



Disciples Follow Jesus

Mark 1:14-20



Third- and fourth-graders long to be part of a group. Being part of a group brings acceptance and positive friendships. Use this lesson to teach children about following Jesus. You'll use strategies that make them feel part of the group. Include kids in discussion, and help them each feel part of a group of people who are following Jesus. Through this lesson you'll not only help kids connect with a deep understanding of how to follow Jesus, but also encourage them to rely on others who are trying to do the same.



► **Bible Point**
Follow Jesus.


Key Verse
" 'Come, follow me,'
Jesus said, 'and I will
make you fishers of
men' " (Mark 1:17).

**Weaving Faith
Into Life**
Children will make
choices that show their
devotion to Jesus.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	It's in the Cards <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Choose whether to give something up or follow an instruction to reach a goal.	masking tape, 5 pennies per child Teacher Pack: "Do It" cards 	Use masking tape to create a 10'x10' game board of squares on the floor (as pictured in the lesson). Separate the "Do It" cards, shuffle them, and set them facedown in a stack.
2 Bible Exploration	Following—What Does It Really Mean? <i>(about 35 min.)</i> Experience different aspects of following Jesus at three different learning stations.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, markers or crayons, pens, paper Teacher Pack: CD, Bible Timeline 	Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Then set up three learning stations: • Station 1: Bibles, markers or crayons, and pens • Station 2: paper and markers • Station 3: CD player and CD

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.

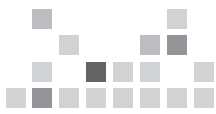




LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Reminder to Follow <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Review their stations, and create a craft reminder.	Bible Truth Sleuth, pens Teacher Pack: Shoestring Ornament craft package	Set out the red, yellow, and blue plastic beads and the safety pins from the Shoestring Ornament craft package.
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





Disciples Follow Jesus

Mark 1:14-20

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

John the Baptist Is Imprisoned and Killed

At the beginning of this passage, we read that John the Baptist was put in prison. Mark doesn't tell us why, but we know from Luke 3:19-20 that Herod put John in prison for rebuking the ruler for various reasons. We also know from Matthew 14:6-11 that Herod eventually—likely in the midst of a drunken party—had John the Baptist beheaded.

Jesus Begins His Ministry

After John was imprisoned, Jesus began his ministry with focus and intention. Mark relates Jesus' message in a nutshell: "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news." For Jews, this would indeed have been good news. What they heard was that David's earthly kingdom would be restored! They'd be freed from Roman bondage! Though their interpretation was incorrect, Jesus' message certainly caught their attention.

Jesus Calls Disciples to Follow Him

At this point, Jesus began gathering around him the band of disciples who would be with him throughout his ministry. The first four were Simon, Andrew, James, and John. We tend to think of these men as simple, ordinary fishermen, and to some degree that perception is correct. They were in a rather lowly occupation and likely had no formal education.

However, John 1:35-42 indicates that two of the men, at least, had been disciples of John the Baptist and thus, to some degree, followers of Jesus already. It's possible that Andrew and James also had been disciples of John the Baptist. All four were spiritual men who were seeking to follow God as closely as

they knew how, so when Jesus asked them to follow him, they did so without hesitation.

Fishermen Respond to Jesus' Call

We needn't necessarily think that these men abandoned their nets and boats along the seashore. James and John left their fishing business in the care of their father and hired hands. Peter and Andrew's situation was probably much the same.

The decision to follow Jesus didn't mean that these disciples recklessly dropped their responsibilities, but it did mean that they were totally committed to Jesus. They had to make following Jesus the most important aspect of their lives.

The Jesus Connection

To follow Jesus, we don't just follow his example or his teachings, though that certainly is important. Nor do we tag along behind him unnoticed. When we follow him, we actually walk alongside him in community and in friendship. Are you aware of Christ's presence in your life? Are you intentional in following his guidance? What can you do to grow closer to Jesus and stay there? Your first step can be to ask for Jesus' help in that. You can write your prayer here.





It's in the Cards Supplies

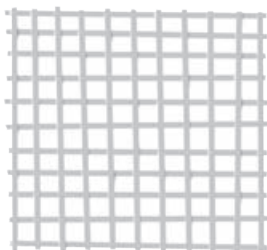
masking tape
5 pennies per child

Teacher Pack

"Do It" cards

It's in the Cards Easy Prep

Use masking tape to create a 10'x10' game board of squares on the floor (as pictured in the lesson). Separate the "Do It" cards, shuffle them, and set them facedown in a stack.



1

GETTING STARTED

It's in the Cards

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **We're going to play a game where you're the game pieces!** Give each child five pennies, and then have kids choose a spot on an outside row of the giant game board you created ahead of time.

Say: **The object of the game is for you to move from the row you're standing in right now to the row on the opposite side of the board. Here's how you'll move. I'll start by choosing one of you to go first, and then I'll have you draw a "Do It" card. Each card has a different instruction. When you draw a card, read the instruction and decide whether you want to follow the instruction and be allowed to move two spaces toward your goal, or whether you want to give me a penny and be allowed to move one space toward your goal. The choice is yours. It's okay if you're standing in the same space as someone else. Any questions?** Repeat or clarify the directions as needed.

Invite a willing child to go first, and have him or her draw a "Do It" card. Continue having kids draw cards and move across the board until one person reaches the other side. Then have kids sit in a circle inside the game board.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids form pairs to discuss the following questions.

Ask:

- **What made you decide if you'd rather give up a penny or follow the instruction?**
- **What did you like about having a choice to follow or not follow what the card said to do?**
- **In this game, one of your choices was to give something up in order to reach your goal. Tell about times in your own life when you had to give things up in order to reach a goal.**
- **Your other choice in this game was to obey an instruction in order to reach your goal. Tell about times in your own life when you obeyed instructions in order to reach a goal.**

Say: **In this game, you had to make a choice. Today we're going to be looking at following Jesus. When we ► FOLLOW JESUS, we have choices to make. Let's see what Jesus said about choosing to follow him.**





2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION

Following—What Does It Really Mean?

What You'll Do

Have kids form three groups, and have kids open their Bibles to Mark 1:14-20. Say: **We're going to learn about four men who made a choice to follow Jesus. These four men were named Simon, Andrew, James, and John.** Show kids the Bible Timeline, and point to the "Disciples Follow Jesus" picture. **As I read, concentrate on one of these four disciples. Choose in your group who you'll focus on.** Pause. Read Mark 1:14-20 aloud as kids follow along.

Now you're going to do some activities in your group at three stations I've set up. As you do your activities, keep the disciple you chose in mind. Try to complete the activities like you imagine he would.

Give the instructions for each station, and have each group start at a different station. Give groups no more than 10 minutes at a station before you indicate time to move to a different station. Monitor the stations in case kids need a refresher on what to do.

Station 1: What I Did to Follow Jesus

Distribute today's Bible Truth Sleuth pages, and have kids turn to the "What I Did to Follow Jesus" section.

Say: **Use the space on your Bible Truth Sleuth pages to write about what the disciple you chose did to follow Jesus when Jesus called. Be sure to work together in your group to be detailed and accurate. You can look in a Bible for help if you need to. If you'd rather draw a picture than write, use the markers or the crayons.** Allow kids time to work, and then cue them to move to their next station.

Station 2: Making a Sacrifice

Say: **At this station, you'll read aloud together our Key Verse, Mark 1:17. Then you'll think about what the disciple you chose might have had to give up or leave behind in order to follow Jesus. Consider their jobs and what life was like in those days. Together with your group, brainstorm things people today might be asked to give up so that they can follow Jesus. Then create a poster showing those things using paper and markers. Be sure to include the Key Verse on your poster as well.**

Station 3: The Joy of Following

Say: **At this station, you'll listen to a story on the CD. This story is about a boy who chose to give up something important to him in order to follow Jesus and to do what he believed Jesus wanted him to do. As you listen, think about what he got in return. Then talk with the others in your group about how this boy's story compares with what happened with Jesus' disciples. You might also share similar experiences you've had.**



Following—What Does It Really Mean? Supplies

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- Bibles
- Bible Truth Sleuth
- CD player
- markers or crayons
- pens
- paper
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Following Jesus" (track 13)
- Bible Timeline

Following—What Does It Really Mean? Easy Prep

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- Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Then set up three learning stations:
- Station 1: Bibles, markers or crayons, and pens
- Station 2: paper and markers
- Station 3: CD player and CD





Play “Following Jesus” (track 13 on the CD). After the track ends, allow kids time to discuss what they just heard.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead pairs in this discussion.

Ask:

- What have you learned about what it takes to follow Jesus?
- Even when it might mean giving something up—such as the boy who gave up his new sleeping bag—what makes it worth it to follow Jesus?

Say: **Jesus loves us and wants us to follow him, but he doesn’t force us to do it. We’re given a choice, just as the disciples had a choice. The disciples knew that following Jesus wasn’t always easy, but the good things they got to witness and do for others with Jesus made their choice a reason to be happy. We can ► FOLLOW JESUS and discover the joy in it, too.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Reminder to Follow

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Have kids sit in a circle.

Say: **You’ll each use a safety pin and some beads to create a shoestring ornament. Each bead color represents something different: the red beads represent giving something up to follow Jesus, the yellow beads represent the joy we can find by following Jesus, and the blue beads represent being fishers of men. Make sure you get at least one bead of each color on your safety pin. When you’ve finished, attach the safety pin to one of your shoes. Every time you see it on your shoe it will remind you to follow Jesus in all you do.**

After kids have finished making their shoestring ornaments, help them as needed to attach them to their shoes. Have kids find the “A Reminder to Follow” activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and write down what each color bead represents. Have them consider the meaning on a personal level, writing something they can give up to follow Jesus for the red bead, a way they’ve found joy by following Jesus for the yellow bead, and the name of someone they can tell about Jesus for the blue bead.

Reminder to Follow Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth
pens

Teacher Pack

Shoestring Ornament
craft package

Reminder to Follow Easy Prep

Set out the red, yellow,
and blue plastic beads
and the safety pins
from the Shoestring
Ornament craft
package.



Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What about following Jesus excites you?
- What about following Jesus seems difficult or even scary?
- What will it mean for you to follow Jesus this week?

Say: **As the disciples discovered, following Jesus might mean leaving some things behind. But they asked Jesus for help when they struggled and we can, too. No matter where we are or what we're doing we can always ask for help to**
► FOLLOW JESUS in our decisions, actions, and what we say. Let's look at ways we can do that this week.

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think this week about how we can ► FOLLOW JESUS.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Ask Jesus to help you show others how wonderful it is to know and follow him.**
- **Use your shoelace pin as a reminder to follow Jesus this week.**
- **Give up something, such as your place in line, to show that you follow Jesus.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **The disciples left their fishing nets so they could follow Jesus. Let's remember to ► FOLLOW JESUS** as we do our Daily Challenges this week.



Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth





Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about following Jesus. Kids can also do the activities in the “HomeConnect” section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids.

Say: **Find a partner, and pray for each other that God will help you ► FOLLOW JESUS this week.**

Pray: **Dear God, please help us ► FOLLOW JESUS in all we do, say, and think this week. In Jesus’ name, amen.**

