



Matthew/Mark/Luke

Jesus Called Disciples

Lesson Objective: Jesus calls us to follow Him.

Activity *Finding Friends*

Question, if you had to change schools and make all new friends, what qualities would you look for in your new friends? Take a few minutes to discuss.

Connect To activity to the lesson:

We formed groups based on specific qualifications. Today we will hear about the people Jesus chose to be His followers. They weren't famous or powerful. Let's find out what kind of people Jesus chose to follow Him.

WORSHIP - Choose 2-3 songs to worship together as a family.

Prayers: How can I pray for you?

Introduction:

Did you have a favorite teacher last year? Did they let you follow them everywhere they went and teach you to do everything they were doing? No? Well, in the first century, school looked a little different. "Rabbi" means "my master." It 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, so they looked to the rabbis to instruct them in their behavior. 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 how to think and how to act from the Rabbi because the goal was to become just like him.

VIDEO: " Jesus Called Disciples" (Video Transcript)

Jesus' ministry had begun. He traveled around, preaching about God and telling people to turn away from their sins. Large crowds followed Jesus around and listened to Him teach.

One day, Jesus was walking along the Sea of Galilee. He saw two brothers: Simon—who was called Peter—and Andrew. Peter and Andrew were fishermen. Jesus called out to them, "Follow Me, and I will teach you to fish for people!" Right away, Peter and Andrew dropped their nets and followed Jesus. Later, He saw two more brothers. Their names were James and John. They were in a boat fixing nets with their father, Zebedee. Jesus called out to them, and right away they got up, left their father and the boat, and followed Jesus. Jesus went on and saw a man named Matthew (who was also called Levi). Matthew, who was a tax collector, was sitting at the tax office. Many people didn't like tax collectors because tax collectors were unfair. Jesus called out to him, "Follow Me!" So Matthew got up, left everything behind, and followed Jesus. Matthew had a big feast for Jesus at his house. Many tax collectors and sinners came to eat with Jesus and His disciples.

The religious leaders saw this, and they didn't think Jesus should be friends with people who did wrong things. They complained to the disciples, "Why does your Teacher eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" Jesus heard the religious leaders and said, "People who are healthy don't need a doctor, but people who are sick do. I did not come to invite good people; I came to invite sinners to turn back to God."

Later, Jesus gathered His followers together and chose twelve of them to be His apostles. Jesus' apostles would work closely with Jesus and would go out to tell others about Him. These are the men Jesus chose: Simon (who was called Peter), Simon's brother Andrew, James and John (who were called the "Sons of Thunder"), Philip and Bartholomew, Matthew and Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus (al FEE uhs), Thaddaeus (THAD ih uhs), Simon the Zealot, and Judas Iscariot (iss KAR ih aht).

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. We are Jesus' disciples when we trust in Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news about Jesus.

Read - Matthew 4, 9, Mark 1-3, Luke 5-6

Debrief

Why do you think Jesus picked fishermen and tax collectors to be His disciples instead of kings or religious leaders? *(The Bible says God uses people who have nothing to offer to show His power and strength through them.)*

What does it mean to follow Jesus? *(Following Jesus means trusting Him, obeying Him, and telling others about Him.)*

What do you think might keep someone from following Jesus? *(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.)*

Apply the Story

When Jesus chose His disciples, His strategy was unusual. Rather than waiting for students to come to Him, Jesus sought out His disciples. 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). Jesus taught His disciples 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).

Momentum Moment Chosen!

Supplies: paper, pencils

Hand out paper and pencils to the kids. Ask them to write out a list of character qualities or skills that they think would qualify them to be chosen to follow Jesus. Give them time to think about it and write out their list. After they have completed their list, tell them to tear it up. Explain to them that Jesus doesn't choose us based on how good we are or how many skills we have or anything else. He chooses us because of His great love for us. We don't have to do anything to earn that. He has already chosen us. All we have to do is accept His invitation. Now that's good news!

Close with a prayer: Let each person take a moment to say a one sentence prayer.