

Many Follow Jesus

DISCIPLES

Pass out leaflets, crayons, and construction paper squares.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Jesus invites everyone to follow him. You are invited to follow Jesus and be his disciple too!**
2. Invite kids to draw a picture of themselves in each of the two blank boxes.
3. **Let's play a memory matching game.**
4. Have kids play with a partner. Use one leaflet at a time to play Memory.
5. Kids cover the pictures on their leaflets with the paper squares. Take turns uncovering two at a time to make a match.
6. **After you've found all the matches, play again with your partner's leaflet.**
7. **What kind of people did you see in the different squares? Who does Jesus call to follow him?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

When Jesus was alive on the earth, many people followed him because they wanted to be like him. Today, people are still following Jesus. We're being Jesus' disciples when we are kind and loving like he teaches us to be. Jesus' disciples invited even more people to follow him with them. Who do you want to invite to follow Jesus with you? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Pass out leaflet panels, crayons, and straws.

Invite kids to write the name of someone they want to invite to follow Jesus with them on the fish on their leaflet. Help kids staple a straw "fishing pole" to the corner where the fishing line ends.

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.

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

Young kids look up to older family members, neighbor kids, and even fictional characters they want to imitate. This lesson teaches that anyone can be a disciple of Jesus. Even young kids can respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons
- Stapler
- Construction paper (precut in 2½-in. squares, 8 per kid)

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Painter's tape
- Paper bags (1 per kid)
- Straws (1 per kid)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have kids stand in a circle arm's width apart. Choose a leader. Invite other kids to copy the leader's movements, such as smiling, waving, hopping, or turning in a circle. Have kids take turns being the leader. As other kids arrive, make room for them to join the circle and follow the leader.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

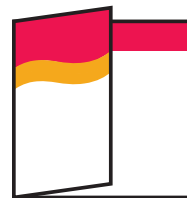
Invite kids to close their eyes and wait to open them until they hear their name. Call each kid's name one by one until everyone's eyes are open. **A long time ago, Jesus called people by name to follow him. Those people were Jesus' disciples. The word *disciple* means "follower." Jesus taught his disciples how to be like him, love others, and even heal people. Today Jesus calls each of us. We help each other follow Jesus at church and at home.**

Pray together: **Dear Jesus, thank you for calling us to follow you. Teach us how to be your disciples. Help us be more like you every day. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Anyone can follow Jesus. It doesn't matter how old you are or where you live. Jesus wants everyone to be his disciple. Your leaflet says, "Jesus calls ME!"

Just as Jesus called the first disciples, he calls each of us today. When Jesus calls us, he wants us to learn about him. As we learn about Jesus, we do things like Jesus did. Invite kids to write their names on the leaflets. Collect their leaflets until Respond.



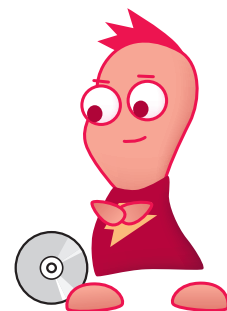
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

In the video today, Ada has a funny idea about what it means to follow Jesus. As you watch, decide if you think she's got it right.

View Episode 8, "Disciple Requirements," on the Year Gold Winter PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- Why is Ada in a boat?
- What is in the boat?
- How do Otto and Monty help Ada?
- Who does Jesus call to be disciples?
- What does it mean to follow Jesus?



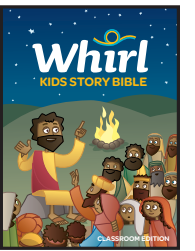
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story for today! Help kids find "Jesus Calls Disciples" on page 186. Before you read, invite kids to look for all the different people Jesus called to be disciples.

Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

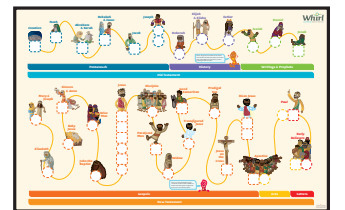
Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How many fish had Peter, Andrew, James, and John caught after a whole night of fishing?
- Have you ever felt discouraged when something didn't go right? What happened?
- What happened when Jesus told the fishermen to lower their nets again?
- I wonder why Jesus called the fishermen to follow him.
- Why did so many people want to become disciples of Jesus?



Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New) and character image (group of disciples). Today's Bible story is about Jesus inviting the first disciples to follow him. They had been fishing all night and hadn't caught any fish. Let's add a sticker to remind us of how Jesus told them to drop their nets again, and they came up full of fish (net full of fish). Point to the corresponding images of the group of disciples and the net full of fish on page 187 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Use painter's tape to create lines on the floor. These are lines the kids will follow as if they're following Jesus. Make curves and zigzags to keep it interesting. Give each kid a paper bag to be a fishing net. **The disciples lowered their nets and followed Jesus. Let's walk along the line and imagine we're following Jesus. First, we have to drop our nets!** Invite kids to drop their bag and balance along the tape line. **When Jesus invited people to follow him, he called them by name.** The next time through, have kids call each other's names as they get to the end of the line. **See if you can walk the line backwards, on tiptoe—or jump!**

BIBLE BIT

In Jesus' day, a disciple (follower) went with their teacher wherever they went. They were with them all the time to learn as much as possible.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, invite the kids to think of how they would help Ada understand that anyone can follow Jesus.

OUR CHURCH

How does your church welcome new followers of Jesus? Have the kids draw pictures to give to new church members or newly baptized followers of Jesus.