

Many Follow Jesus

Grades
5-6

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

Most kids this age are used to listening to adults and following directions. But being a disciple is also about sharing knowledge and passion with others. Encourage kids to move past simple following by helping them see ways they can begin to lead.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- White paper
- Pens
- Scissors
- Colored pencils

LESSON SUPPLIES

- None

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Place white paper, pens, and scissors by the door. Have kids trace their shoe, cut it out, and tape it to the floor to create a series of footsteps into the room that other kids can follow as they arrive.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Name someone you look up to as a role model. Give kids a chance to respond. Encourage them to name role models other than their parents. **What makes those people good role models? How does their presence in your life affect your choices and actions? What do you learn from them?** Allow time for kids to discuss. **Jesus was, and still is, a role model. He chose many people to follow him, learn from him, and help teach others about him. Those people were called disciples. But disciples didn't just exist in Bible times. We are all disciples of Jesus because we have chosen to follow him.**

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for sending us Jesus to be our role model. Help us discover new ways to follow him every day. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens.

If you could choose one person to follow and learn from, who would it be? Write the name of this person in the blank rectangle on your leaflet. Then answer the questions on your leaflet. Give kids time to work, then invite them to share their answers with the group. **Who did you write down? What kind of conversation would you like to have with your role model?**



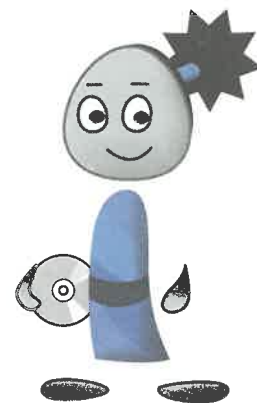
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Disciples follow and learn from their teacher, but there's also a lot of responsibility that comes with being a disciple. The more they learn, the more wisdom disciples have to share with others. That can be harder than it sounds. Let's watch how Mimi handles it.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What would you expect out of something called "the God Club"? Is it something you'd want to be a part of? Why or why not?**
- **Why do you think Mimi reserves a seat for God at all of the group's meetings?**
- **What did you think when Mimi escorted Gabe from the meeting?**
- **Why do you think Ruby was so upset? What would you have done if you were there?**
- **If no one is willing to follow you, are you still a leader? Why or why not?**



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.



Jesus picked everyday people, like fishermen and a tax collector, to be his disciples. Most were probably young, and many had jobs or were just starting to learn a trade. They all had plans for their future. But when Jesus asked, they left their homes and their families to follow him.

Help kids find Luke 5:1-11; 6:12-16; 8:1-3 and read it in this creative way together: Divide the class into three groups, and assign each group one section of the reading. Give groups two minutes to come up with a way to act it out as one of the group members reads the scripture.

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

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Why do you think Jesus told Simon Peter and his friends that they would “catch people”?**
- **Why do you think Simon Peter fell to his knees in front of Jesus?**
- **What do you think Jesus prayed about?**
- **Do you think anyone can be a disciple? Why or why not?**
- **How is our job as disciples different from that of Jesus' original disciples?**

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Disciples*. **Everywhere Jesus went, the disciples followed, learning from Jesus so that one day they could teach others about him. Being a disciple includes both following the leader and leading the follower.** Invite a volunteer to draw a footprint in the box by *Disciples*.



BIBLE BIT

The number 12 is important in the Bible. It is mentioned more than 180 times and symbolizes a solid structure or foundation.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, talk about Mimi's reasons for kicking people out of the God Club. Look for ways she could do something different that would get her point across.

OUR CHURCH

Ask your pastor for a list of people he or she learns from and follows. Do you think you ever stop needing teachers to learn from? Why or why not?

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out colored pencils.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Being a disciple includes lots of things, like listening, learning, growing, and teaching. Find a partner. The instructions on our leaflets are going to help us practice following and leading.**
2. **Without reading the leaflet, fold the square in half on the dotted line. Decide who will read from the green side and who will read from the red side.**
3. **The green-side person is the first leader. Your job is to lead your partner in creating a drawing by communicating the instructions on the green side of the leaflet. The only rule is that you can only give each instruction once.**
4. **The red-side person is the follower. Your job is to listen carefully and follow instructions. In the blank square, draw what you hear.**
5. After a few minutes, have the kids switch roles and repeat the activity, using the instructions on the red side of the square.
6. When everyone is finished, have them compare drawings and instructions with each other and with the rest of the class. Did everyone come up with the same pictures? One picture should be a house and the other a cat.
7. Process the activity with open-ended questions: **Which role was easier? Why? Did you read the instructions word-for-word or did you change them? How?**
8. **What are some valuable characteristics in a leader? How about a follower?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

The disciples didn't know Jesus when they chose to follow him, but they trusted that he was an important person they could learn from. We are called to follow and learn about Jesus as his disciples too. Who teaches you about Jesus? Whom could you teach about Jesus?

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

Leading and following are both parts of being a disciple. How can you use your gifts to disciple others? Help a younger kid learn to tie shoes? Help an older adult navigate the Internet? On each puzzle piece on your leaflet, write one way you can lead or follow this week.

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.