

Lesson 7

Jesus Chooses Twelve Disciples

Bible Text: Matthew 4:18-24; 9:9; 10:1-4; Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-14; 3:13-19; John 1:43-50 Jesus chose twelve men to follow Him and be His disciples.

Bible Truth: Jesus wants me to follow Him.

Bible Verse: If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. John 8:31 (NIV)

For the Teacher

A disciple is someone who learns from his teacher by listening to his words and observing how he lives. Jesus chose 12 ordinary men who were willing to follow Him in this way. What a privilege to help kids understand that Jesus is the best leader they can choose to follow and become His disciples.

LESSON SEGMENT	TIME	SEGMENT DESCRIPTION	SUPPLIES & PREPARATION
Focus on God's Word	10 min.	Game: Follow the Leader	Space to play. List of actions.
Learn God's Word	17 min.	Matthew 4:18-24; 9:9; 10:1-4; Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-14; 3:13-19; John 1:43-50	Visuals 7a, 7b. Map "Life of Jesus." Motions for 'Follow me' and 'Fish.' Write the names of the 12 disciples on a board as shown in the lesson.
Bible Truth	5 min.	Jesus wants me to follow Him. Learning Game: Musical Fish	Make one fish shape from cardstock. Music.
Connect with God's Word	15 min.	Game: Copy Me Prayer Response	Space to play. Lesson Notes.
Memorize God's Word	8 min.	Bible Verse John 8:31 Bible Verse Activity: Fish Net	Write each word of John 8:31 on a fish shape.
Act on God's Word	10 min.	Craft: Fish Talk Invitation (Prepare a sample ahead of time.)	One sheet of white paper per child, wax crayons, blue paint, brushes, pencils. Info card (see lesson section)
Review God's Word	10 min.	Review Questions Review Activity: Go Fish	Write numbers 1-12 on pieces of paper, fold, and place in a bag.



FOCUS ON GOD'S WORD

Game: Follow the Leader

Have the kids form a line behind you. Begin walking around the room doing actions and saying words for the kids to copy. For example: march; march and count out loud; march and clap hands; tiptoe around chairs; stop and turn around; take giant steps as you walk; take baby steps; hop; jump; skip.)

When you were the followers in this game, how did you know what to do? (Allow responses.) What made you a good follower? (Allow responses.) You watched the leader and did whatever he did. There are all kinds of leaders in the world, but Jesus is the best leader we can choose to follow.

Today, we will find out what it means to be a disciple, a follower of Jesus.



LEARN GOD'S WORD

(Open your Bible to Matthew 4.)

Tell the kids to listen for these words: 1. 'Follow Me.' Each time they hear you say, 'Follow Me', they stand up and wave an arm to indicate 'Follow Me'. 2. 'Fish.' Each time they hear you say 'Fish,' they stand up and make their hands swim like a fish.

Jesus went to live in Capernaum, right on Lake Galilee. (Point to it on the map.) He was ready to begin the ministry God had sent Him to do. Jesus began to travel around the lake, telling people, "Turn back to God and start living God's way! God's Kingdom is almost here."

One day as Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, He saw two brothers. One was Simon Peter – Jesus liked to call him Peter - and the other was Andrew. (Display visual 7a.) They were fishermen and were throwing their net into the lake to catch fish. (Kids stand and do the motion for 'Fish.')

"Come, follow Me," Jesus said, (Kids stand and do the motion for 'Follow me.') "and I will make you fishers of men." Peter and Andrew didn't hesitate at all. They put down their nets and followed Jesus. But what did Jesus mean by saying, "I will make you fishers of men"? (Allow responses.) Instead of fishing for a living, their new job would be to "fish for men." (Motion for 'Fish.') That meant telling people that Jesus was the way to God. He was the answer to their problem of sin. They could ask Him to forgive their sin, and then choose to follow Him. Those that did would become a part of God's family.

Jesus walked a little farther along the shore and saw two more fishermen, James and his brother John in a boat mending their nets. Jesus called out to James and John, "Come, follow Me." (Motion for 'Follow me.') What do you think these two brothers did? (Allow responses.) They immediately left the boat and followed Jesus.

Jesus continued traveling all around the region of Galilee. He called other men to, "Come,

follow Me. (Motion for 'Follow me.') One of them was a tax collector named Matthew. Matthew's job was to collect the tax money people had to pay to the government. Nobody liked tax collectors because they often overcharged people and kept part of the money for themselves.

But when Jesus walked by the tax booth, He said to Matthew, "**Follow Me.**" (Motion for 'Follow me.') And Matthew, just like Peter, Andrew, James, and John, got right up, left his business, and followed Jesus.

Next, Jesus found Philip and said, "**Follow me.**" (Motion for 'Follow me.') Immediately Philip believed in Jesus and became one of His disciples. Philip met Nathanael (Display visual 7b.) and told him: "We have found the very person that Moses and the prophets wrote about—it's Jesus from Nazareth!"

Nathanael wasn't sure about that. "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?" he asked. "Come and see," Philip told him.

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, He said, "Here comes an honest man of Israel." Nathanael was surprised. "How do you know what I'm like?" he asked Jesus. "I saw you sitting under the fig tree before Philip told you about Me," Jesus answered. "Teacher," Nathanael exclaimed, "You are the Son of God. You are the King of Israel."

Jesus said, "Did you believe me just because I said I saw you sitting under the fig tree? You haven't seen anything yet! Come and **follow Me.**" (Motion for 'Follow Me.') And Nathanael, along with Philip, followed Jesus.

Jesus went all over Galilee, teaching in the Jewish meeting places and preaching about God's kingdom. Sometimes He taught out on a hillside or by the lake. Everywhere He went, He healed people who were sick. Soon everyone knew about Jesus, and many people from all over the country heard Jesus say, "**Follow Me.**" (Motion for 'Follow Me.') And many people chose to follow Him.

One day, Jesus went up a mountain to pray. He spent the whole night praying to God. When morning came, Jesus asked some of His followers to go up the mountain with Him. Then He chose 12 men to be His special disciples to be with Him and learn from Him. Jesus wanted to prepare them to go out and tell people that God's promised Savior had come at last. These 12 disciples followed Jesus wherever He went. They listened to His teaching and learned about God's kingdom. They watched Him as He healed people, set people free from evil spirits, and even raised the dead. They saw how much Jesus loved and helped people.

Here are the names of these 12 special disciples of Jesus. (Say the name of each of the 12 disciples you have already written on the board.)

Peter, Andrew, James, and John, Matthew, Philip, Nathanael, and Thomas, James, Thaddeus, Simon, and Judas Iscariot.

Now point to each name as you say: Simon Peter (We'll call him Peter like Jesus did.) and his brother Andrew, the two brothers James, and John, Matthew, the tax collector, Philip, Nathanael, and Thomas. Then we have another James (Son of Alphaeus), Thaddeus, Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot. Jesus said to each of these 12 men, "**Follow Me,**" and they did. (Motion for "Follow Me.")



Let's say these 12 names together. *(Have the kids repeat after you.)*

BIBLE TRUTH

Bible Truth: Jesus wants me to follow Him.

What did Jesus say to each one of His 12 disciples? *(Do the motion for 'Follow Me.')*

Jesus said, "Follow me." And that's what He's still saying to each one of us today.

Let's say the Bible Truth: Jesus wants me to follow Him.

Game: Musical Fish

Supplies: a fish shape cut out of cardstock, music (or a helper to clap their hands)

Have the kids sit in a circle. Start the music (clapping). Have the kids pass the fish shape around the circle. When the music (clapping) stops, the one holding the fish is "caught." He goes in the "net" (stands in the middle of the circle) and says the Bible Truth. Continue until everyone has had a turn to say the Bible Truth.



CONNECT WITH GOD'S WORD

Game: Copy Me

Select one child to be the leader and do silly motions. Everyone else should copy that person. Allow 2 or 3 kids to have a chance to be the leader for a short time. After the game is over, have the kids sit down.

A disciple is someone who copies their teacher. Who does God want us to copy? *(Allow responses.)*

Jesus had 12 special disciples, but many other people followed Jesus and learned from Him. They believed what Jesus said. They saw the miracles He did, and they followed His example by telling others about God. Jesus called them fishers of men.

Anyone who loves Jesus, stand up!

Anyone who wants to be a disciple of Jesus, shout "Yes!"

Have the kids sit down.

Jesus' disciples spent a lot of time with Him and learned from Him. How can we spend time with Jesus and learn from Him? *(Answers might include read the Bible, learn Bible stories, memorize the Bible verse each week, talk to Jesus in prayer, come to church, spend time with other believers, help people.)* **Following Jesus means living in a way that pleases God. Can you think of some examples of what God wants us to do?** *(Answers might include: tell the truth, pray, show love to others, forgive one another.)*

Ask those who really want to be a disciple of Jesus to come up and sign their names on the board along with the twelve disciples.

Prayer Response

Have the kids sit quietly. Play quiet music if possible.

Today Jesus wants each one of you to be His disciple. But first, you must decide to follow Him when He calls you. Jesus is calling now. Come follow Me. He wants to forgive your sin and be the leader of your life. He wants you to pray to Him and ask Him to come into your heart. Then you can learn from Him, obey Him, and follow Him with all your heart.

Pray over the kids: **Dear Jesus, thank You that You want all these kids to follow You and be Your disciples. Please help them to hold to Your teaching and become real disciples. Help them to want to follow You with all their hearts. Amen.**

Allow the kids a few minutes to quietly talk to Jesus about becoming His disciple.

Leading a Child to Jesus: If any child wants to accept Jesus as their Savior and become a disciple, explain the plan of salvation and pray with them. (See Teacher's Guide p.3 Leading a Child to Jesus.)



MEMORIZE GOD'S WORD

Bible Verse: If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. John 8:31

What must we do to be disciples of Jesus? Our Bible verse has the answer. (Say the verse.)

Jesus wants you to listen to Him and then believe and obey what He teaches. That is what Jesus meant when He said: "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples." John 8:31

(Repeat the Bible verse several times with the kids.)

Bible Verse Activity: Fish Net

Before class, cut out fish shapes from colored paper. On each fish, write one word of the Bible verse. Place all the fish in a bowl. Have one child take a fish from the bowl, and stand at the front of the room, holding the fish up. The next person to take a fish must decide if his word comes before or after the word on the first fish and then stand accordingly. Continue until the Bible verse is in the correct order.

Say: Good job. All the fish are in the net.

Let the kids take a few minutes alone to talk with Jesus about being His disciples.



ACT ON GOD'S WORD

(Prepare a slip of paper with your church's address, the time of the class, and a phone number of the teacher for the kids to glue on to their Fish Craft.)

Jesus called Peter and the others to become His disciples and be fishers of men. He wants us to be His disciples too. Jesus is so amazing that we will want to tell everyone about

Him so they can follow Jesus too. But sometimes we don't know what to say to our friends, right? Here's a fun way you can ask your friends to come with you to church.

Craft: Fish Talk Invitation

Give each child a sheet of white paper on which to draw 2 large fish facing each other. Color the fish with wax crayons. Draw bubbles coming out of each fish's mouth leading up to a speech balloon. In the balloon for the fish on the left write, "Would you like to go to church with me on Sunday? We sing songs and play games." The fish on the right answers, "Sure, that sounds like fun." Have the kids use diluted blue paint to color the sea. Have the kids glue the paper with the address of the church, the time, and a phone number for parents to call on to the back of their fish invitation.

Challenge the kids to find one friend to invite to come with them to church next time and give them the fish invitation.



REVIEW GOD'S WORD

Review Questions

1. Who was Peter's brother? (Andrew)
2. What were Peter and Andrew doing when Jesus saw them? (Throwing their net into the water.)
3. What did Jesus say to Peter and Andrew? ("Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.")
4. Who were the other two brothers that Jesus called? (James and John)
5. What work did James and John do? (They were fishermen.)
6. Jesus called a tax collector to follow Him. What was his name? (Matthew)
7. Who did Philip bring to see Jesus? (Nathanael)
8. Where did Jesus first see Nathanael? (Under the fig tree)
9. How many men did Jesus choose to be His special disciples? (12)
10. How many disciples can you name? (Answers will vary.)
11. What must we do first to become a disciple of Jesus? (Ask Jesus to be our leader.)
12. Tell one thing you can do this week to show you are a disciple of Jesus. (Answers will vary.)

Review Activity: Go Fish

Write the number 1-12 on pieces of paper. Put them in a bag.

Pick a child and say, "Go fish." He picks a number out of the bag.

Ask him the review question that corresponds with the number. If he can't answer, say to the other kids, "Let's all go fish." The child who stands and answers correctly picks a new child to get a number out of the bag.