

# The Disciples

## Lesson At-A-Glance

Scripture Reference  
**Matthew 4:12-23;  
9:9-13; 10:1-4**

Lectionary Sunday/  
Church Season  
**Epiphany 3**

Lesson Focus  
**God's call can  
mean making  
difficult decisions.**

Bible Memory Verse  
**Jesus went throughout  
Galilee, teaching in  
their synagogues and  
proclaiming the good  
news of the kingdom and  
curing every disease and  
every sickness among the  
people. Matthew 4:23**



### Gather (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Arrival Activity</b> Kids write about a recent tough decision and its outcome.	Activity Pages, Leaflets 	Pencils
<b>Opening Conversation</b> Kids talk about the toughest decision they've ever made.	Leaflets	None
<b>Opening Prayer</b> Kids pray responsively with the leader.	None	None

### Open the Bible (20 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>The Disciples Story</b> Kids dig into the Bible story and practice following.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	None
<b>Disciple Discernment</b> Kids match the disciples to fun facts about them.	Leaflets	Pencils
<b>Give It Up?</b> Kids discuss what would be the hardest things for them to give up in order to live the nomadic life of a disciple.	None	Whiteboard, marker
<b>Remember It</b> Kids memorize the Bible Memory Verse.	Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers, Leaflets	Pencils

## Activate Faith (10 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Big Decisions, Bigger Dividends</b> Kids learn about people who made tough decisions that reaped big dividends.	Leaflets	None
<b>You're the Potential Disciple</b> Kids imagine they're in ancient Galilee, where they are called to follow Jesus.	Spark Bibles, Leaflets	Pencils
<b>If You Thought That Was Hard . . .</b> Kids consider the hardest thing about being a disciple.	Leaflets	Pencils

## Send (5 minutes)

	Spark Resources	Supplies
<b>Closing Conversation</b> Kids discuss what God calls them to do and what makes the call difficult or challenging.	Leaflets	None
<b>Closing Prayer</b> Kids pray about the challenges identified in Closing Conversation.	Family Pages 	None



Looking for additional Spark content to further engage kids? Visit [wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS](http://wearesparkhouse.org/kids/SHOSS) to learn more about these options for purchase.

- The Director's CD-Rom contains Activity Pages, Coloring Pages, Family Pages, Large Group Openings, and two additional in-class activities for each lesson.
- A Spark Online annual subscription gives you access to all content contained in the Director's CD-Rom and the Spark Leader Guides, plus administrative tools and other extras.

# Gather (10 minutes)

## Arrival Activity

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If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of the downloadable Activity Page and set them out for kids to try.

As kids gather in the room, pass out leaflets and pencils. Direct their attention to Tough Calls on the second page of the leaflet. **Today we'll discuss tough decisions we've had to make. Think back to something recent—maybe it's the toughest decision you've ever made—and take time to remember what made it so difficult. How did you approach it? How was it resolved? What did you learn about yourself?**

Give kids a couple of minutes to think.

### Spark Resources

Activity Pages



Leaflets

### Supplies

Pencils

## Opening Conversation

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**Who was able to try a Faith on the Go! activity this past week? Tell us what you did.** Allow some time for sharing.

**Who can tell me the Bible Memory Verse (BMV) from last week?** If kids remember the BMV, invite them to recite it for the group. Guide the kids to help them remember parts they don't.

Look together at the pictures on the front page and then read the Life Question and Lesson Focus. **We'll be talking about the disciples' story as found in the Gospel of Matthew. In this story, Jesus builds his team for spreading the good news and growing his ministry. But does he go to the temples, palaces or halls of learning? Not exactly!**

Ask kids to consider the images on the first page of the leaflet. Then, invite them to share their answers to Tough Calls in Arrival Activity. Encourage discussion and practice empathic listening.

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

### Supplies

None

## Opening Prayer

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Ask kids to gather in a circle. **In this prayer, you will be called—as in called upon. When I call your name and hand you the leader guide, recite the next line of the prayer. Everyone else will listen to you recite it.**

Dear God,  
I'm sometimes slow to follow,  
I'm sometimes unprepared.  
I don't like tough decisions,  
Sometimes I am scared,  
Sometimes I'm uncertain,  
And sometimes I fall down.  
Sometimes I'm too comfortable,  
I love my earthly crowns.  
Show how your disciples  
Multiplied your love.  
Teach me their example,  
Point to where you lead.  
When you stand and knock,  
I pray that I would know  
The courage to come answer  
And walk where you would go.  
Amen.

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

None

## Open the Bible (20 minutes)

### The Disciples Story

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Pass out Spark Bibles. Ask the kids if they know where the book of Matthew is. Then invite them to turn to Matthew 4:12-23; 9:9-13 and 10:1-4 on pages 1061, 1068, and 1069, the story of the disciples coming into Jesus' ministry. Go around the group, with each kid reading one verse. As kids finish reading, direct them to a preselected spot in the room; when the next reader is done, the preceding reader says, "FOLLOW ME!" and the second kid goes over to the spot, and so on. When the readings are done, invite kids to place I Read It stickers in their Bibles.

**Jesus uses an unusual method for picking his disciples, if you could even call it a method. What kinds of jobs do the people have whom he picks?** (*fishermen, tax collectors*) **Are any of them experts in religion, or are they important priests?** (*No!*) **We hear no accounts of the disciples arguing with friends or family over their decision in these passages. Why do you think that is?** Invite kids to share their responses.

### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles

Spark Bible Stickers

### Supplies

None

## Disciple Discernment

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Ask kids to read and complete Disciple Discernment on the second page of the leaflet.

Answer Key

1. PETER
2. JOHN
3. JUDAS
4. BARTHOLOMEW
5. THOMAS

**We don't know a whole lot about the lives of the disciples, except for some highlights, lowlights, and their names. What kinds of qualities do you think the 12 had in common? What do you think Jesus might've seen in them as individuals and as a group?** Invite kids to share their responses.

Ask a volunteer to read Did You Know? on the second page of the leaflet.

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

### Supplies

Pencils

## Give It Up?

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Have a whiteboard and a marker handy. **Maybe the life of a fisherman or a tax collector doesn't sound glamorous to you, but staying put and having steady work has its advantages. On this board, let's see if we can list the things you'd find hardest to give up, in order to live the life of a disciple. Remember: No video games. No hotel rooms. No air conditioning! What else can you think of that would make a disciple's life hard for you?** Write kids' comments on the board. Keep the conversation going by adding your own observations.

### Spark Resources

None

### Supplies

Whiteboard  
Marker  
Pencils

## Remember It

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Ask kids to look up Matthew 4:23 page 1061 in the Spark Bible. They can also look at the fourth page of the leaflet. **Verse 23 in Matthew 4 is today's Bible Memory Verse.** Teach these gestures to help the kids learn the BMV. Remind them that here, Jesus is beginning his ministry, with the first disciples at his side.

Jesus went throughout Galilee, (March)  
teaching in their synagogues (Point and write on a pretend chalkboard)  
and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom (Jump up and shout "YEAH!")  
and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. (Stretch arms out in front of you with palms spread, part arms to the side as if clearing away smoke.)

Once kids have memorized the verse, encourage them to put I Memorized It stickers in their Spark Bibles. They can also sketch a temple building in the margin.

### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Spark Bible Stickers  
Leaflets

### Supplies

Pencils

# Activate Faith (10 minutes)

## Big Decisions, Bigger Dividends

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Ask kids to read Big Decisions, Bigger Dividends on the third page of the leaflet.

**What other people do you know who have made huge sacrifices or changes to gain a new life, or help a cause?** Invite kids to share their responses. **In the cases of all the people we read about in the leaflet, they gave up a lot—safety, material comfort, sometimes even their own lives. But in return, they made large contributions and left behind legacies that will always be remembered. Would James and John be remembered if they had remained fishermen? (No!) What kinds of things do you want to be remembered for?** Allow time for sharing.

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

### Supplies

None

## You're the Potential Disciple

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Ask kids to read and complete You're the Potential Disciple on the third leaflet page. **So you're in the time of Jesus, and he calls you. Well, you could say what Matthew did—and that was what? (Nothing!) So, what would you say to Jesus? How do you think you would react?** Invite responses to this and the following questions. **What would be the most intimidating thing about being called by Jesus? The most exciting? What kind of life do you think you might lead?**

Ask a volunteer to read Look It Up! on the third page of the leaflet. Help them find Capernaum on page M13 in their Spark Bibles.

### Spark Resources

Spark Bibles  
Leaflets

### Supplies

Pencils

## If You Thought That Was Hard . . .

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Ask kids to read and complete If You Thought That Was Hard . . . on the fourth page of the leaflet.

**So Jesus picks you, you become a disciple, and everything's fine, right? No! We know that the disciples sometimes quarreled amongst themselves. They didn't always understand what Jesus was saying. What kinds of things did you list as challenges they would've faced in their new lives?** Invite responses to this and the following questions. **Do you think Jesus ever became frustrated with the disciples? Do you think the disciples ever had second thoughts about the sacrifices they had made?**

### Spark Resources

Leaflets

### Supplies

Pencils

# Send (5 minutes)

## Closing Conversation

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**What do you think God calls you to do? It may not involve anything as drastic as dropping your nets and following Jesus across the desert. Often God calls us to make small but meaningful changes, from being nice to a sibling to making an outcast at school feel included. What do you feel God tugging at you to do? Why do you think it's important?**

Ask for a volunteer to read Faith on the Go! on the last page of the leaflet. If time allows, have kids discuss what makes those things God calls them to do difficult or challenging.

Spark Resources  
Leaflets

Supplies  
None

## Closing Prayer

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**As we pray, make sure to lift up the areas of calling and challenge in your life. Lift up the people who are part of those situations.**

**Dear God,  
You turned fishermen and tax collectors,  
Ordinary people,  
Into your closest confidants,  
The bearers of your message.  
And in so doing, showed us the love  
And inclusion in your kingdom.  
They gave up everything  
To be with you and spread your good news.  
May we be so inspired  
And so brave  
In hearing the call  
You place on our lives:  
We know you will lead and never fail.  
May we follow and never falter.  
In Jesus name we pray.  
Amen.**

Be sure to send a leaflet and a Family Page home with each kid.

Spark Resources  
Family Pages



Supplies  
None