

Use Week of:

## Unit 20 • Session 4

# Jesus Called Disciples

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 4; 9; Mark 1–3; Luke 5–6

### STORY POINT:

Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.

### KEY PASSAGE:

John 3:30

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.



**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(15–20 MINUTES)  
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**TEACH THE STORY**  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
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## LEADER Bible Study

In the first century, *rabbi* 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, and they looked to the rabbis to instruct them in their behavior.

The word *rabbi* translates “my master.” 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 from the rabbi how to think and how to act. They trusted the rabbi, and the goal was to become just like him.

When Jesus chose His disciples, His strategy was unusual. Rather than waiting for students to come to Him, Jesus sought out His disciples among the people who followed Him. 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).

The Twelve—Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew; James and John; Philip; Bartholomew; Matthew; Thomas; James, son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus; Simon; and Judas—spent time with Jesus during His ministry. Jesus taught them 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).

# The BIBLE Story

## Jesus Called Disciples

*Matthew 4: 9; Mark 1–3; Luke 5–6*

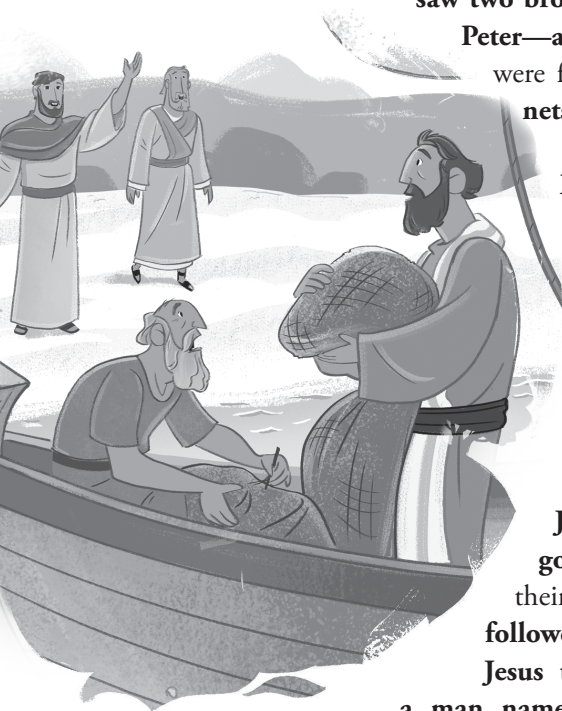
Jesus' ministry had begun. Jesus taught people about God and His Kingdom. People started talking about Jesus and the things He was saying. They wanted to know more, so big crowds of people followed Jesus to hear Him teach.

**One day, Jesus was walking along the sea. He saw two brothers: Simon—who was called Peter—and Andrew. Peter and Andrew were fishermen. They were throwing nets into the sea to catch fish.**

Jesus said to them, “Follow Me, and I will teach you to fish for people!” Peter and Andrew dropped their nets right away and followed Jesus.

Later, He saw two more brothers: James and John. James and John were in a boat with their father. The men were fixing their fishing nets. Jesus talked to them and they got up, too. James and John left their father and their boat, and they followed Jesus.

Jesus traveled further, and He saw a man named Matthew, also called Levi. Matthew was a tax collector, sitting at an office where people paid taxes. Some people didn't like tax collectors because they often took more money than they were supposed to and kept it for themselves. Jesus said to Matthew, “Follow Me!” So Matthew got up.



## He left everything behind, and he followed Jesus.

Matthew had a big party at his house for Jesus and His friends. Tax collectors and other sinners came. The religious leaders did not think Jesus should be friends with people who did wrong things. They asked Jesus' disciples, "Why does Jesus eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus heard the leaders and said, "People who are healthy do not need a doctor, but sick people do. I did not come to help good people; I came to help sinners turn back to God."

**Later, Jesus chose 12 of His friends to be His disciples. That meant Jesus was going to give them a special job to do. They would work with Jesus and tell others about Him.**

These are the men Jesus chose: Simon (who was called Peter), Simon's brother Andrew, James and John, 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 save people from their sins. This is very good news! Jesus told His disciples to tell people about Him, and we are Jesus' disciples when we trust in Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear about Jesus.*

## Bible Storytelling Tips

### • Look at the disciples' names:

List the disciples' names on a chart or dry erase board as they appear in the Bible story before the session. Cover each name with a strip of paper. Remove the strips of paper as you come to each disciple's name in the Bible story. Read the names at the end of the story and let the children echo read the names.

• **Count to 12:** Gather 12 people figures or other items. Pick up one figure at a time as each disciple is mentioned in the Bible story. Count to 12 as you pick up all the figures.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Called Disciples

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 4; 9; Mark 1–3; Luke 5–6

**STORY POINT:** Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 3:30

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.

## Welcome time

- “Take It to the Lord” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “Match the Fish” activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide children to draw lines connecting the matching fish. **SAY** • There are many kinds of fish in this picture! You did a good job of matching the fish. In our Bible story today, **Jesus chose disciples to follow Him**. Several of the disciples were fishermen. Jesus told them He would teach them to fish for people! Listen to the Bible story to find out what Jesus meant.

## LOW PREP

- paper
- markers

Tip: Be sensitive to preschoolers who may struggle with friendships. Be prepared to offer suggestions.

## Draw your friends

Give each child a paper and markers. Encourage each child to draw a picture of himself and his friends. Help preschoolers write their friends’ names to label the picture, if desired.

**SAY** • You drew your friends. It is good to have friends. Today in our Bible story we will hear about Jesus choosing twelve men to be His helpers or *disciples*.

Jesus called these men His friends. They traveled with Him as He taught about God and helped people.

## Pretend to fish

Use tape to make an outline of a boat on the floor or turn a table over to serve as a boat. Invite preschoolers to pretend to fish by playing out casting a fishing rod or net overboard. Ask children if they have been fishing before. Invite them to tell about their experiences.

· painter's tape

**SAY** • Pretending to fish is fun! You probably use a fishing rod when you go fishing. You cast the hook into the water. Then you wait for the fish to bite on the hook so you can reel it in. The people in our Bible story today had boats and large nets to catch fish. They would throw the net over one side of the boat and wait for many fish to swim into the net. Then they pulled the net closed and took the fish to shore to sell. We will learn more about several fishermen today in our Bible story.

## Transition to teach the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage the preschoolers to pretend to swim like a fish as they move to the Bible study area.

· countdown video  
(optional)

# TEACH the Story



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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.

## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Matthew 4 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Our story today is from Matthew. It is also in the Books of Mark and Luke. What do we call the four books at the beginning of the New Testament that tell about Jesus' life? (*The Gospels*) The Bible tells the true stories of God's Son, Jesus.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jesus Called Disciples" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Jesus' began teaching people about God and His Kingdom. In Bible times, disciples chose a teacher to follow, but **Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.** Jesus' disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus. We are Jesus' disciples when we trust in Him. Jesus gives us the special job of telling people about Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear about Jesus.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at John 3:30. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Play music and pass a Bible around the group. Stop the music and ask the child holding the Bible to say the key passage. Offer assistance as needed. Repeat several times.

**SAY** • Jesus is most important of all. Everyone in the world needs to hear about Jesus. That's why we say He must increase, but we must decrease. God made us to show how great Jesus is, not how great we are!

Sing the key passage song, "He Must Increase," and the theme song, "Take It to the Lord."

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "He Must Increase (John 3:30)" song
- "Take It to the Lord" song

Option: For a large group, use several Bibles and ask everyone holding a Bible to stand and say the key passage together.

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question asks, *Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.* Jesus became human, and then He chose ordinary humans to join Him in His work of rescuing the world from sin.

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • We have been learning about Missionary Aviation Fellowship, MAF, and how they are helping make sure everyone in the world hears about Jesus. We can be a part of what MAF is doing in three ways. [*Invite preschoolers to hold up a finger to number the ways they can help.*] 1. We can send supplies through MAF, like Bibles and school supplies. 2. We can adopt an airplane and give money to help keep it running. 3. We can pray! Let's do that now!

## Pray and transition to experience the story



# EXPERIENCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Called Disciples

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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.

## LOW PREP

### Play a “follow me” game

Seat children in a circle. Walk around the room and call different children’s names and say, “Follow me.” Continue walking and choose children to follow until everyone is in line. Move in circles and back and forth so the children have to pay attention. Choose children randomly so no one knows who will be picked next. Play again as time allows. For large groups, play this game in groups of 12.

**SAY** • Jesus had begun His ministry. **Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.** He said to each of those twelve men, “Follow Me.” Jesus told His disciples to tell people about Him. Jesus came to earth to show what God is like and save people from their sins. Everyone in the world needs to hear this good news!

### Stamp the disciples’ names

Write each disciple’s name on an index card. Provide a rubber stamp alphabet and paper. Encourage children to stamp as many of the disciples’ names as they can. If rubber stamps are not available, provide alphabet blocks or magnetic letters and encourage children to work together to spell as many names as they can. Be prepared to assist younger preschoolers by pointing to a letter in a disciple’s name and encouraging them to find the correct stamp.

- index cards
- markers
- rubber stamp alphabet
- washable stamp pads
- alphabet blocks or magnetic letters (optional)
- paper

**SAY • Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.** Jesus chose twelve men to be His special helpers and friends. You stamped their names. Jesus told His disciples to tell people about Him, and we are Jesus' friends when we trust in Him. Everyone in the world needs to hear the good news that Jesus came to earth to save people from their sins.

## Prepare a party

Provide paper plates, paper cups, napkins, plastic utensils, and streamers. Encourage children to prepare for a party. They may decorate and pretend to serve one another refreshments. While children play, retell the part of the Bible story where Matthew had a big party at his house for Jesus and his friends. Ask children whom they would invite if they had a party for their friends to learn about Jesus.

- paper plates
- paper cups
- napkins
- plastic utensils
- streamers
- tape

**SAY • Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.** One of the disciples Jesus chose was a tax collector named Matthew. Matthew had a big party at his house for Jesus and his friends. Some people didn't like tax collectors because they often took more money than they were supposed to and kept it for themselves. The religious leaders did not think Jesus should be friends with a tax collector, but Jesus said, "I did not come to help good people; I came to help sinners turn back to God." Jesus wants all people to turn from their sin and follow Him.

- "Disciple Fish" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- paper clips
- large plastic bin
- yarn or string
- magnet
- dowel

## Match the disciples' names

Print "Disciple Fish" and cut out the pairs of fish. Put a paper clip on the mouth end of one set of fish. Spread out those fish in a large plastic bin. Place the bin on the floor

beside a table. Spread the other set of fish on the table. Cut a 2-foot piece of yarn. Tie a dowel to one end and a magnet to the other to create a fishing pole. Invite preschoolers to take turns “catching” a fish and finding its match on the table. Read the names on the fish as the children catch them. Retell the Bible story as children fish.

**SAY • Jesus chose disciples to follow Him.** Four of the men Jesus chose were fishermen. When Jesus said, “Follow Me,” they left their boats and their nets, and they followed Him. Jesus said He would teach them to fish for people. Jesus was not talking about fishing for people in a river, lake, or ocean, Jesus was talking about telling people the good news about Him. Jesus came to earth to show what God is like and save people from their sins. Everyone in the world needs to hear about Jesus.



### Pray for MAF missionaries

Write *missionary kids, pilots, mechanics, technology specialists, and teachers* on one color of paper strips. Place the strips in a cup labeled *MAF Team Members*. Write *health, safety, money, people, and hearts* on another color of paper strips. Place those strips in a cup labeled *Prayer Needs*. Invite preschoolers to take turns drawing one strip from each cup. Lead preschoolers in saying sentence prayers to pray the prayer need drawn for the team member drawn.

**SAY •** Prayer is so important to everyone on the Missionary Aviation Fellowship team. When we pray for the MAF team, God meets their needs in amazing ways. God uses the MAF team to share the love of Jesus with people who are very hard to get to. Everyone in the world needs to hear about Jesus.

- construction paper, 2 colors
- scissors (adult use)
- cups, 2

Tip: Draw a picture to describe the word on each strip for early readers.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve fish-shaped crackers for snack. Comment that several of the men that Jesus chose as His disciples were fishermen. Remind preschoolers that **Jesus chose disciples to follow Him**. He told them to tell people about Him. People all over the world need to know about Jesus.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What were Simon Peter and Andrew doing when Jesus saw them? (*fishing*)
2. What did Jesus say to them? (*“Follow Me, and I will teach you to fish for people.”*)
3. Who were the other fishermen Jesus saw fixing their nets before Jesus called them? (*James and John*)
4. What was Matthew’s job? (*He was a tax collector.*)
5. What was the special job Jesus gave His disciples? (*work with Jesus and tell others about Him*)
6. ***Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to rescue sinners.***

## Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- fish-shaped crackers (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- “He Must Increase (John 3:30)” song
- “Take It to the Lord” song
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers*