

JESUS CALLED DISCIPLES | Matthew 3; John 1; 3

Bible Story: Jesus called disciples to follow Him.

Memory Verse: ¹In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. **John 1:1-2**

Big Picture Question: Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human.

Bottom Line: *We serve Jesus because He is God.*

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.*

Leader Notes:

CONTEXT

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)

TEACHING FOCUS (Jesus Calls His Disciples)

As we teach kids about Jesus, lead them to see how Peter, Andrew, James, and John followed Jesus. He called them and they left everything to go with Him. He called fisherman and a tax collector to be his closest friends and followers. He told them that they had a new purpose in life: fish for people. Just as Jesus called his first disciples, he calls us to leave everything and serve Him because He is God.

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.*

Bottom Line: *We leave everything for Jesus because He is God.*

Today's Takeaways:

- Jesus called disciples to follow Him.
- He would teach them to fish for people.
- They left their families and their jobs to go with Jesus.
- Jesus calls us to follow Him and to do what He says.
- **Bottom Line:** We serve Jesus because He is God.

PRAYER AND TIME OF COMMITMENT

Give kids a chance to believe in Jesus for the first time. Remind them that God loves them so much that He sent Jesus to earth to pay for their sins. Lead them to pray as you pray. Pray that believers will submit their lives to the Holy Spirit, follow Jesus, and tell others about Him.

Worship and Story Time

Gather children on a rug or in a specific area of the classroom to tell the story. Some kids (especially the younger ones) may wander. That's okay. They're still listening and learning!

Play the DVD of All Star Kids worship (choose 1 song for today)

What You Say: "Way to go! You are such amazing singers. Now let's sit down to learn from the Bible Story today."

What You Do: Introduce the Story

"When Jesus was ready to teach, Jesus chose disciples, or special friends who learned from Him. As Jesus walked near the sea, He told two fishermen named Simon and Andrew, "Follow Me, and I will make you fish for people." Right away, they followed Him. He called James and John while they were helping their father fix fishing nets. James and John left their father with the nets and followed Jesus! Then Jesus called Matthew- a tax collector. Jesus chose twelve men to follow Him: Simon Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, another James, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas. These twelve friends followed Jesus, listened to Him teach, and saw Him heal people and do many miracles."

PLAY BIBLE STORY VIDEO

Check diapers and serve snack.

Activities

Depending on the size of your group, you may lead each activity two or three times. Not every child may want to participate in the activities. That's okay.

1. **Make fish art**

What You Need: give each kid a cut out paper plate, fin, googly eyes, stamp pads, baby wipes, gluesticks

What You Do:

- Help kids glue their fin and googly eyes to their fish.
- Then using the stamp pad have them use their fingers to make scales on their fish's body.
- Wipe hands immediately.
- Draw a mouth on the fish.
- Retell the story.

What You Say " Jesus chose twelve disciples to be "fishers of men." Jesus meant that they would tell others about Him. Jesus obeyed God's plan. People who love Jesus are also His disciples."

2. **Practice signing the Memory Verse**

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster

What You Do:

- Show the poster to the kids.
- As you say the words point to them on the poster.
- Create simple hand motions to teach toddlers the memory verse. Sample hand motions include, "**In the beginning** (draw world in air) **was the Word** (open book), **and the Word** (sign Jesus) **was with God, and the Word** (sign Jesus) **was God. He** (sign Jesus) **was with God**(sign God) **in the beginning**(draw world in air). **John 1:1-2**

What You Say "When the verse says Word, it means Jesus. The Word, Jesus was God. They are the same! People knew Jesus was not an ordinary baby. They knew He was the Savior who had come to save people from sin. Help me with the Big Picture Question: **Is Jesus God or a human? As the Son of God, Jesus is both fully God and fully human. We worship Him because He is God.**

Pray and Dismiss:

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Do:

- Pray: "Jesus thank You for obeying God and showing us who you are through helpers like your disciples. Help us to look for you every day and to follow you with our whole lives. In Jesus name, Amen."
- Tell parents one thing you did today and encourage them to check out the Family Resources online, app and in paper copy on the slat wall.