should mix up the cards facedown and arrange them in a grid.

Players will take turns flipping over two cards at a time, trying to find a match. If the cards match, the player collects them. If the cards do not match, the player should turn them facedown again. Play passes to the next kid. The player to collect the most matches wins.

What You Say:

These cards tell us about Jesus’ twelve disciples. **Jesus called disciples to follow Him.** Today we will learn more about who these disciples were and how they responded to Jesus’ call, “Follow Me!”

Bible Lesson: Jesus Called Disciples • Matthew 4:4-22; 9:9-12; Mark 3:13-18

Jesus Begins Work in Galilee

(Matthew 4:4-16)

¹² Jesus heard that John had been put in prison. So Jesus went back to Galilee. ¹³ He left Nazareth and went and lived in Capernaum, a town near Lake Galilee. Capernaum is in the area near Zebulun and Naphtali. ¹⁴ Jesus did this to make true what the prophet Isaiah said:

¹⁵ “Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali
are on the way to the sea.

They are along the Jordan River.

This is Galilee where the non-Jewish people live.

¹⁶ These people who live in darkness
will see a great light.

They live in a place that is very dark.

But a light will shine on them.” *Isaiah 9:1-2*

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

(Matthew 4:17-22)

¹⁷ From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, “Change your hearts and lives, because the kingdom of heaven is coming soon.”

¹⁸ Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two brothers, Simon (called Peter) and Simon’s brother Andrew. The brothers were fishermen, and they were fishing in the lake with a net. ¹⁹ Jesus said, “Come follow me. I will make you fishermen for men.” ²⁰ At once Simon and Andrew left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two other brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets to catch fish. Jesus told them to come with him. ²² At once they left the boat and their father, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus Teaches and Heals People

²³ Jesus went everywhere in Galilee. He taught in the synagogues and preached the Good News about the kingdom of heaven. And he healed all the people’s diseases and sicknesses. ²⁴ The news about Jesus spread all over Syria, and people brought all the sick to him. These sick people were suffering from different kinds of diseases and pain. Some were suffering very great pain, some had demons, some were epileptics, ^[d] and some were paralyzed. Jesus healed all of them. ²⁵ Many people followed him. They came from Galilee, the Ten Towns, ^[e] Jerusalem, Judea, and the land across the Jordan River.

Jesus Chooses Matthew

(Matthew 9:9-12)

⁹ When Jesus was leaving, he saw a man named Matthew. Matthew was sitting in the tax office. Jesus said to him, “Follow me.” And Matthew stood up and followed Jesus.

¹⁰ Jesus had dinner at Matthew’s house. Many tax collectors and “sinners” came and ate with Jesus and his followers. ¹¹ The Pharisees saw this and asked Jesus’ followers, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and ‘sinners’?”

¹² Jesus heard the Pharisees ask this. So he said, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor. Only the sick need a doctor. ¹³ Go and learn what this means: ‘I want faithful love more than I want animal sacrifices.’” ¹⁴ I did not come to invite good people. I came to invite sinners.”

Jesus Chooses His 12 Apostles

(Mark 3:13-18)

¹³ Then Jesus went up on a hill and called some men to come to him. These were the men Jesus wanted, and they went up to him. ¹⁴ Jesus chose 12 men and called them apostles. ¹⁵ He wanted these 12 to be with him, and he wanted to send them to other places to preach. ¹⁶ He also wanted them to have the power to force demons out of people. ¹⁷ These are the 12 men he chose: **Simon** (Jesus gave him the name Peter); ¹⁸ **James** and **John**, the sons of Zebedee (Jesus gave them the name Boanerges, which means “Sons of Thunder”); ¹⁹ **Andrew**, **Philip**, **Bartholomew**, **Matthew**, **Thomas**, **James** the son of Alphaeus, **Thaddaeus**, **Simon** the Zealot, ²⁰ and **Judas** Iscariot. Judas is the one who gave Jesus to his enemies.

The disciples were busy when Jesus showed up. **Jesus called disciples to follow Him**, and isn’t it amazing that they immediately left what they were doing and followed Him? They didn’t say, “We will follow You, just let us finish up here,” or “Let me work through the end of the month and then I’ll follow You.” What did they do? Look at Mark 1:18. [*Allow kid to read the verse and respond.*] Two brothers even left their dad behind. [See Mark 1:19-20.] I wonder what their dad thought about that!

In those days, only the best students approached teachers and asked to follow them. The students watched their teachers very carefully. They tried to be just like the teachers. Teachers didn’t allow just anyone to follow them; you had to be a very hard worker, and the teacher had to think you were pretty special too.

Jesus chose His followers from a group of people no one probably ever thought was smart enough to be students. Jesus’ followers were called disciples. Jesus chose some fishermen: Peter, Andrew, James, and John. Then He chose a tax collector named Matthew. The other men Jesus chose were Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, James, Thaddaeus, Simon, and Judas. Yes, two of Jesus’ twelve disciples were named James! Jesus’ disciples would learn from Jesus so that they could tell others the good news about why Jesus came: to save people from their sins.

DISCUSS:

- **Why do you think Jesus picked fishermen and tax collectors to be His disciples instead of kings or religious leaders?** *Invite kids to share their ideas. Share that the Bible says God uses people who have nothing to offer to show His power and strength through them.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 1:26-31.)
- **What does it mean to follow Jesus?** *Prompt kids to recognize that following Jesus means trusting Him, obeying Him, and telling others about Him.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 16:24.)
- **What do you think might keep someone from following Jesus?** *Help kids understand that everyone follows something, and we follow what we value the most. Some people live for family and friends, for themselves, for popularity, or for money. The Bible says we must follow Jesus and nothing else. We can pray that God will soften the hearts of those who do not follow Jesus so that they would come to know and love Him.*

Christ Connection

Jesus came to earth to show what God is like and to save people from their sins. This is great news! Jesus told His disciples to tell others about Him, and we are Jesus' disciples when we trust in Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news about Jesus.

Questions from Kids, Bible Story Video

Show the **Questions from Kids** video (link on email) to the kids. You will also show the **Bible Story Video**. Prompt kids to think about their own plans and hopes for the future. Guide them to discuss whether it is easy or hard to trust God's plan.

Missions Moment

What You Do:

Print out a copy of the "How Kids Can Help MAF if you have a printer. If not, show kids the form online. read aloud some of the ways that kids can get involved in helping a mission organization like Mission Aviation Fellowship. Specifically look at the prayer list on page 2. Take time together to pray for some of the requests.

Our prayers for missionaries are very important and it's important for us to remember that we can be on mission wherever we go. **Jesus called disciples to follow Him.** We are Jesus' disciples when we trust in Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news about Jesus.

Memory Verse

Read the Memory Verse to the kids. "He must become greater; I must become less." John 3:30
Next, have kids read it out loud together. John 3:30.

What You Say:

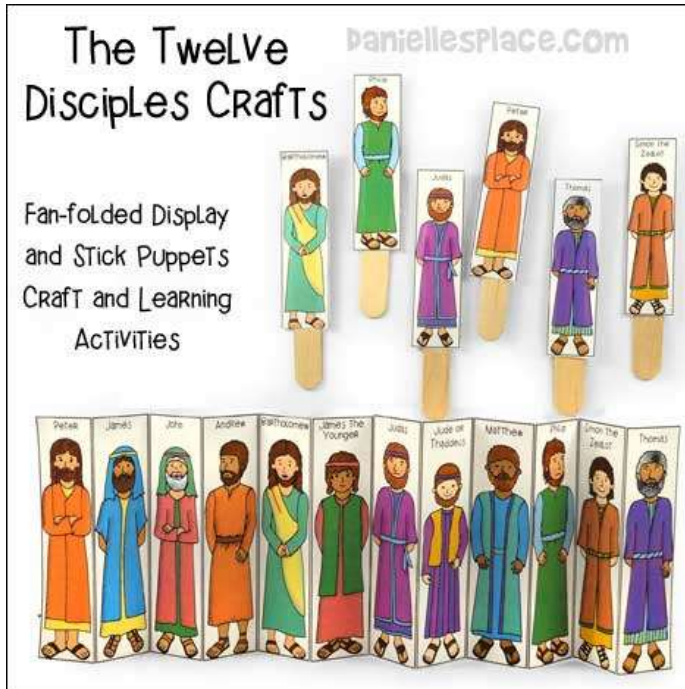
What if we don't decrease in order to increase Jesus' fame and worth? Is this optional or only for certain Christians? No, this is the path of all of God's people. Following Jesus can be hard. As we love people and they come to know Jesus, they might be tempted to follow us instead of Jesus. Our memory verse creates in us humility that keeps us, like John, pointing everyone to Jesus and away from ourselves as the answer to all of life's problems.

Prayer

God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us from our sin. We pray You would work in the hearts of those who don't know You to repent and become followers of Jesus—trusting Him, obeying Him, and telling others about Him. We want to be faithful followers. We need You. Amen.

Craft:

The Twelve Disciples Stick Puppets or Fan-folded Craft



Use these patterns to make stick puppets or a fan-folded display.
Use them to review and memorize the names of the twelve disciples.

What you will need:

Craft Sticks – Regular-sized or Mini Jumbo Craft Sticks
Glue
Scissors
Paper or Card Stock
Colored Pencils (Optional)

How to make:

1. Before class print out the patterns (color or black and white).
2. If you chose to print black and white patterns, have your children color the pictures.
3. *If they are making the stick puppets, have them cut the patterns apart and glue them to craft sticks.
*If they are making the fan-folded display, have them cut out the rows of disciples, tape or glue them together, and then fan-fold them to make the display.