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**TEACHER GUIDE**

Imagine being at your job and having a man you’d never met approach you, and tell you to quit your job and follow him. Would you do it? Would you leave your family for an unknown amount of time if someone bid you to “come”? That was the decision placed before Jesus’ disciples—twelve men from different backgrounds and vocations. Amazingly, all of them dropped what they were doing to follow Jesus.

What they witnessed during their three years with him was extraordinary. Jesus was a rabbi who not only had the ability to teach Scripture with authority, but also to heal the sick, forgive sins, and even raise people from the dead. Jesus challenged their assumptions of who the Messiah would be. Instead of power-hungry, he was humble. Instead of demanding respect, he was the ultimate servant. Instead of flaunting his deity, he was completely obedient to his Father.

Using parables and memorable sayings, Jesus taught his disciples and others about the Kingdom of God. This Kingdom would right everything that was wrong with the world: sickness, disease, pain, sadness, and even death. Jesus had been given authority to right all wrongs, beginning with the biggest one—our sin. He would ultimately give his life as a ransom for many, freeing people from the bondage of sin.

**FOR THE TEACHER:**

Read the account of Jesus calling his disciples in Matthew 4:18-22.

***What stands out to you about this story?*** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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***What is something new you learned from reading it this time?***

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***What is one important truth you think your students need to hear?***

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Remember that you are one of Jesus’ disciples too. Think of a time when you had to give something up to follow Christ. Consider sharing this story during “Going Deep.”

**LESSON SCHEDULE & SUPPLY LIST**

*Note: Italicized supplies are included in the curriculum. You can find the video on the DVD or DVD-Rom (for .mov version) and the printables on the Print Materials Disc in the Week 2 folder.*

**SETTING THE STAGE** (10 minutes)

You’ll need:

• Streamers

• Tape

• Chairs

• Traffic cones (optional)

**INTRODUCTION & VIDEO** (8 minutes)

You’ll need:

• *Week 2 Video*

**GOING DEEP** (10 minutes)

Jesus Calls His Disciples—Matthew 4:18-22.

You’ll need:

* Bible

**CLOSER LOOK** (10-20 minutes)

**Activity 1:** PARABLES IN PICTURES

You’ll need:

• 5 pieces of poster board

• Slips of paper

• Marker

• Bible(s)

**Activity 2:** WHO MAKES THE RULES?

You’ll need:

• A favorite board game or games, like checkers.

**THE GOOD WORD** (10 minutes)

“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’”— Matthew 16:24

*Note: Write this on a poster board or white board before class starts.*

**BIBLE TO-GO** (5-10 minutes)

You’ll need:

• *Follow Jesus Bookmark Template* (one for each child printed on cardstock)

• Markers

• Crayons

• *Popsicle Stick Miracles Sheet* (optional)

• *Week 2 Take Home Activities* (one per child or family)

**SETTING THE STAGE** (10 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Streamers, Chairs, Traffic cones (optional)

Before class, select an open area where your kids can play the following game. Hang streamers from the ceiling, or position chairs or traffic cones several feet apart, to create an obstacle course.

Divide children into two groups. Assign a leader to each group, with everyone else standing in a line behind them, hands on shoulders. Children who are not the leader should close their eyes.

The leaders must help their teams navigate the path without anyone touching an obstacle. The leader must make sure each person turns at the correct time and in the right direction. Have teams compete to see who can make it to the other side first. Or time each group and celebrate the fastest time. Play the game several times, switching so more children can practice leading and following.

[Alternative game: traditional “Follow the Leader” or “Simon Says.”]

**INTRODUCTION & VIDEO** (8 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Week 2 Video

Introduce the video, saying something like:

**I hope everyone enjoyed our game of follow the leader. Did you trust your leader? Today we’re going to be talking about the greatest leader who ever lived. We’ll hear about his followers and some of the special things he did. Let’s watch as some friends tell us the story!**

**PLAY** Week 2 Video.

Follow video by saying something like this:

**Jesus was the most amazing man who ever lived. That’s because he was God in human form. People loved to be around him. He saw them and healed them and taught them about God’s Kingdom where God would make everything right again and bless the entire world through Jesus.**

**OPTIONAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

• What is a disciple? *(A follower of Jesus.)*

• Why was Jesus able to explain the Old Testament Scriptures? *(Because he is God.)*

• Why did the Pharisees hang around Jesus? *(They wanted to know if Jesus was following the rules.)*

• Why do you think Jesus used Parables, or stories, to teach the people about the Kingdom of God? *(Answers will vary.)*

• Who did the people think that Jesus was? Who did his disciples think he was? *(People thought Jesus was a rabbi, or a teacher. Some people weren’t sure who he was! Jesus’ disciples figured out that he was the Messiah.)*

**GOING DEEP** (10 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Bible

Tell the story of Jesus calling his disciples from Matthew 4:18-22, using this script.

**SAY: When the time came for Jesus to begin his ministry, he decided to gather some people together to help him. One day, as he was walking along the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers fishing. Their names were Simon Peter and Andrew.**

**As they were casting their nets into the water to catch fish, Jesus called, *“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.”*** **What would you think if you were fishing and a stranger told you something like that?** (Allow children to answer.)

**The Bible tells us what the brothers did.** (Read Matthew 4:20 from your Bible.) **This was a big deal! Imagine if your job was working at a store. Each day you would go to work and help people find what they needed in the store. Then, one day, a customer comes up to you and says, “Leave this job and follow me.” Would you quit your job immediately and follow that person? Probably not. But Peter and Andrew could tell there was something very special about Jesus. They dropped everything to follow him.**

**After Jesus called Peter and Andrew, he saw two other brothers fishing on a boat with their father. Their names were James and John. When Jesus called them to follow him, do you think they came? Not only were they busy doing their jobs, they were also helping their dad. What do you think happened?**

**Let’s read to find out!** (Read Matthew 4:21-22.) **Wow! These two sets of brothers were willing to leave everything behind to follow Jesus.**

**Jesus called eight more disciples after Peter, Andrew, James and John. Their names were: Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James, Simon, Thaddaeus, and Judas. These were all different kinds of men. Some were fishermen, one was a tax collector, one was a political rebel (a Zealot). But they all came when Jesus called them. They stayed with him for three years and helped him accomplish the things he came to earth to do.**

**More than that, these men were some of the first to spread the good news about Jesus, after he returned to heaven. They even helped to start the church. And almost all of these men gave their lives for their faith in Jesus. Whatever they saw in this man caused them to stay loyal to him their entire lives. When Jesus asked his disciples who they thought that he was, Peter answered: *“You are the Messiah.”***

**Even though being Jesus’ disciple wasn’t always easy, his closest friends knew that they could trust him. They didn’t always understand what he was teaching, and sometimes they were afraid of what was happening, but they followed Jesus anyway. After he returned to heaven, they believed in him so deeply that they were willing to suffer persecution and even give their lives for him. They knew that he was the Savior who had come to establish the Kingdom of God!**

**CLOSER LOOK** (10-20 MINUTES)

**Activity 1: PARABLES IN PICTURES**

***You’ll need:*** 5 pieces of poster board, Slips of paper, Marker, Bible(s)

**SAY: *Jesus used stories called parables to teach people what the Kingdom of God was like. This is your chance to be dramatic as we take a closer look at some of Jesus’ parables.***

Write the name of one parable on each piece of poster board and slip of paper:

• The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32)

• The Sower and the Seeds (Matthew 13:1-23)

• The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

• The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

• The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7)

On the back side of the slips of paper, write a one or two sentence description of the parable. For example, “In the prodigal son, the son takes his inheritance and spends it all on wild living. The father welcomes his son home when he returns.”

Divide your group into five teams and assign each one a parable to create. They may read the parable first from a Bible. They may create a still “picture” of it by freezing a pose of the scene, or they may act it out silently. [You may want to take a digital picture of each scene and hang prints in the classroom for the next week.] Have each group present its parable while the rest of the group guesses which story it is, using the poster board signs for reference. When someone makes a correct guess, hold up the poster board with the name of the parable.

[Alternate activity: You may choose to simply play charades using some key words from parables, such as mustard, sheep, coin, seed, father and son.]

**Activity 2: WHO MAKES THE RULES?**

***You’ll need:*** A favorite game or games, like checkers.

Say something like:

**Do you enjoy playing games? I do. What are some of your favorite games?** (Allow children to answer.) **It’s really fun to get together with family members or friends and play games.** (Talk about the game you brought and briefly explain some of the rules.) **This game isn’t very hard to play, but you have to follow the rules or it’s not fun.**

**Today we learned about some people who cared a lot about rules. Do you remember who they were?** (The Pharisees.) **They followed the rules from the Old Testament that had come to them through Moses. Do you know what those rules are called?** (The 10 Commandments.) **Can anyone name some of the 10 Commandments?** (Write answers up on the board.) **The Pharisees were very concerned to see Jesus breaking some of the rules, such as, “no healing on the Sabbath.”**

**But who makes the rules? Thinking back to my game, who made up those rules? The person who creates the game makes the rules, right? God created the rules for following him and living a holy life, and he inspired men, such as Moses, to write them down in the Bible. And since Jesus was God in human form, he wrote the rules too. Because Jesus wrote the rules, he could break them and make new ones—because he knew the reason behind them all. The Pharisees didn’t like that Jesus was acting like he was God. But that’s exactly who he was and is!**

**Can you think of a few new rules that might make my game more fun?** (Allow children to answer. Examples: Someone must sing a song each time they arrive on a certain space, players can be on teams, the player whose turn it is must talk in a silly voice, etc.)

[Variations: If you have extra time, bring enough games for children to split up and play in groups. Or use a group game, such as “Simon Says,” “Tag” or “Hangman” and make up new rules.]

**THE GOOD WORD** (10 MINUTES)

Before class, write the memory verse on a white board, print it on a piece of paper or create a PowerPoint slide. Introduce the good word, saying something like this:

**Jesus called twelve disciples during his earthly ministry. We are also his disciples if we have trusted Jesus as our Savior. Today we’re going to learn a verse that talks about what it takes to be a disciple of Jesus.**

Read Matthew 16:24.

**“Then Jesus told his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.’”**

Explain unfamiliar words and concepts:

**DENY HIMSELF —** this means I choose God’s way instead of my own.

**TAKE UP HIS CROSS —** this means I accept God’s plan for me and don’t let hard stuff keep me from following Jesus.

**FOLLOW ME —** Jesus invites us to follow his example as we get to know him better and live for him.

Have students repeat the verse with you one or two times. Next play “Follow the Leader.” Ask a volunteer to say the reference, “Matthew 16:24” in a silly voice, such as high-pitched or while holding his nose. All the other children must say the verse using the same silly voice.

Allow several of the children to lead and repeat the verse five to seven times.

**BIBLE TO-GO** (5-10 MINUTES)

***You’ll need:*** Follow Jesus Bookmark Template (one per child), Markers, Crayons, Popsicle Stick Miracles Sheet (optional), Week 2 Take Home Activities (one per child or family)

**SAY:** ***As we learned earlier from the video, many people followed Jesus around. Some were fans, like the large crowds of people and others were opponents, like the Pharisees. But his closest friends were his disciples. Jesus invites us to be his disciples too! When we believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to pay the punishment for our sins, we can be his disciples—or followers. During the next few weeks, we’ll learn more about what Jesus did for us and even more about why he’s worth following.***

Hand out printed bookmark templates. Have students color bookmarks they can put in their Bibles.

As children are coloring, help them write their answer in the blank. Answers could be: “Because he loves me,” “Because he died for me,” “Because he does miracles.” When children are finished coloring, pray and ask God to help them to follow him.

**OPTIONAL EXTRA:** Popsicle Stick Theater Miracles

*Note: Use the optional extra activity if you need to fill more time, or for kids to do while waiting for their parents to pick them up.*

**TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES**

Each week, use the provided Take Home Activities to encourage kids to keep learning at home with their parents. These thoughtful activities will guide the families in your church through a richer Lent and Easter experience.

**WEEK 2 TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES:**

**For Parents:**This week, your child learned about Jesus’ ministry on earth and the 12 men he called to be his closest friends. During his three years of ministry, Jesus was the ultimate servant. He served the poor, sick and children. He taught them about the Kingdom of God and healed them from diseases. But he had even more to offer them. He would give his life as a ransom for many, freeing people from the bondage of their sin.

The time leading up to Easter is an opportunity to spend some time doing a few of these activities with your family. Don’t forget the discussion questions that go along with each one. Have fun!

**Activity 1: WHAT A MIRACLE!**

***You’ll need:*** a Bible

While he was on earth, Jesus performed many miracles. A miracle is an extraordinary event that cannot be explained by natural laws and is caused by God. Jesus didn’t just do these miracles to show that he was a nice guy. He healed the sick, and even brought people back from the dead, to show that as God, he had authority over all brokenness in the world.

Read these accounts of three of Jesus’ miracles. Then discuss as a family how each one shows Jesus’ authority.

• Jesus calms the storm (Mark 4:35-41)

• Jesus feeds the 5,000 (Matthew 14:13-21)

• Jesus raises Jairus’ daughter (Mark 5:21-41)

***Do you think Jesus still does miracles today? Why or why not?***

**Activity 2: MUSTARD TREE**
***You’ll need:*** Poster Board, Leaf Template (included), Green construction paper, Markers, Double-sided tape

In one of his parables, Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard seed—it will start small, and one day it will be in full bloom! God is continually renewing and restoring his Kingdom on earth, and he calls us to join him! We can build God’s Kingdom by loving our neighbor, being thankful for what God has given us and trusting his plan during hard times.

Create your own mustard tree. Draw the trunk and branches of a tree on a piece of poster board. Cut out leaf shapes from green construction paper using the leaf template. Keep the blank leaves, and double-sided tape, in a small basket or bowl near your mustard tree, so leaves may be easily posted.

Add leaves to your tree anytime! You’ll be amazed at how often leaves are added as your family becomes more aware of what everyone is learning about God and how he is active in every aspect of your lives. Your family will have a beautiful visual representation of the ways God is working in your lives and how you are participating in his Kingdom.

Here are some ideas of what to write on your leaves:

• Write prayer requests.
• Write service ideas you can do as a family (loving your neighbor): doing yard work for an elderly person, taking a meal to someone who is sick, volunteering to help at an event at your church.
• Write things you are thankful for.
 ***What are some ways your family can participate in the Kingdom of God on earth?***

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