

Many Follow Jesus

Grades
3-4

DISCIPLES

LUKE 5:1-11; 6:12-16; 8:1-3

What's happening in this story?

The stories of Jesus calling followers demonstrate how he broke down society's barriers to invite people into community and vocation. In these passages Jesus first calls Simon Peter—a fisherman. He then chooses twelve disciples from among those following him. Finally, we are told Jesus also welcomed Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, "and many others" as followers—unlikely disciples for the time not only because they were women but also because of their backgrounds. Together, these stories capture the wide spectrum of Jesus' followers and the inclusive spirit with which he calls people to join his work.

What does this story mean for kids?

This story helps introduce the topic of how Jesus breaks down barriers and looks past how the world thinks about power and influence. To that end, Jesus is also inviting kids into a life of discipleship. Help them consider how they can be disciples like those in the text—not by leaving everything they know, but by following Jesus here and now.

Why this theme?

These stories of diverse people becoming disciples illuminate the fact that discipleship is accessible to everyone—adults, kids, males, females, and regardless of social standing, ability, or any other characteristic.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age are just starting to form their sense of personal identity. They're still very much in *learner* mode. Emphasize the *leading* component of being a disciple. They may not have realized they have something to offer others.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Pens
- White paper
- Clear tape or glue
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Craft pompoms (½-in. diameter, 1 per kid)
- Colored dot stickers (1 per kid)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Let the first kid know that he or she gets to lead an imitating game. As soon as the second kid arrives, the first can begin performing a movement, like clapping or patting their head, and the second can imitate. As more arrive, they can take turns being the leader.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

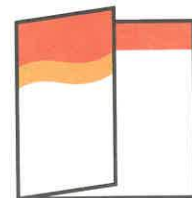
What does the word *disciple* mean to you? Allow time for some discussion. **Being a disciple means listening, following, and learning, but it also means being able to share with others what you've learned. As Jesus' disciples, we listen and learn about Jesus at church, in worship and Sunday school. Where else do you learn how to be a disciple of Jesus?**

Pray together: **Dear God, help us to be better followers of Jesus! Be with us as we celebrate successes, and encourage us when we struggle in our journey toward you. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets, craft pompoms, and markers.

Jesus invited many people to be his disciples. We are invited to follow many different people in our lives—people who teach us, care for us, and help us

grow. The front of your leaflet shows images of people leading and helping kids. Set your leaflet on the table. Stand above it and drop a pompom onto the page. Talk with the person next to you about why you might want to follow the person your pompom landed on. What could you learn from them? How could you share that knowledge with others? If your pompom landed on the blank space, share someone not pictured whom you would want to follow. Allow time for kids to share with their neighbor. If you have time, repeat. **Draw a frame around the person on the page you would be most excited to follow.**



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Being a disciple of Jesus isn't always easy. Today Mimi is going to face some of the challenges that come with getting started as a disciple.

View Episode 8, "The God Club," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- What good thing was Mimi trying to accomplish with the God Club?
- What was the experience of those who first attended her club?
- What opportunities do you have to lead others?
- If being a disciple means both leading and following, how would you grade Mimi on those two qualities? How could she improve?
- How do you best learn from others?



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is in the book of Luke. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Luke, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1225.



Although Jesus had many disciples, twelve of them get a lot of attention. These twelve were chosen by Jesus to follow him, learn from him, and help teach others about God and Jesus. When Jesus called these twelve to follow him, they could have said no, but instead, they said yes. Saying yes to following Jesus meant giving up other things they'd been doing in life.

Help kids find Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16; 8:1-3 and read it in this creative way together: Have kids sit in a circle in order by age, oldest to youngest. **We can learn a lot from people who are a little older than us. It's also true that older people can learn a lot from younger people. Jesus welcomes people of any age to follow him!** Have the oldest begin reading, then move down the line a verse at a time.

Invite kids to check out what Leo says about Luke 6:13-16.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How did Simon, James, and John show they were ready to be Jesus' disciples?
- How do you choose your friends? How do you decide who you will look up to, learn from, and follow?
- Why do you think the disciples followed Jesus?
- What would you be most curious to learn from Jesus as a disciple?
- What's surprising about the people Jesus chose as disciples?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Pass out dot stickers and pens. **Look at the chart and find the theme for today.** Give kids time to find the word *Disciples*. **We're all invited to be disciples of Jesus! Take a couple of seconds to draw your face on a dot sticker. When you're done, place it in or near the box by *Disciples*.**



BIBLE BIT

The word *kingdom* meant something different to Jesus than it did to the leaders in Rome. Jesus' kingdom was spiritual, but their kingdom was about earthly power and control.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Being a leader means more than being in charge—it means leading others. If you watch the video again, watch for moments when Mimi missed an opportunity to lead people.

OUR CHURCH

How does your church practice discipleship? Have someone visit to describe how Christian education works in your congregation.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out paper, markers, scissors, and clear tape or glue.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Do you ever wonder if you're qualified to be a disciple of Jesus? What qualifications did the disciples from today's story have?**
2. **The first disciples didn't know much about Jesus when they started following him, but they were eager to learn. As they learned, they discovered that they could teach others about Jesus too. We're going to make campaign posters that show the qualities we already have that make us great disciples of Jesus.**
3. **Write your name at the top of a sheet of paper. Leave your paper where you're sitting, then go around and write one characteristic you admire about each person on their paper.** Stay on top of this; make sure no one gets too cute or unkind. If someone seems to be getting left out, make suggestions to other kids to include them.
4. **When you're done, return to your seat. Write your name in the blank space above the words "for DISCIPLE." Now cut out the words people wrote on your sheet of paper and decorate your campaign poster with them!** They'll use tape or glue here.
5. Give kids time to share their posters.
6. **What are some qualities of a good follower? What about the qualities of a good leader?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

We don't have to prove anything in order to be disciples—we just choose to follow Jesus! As disciples, we can learn about Jesus and share what we've learned with others. What new thing have you learned about how you can be a disciple of Jesus today?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers.

Add your name to the word cloud of disciples. Pick a friend from class you'll pray for this week, and add their name too. Hang it up when you get home.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.