

JESUS' FRIENDS FOLLOW HIM

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

MIRACLE FRIEND FISH COMMAND FRIENDSHIP FISHERS OF MEN FOLLOW

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 5:1-11

MEMORY VERSE

"You are my friends if you do what I command" (John 15:14, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children understand what it means to follow Jesus.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

This passage speaks of two pairs of brothers who were fishermen. They fished in the Sea of Galilee.

One day while Jesus taught people by the sea and so many were pushing toward him near the water, Jesus asked Simon if he could use his boat to teach from.

Jesus was no stranger to the fishermen or a stranger to asking to use the boat; he was a friend to them.

When he finished preaching, he told Simon to do something that seemed crazy. They had tried all night to catch some fish without success. When the Lord asked him to use his boat, Simon had already washed his nets after finishing a hard night's work.

At the end of preaching, Jesus asked the fisherman to go offshore to deep water and throw out their nets. Simon explained that they had been trying all night to no success. But he was obedient, and did what he was told.

What happened next humbled the expert fishermen in front of a carpenter. The nets were filled with so many fish that they began to break. James and John came to help; it so filled both their boats with fish that they were in danger of sinking by being overweight.

Simon Peter recognized the power of God in the miracle of the miraculous catch and fell to his knees in the presence of the Lord.

After witnessing this miracle, the two pairs of brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, and James and John, did not need any encouragement to stop fishing for fish and follow Jesus.

ADAPTATION

People follow their leader. Leaders whom the children choose have a lot of influence on their spiritual development. Encourage them to see Jesus as a leader who they can follow without fear, and to trust that he will not have them make bad decisions.

Remember that you as a teacher, are the leader of the children; therefore give them an example of what it is to love and obey God. Do not forget that children think literally. If you tell them to follow Jesus, they can understand literally and wonder how it can be possible to do that.

Explain to the children that following Jesus means to voluntarily choose to obey his teachings.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

This lesson is an excellent opportunity to teach children what it means to “follow Jesus.” Say: “In today’s story the miraculous catch contains some concepts that we may not know. One is that in those days, the fishing methods were different from today. Currently the nets are often plastic. Although it is a thin material, it is resistant and transparent.

Ask: “Can anyone tell us what net were made of in Jesus’ day?” (In biblical times, the nets were made with a thick cord.) Then say: “They normally fished at night. Another element is the fact that the fish came close to the shore to find food; so Jesus’ command to go to the deep water and throw nets at that time of day with the sun shining seemed illogical. However, Simon obeyed saying, ‘I will do as you command’. In another Bible version it says: ‘In your name.’”

Use these aspects as a framework for your story.

TEACH THE LESSON

Tell the story creatively. If you can, bring some local fishing items, e.g. a net, hooks, twine, an oar, a miniature boat, a life preserver or fishing photos.

Emphasize the following points of the lesson based on Luke 5:1-11.

Jesus was not an unknown person to the fishermen. Perhaps he was a friend, because Simon obeyed without saying anything. (We know that this fisherman was strong-willed, and if he did not know Jesus, he would not have obeyed.)

Jesus’ instructions were not logical, however, Simon obeyed.

Seeing the miracle, these men were willing to leave everything (including the fish they had caught) to follow Jesus.

Include active songs that relate to the lesson. Remember to use your time well (including texts, songs, crafts, activities, etc.). Try to keep the same schedule throughout the unit. If you can, plan it in advance. This will help you be more effective.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Who is following Jesus?

Give the children Student Activity Sheet #133-A, crayons, markers and pencils. Ask, “What do you think Jesus meant when he told the fishermen to follow him?” (Give them time to answer.) Highlight the fact that following someone can have different meanings. One way to follow someone is to do the same things that the person you are following does, to want to imitate everything they do.

Have the group look at the student activity sheet and have the students identify those who are truly following Jesus.

Play the game “Follow the Leader” with the children with you as the leader. Line the children up behind you and march around the room. The children must follow you. As you march, make movements with your hands. The children must imitate what you do (like clapping, raising your hands, putting your arms at you sides, shaking your arms and hands, crouching down, jumping up, etc.).

Then invite a child to be the leader and you go behind them. After some time, deliberately stop following the leader's actions and do something different from what the leader does. Some children will do what you do instead of imitating the leader. When this happens, ask them how it makes them feel and discuss what happened. Say, "When I was the leader, all (or most) of you followed me and did the same things I did. But when ____ (say the child's name) was the leader and I was behind ____ but did not follow ____'s movements, I was not obedient."

Say, "When Jesus lived on this earth, his friends could follow him in two ways. What was one of them?" (They could follow him from one place to another.) "But his early followers also followed him in another way. How did they follow Jesus?" (They obeyed his teachings, followed his example.) "Did all people on the worksheet follow Jesus in this way?" Have the children take turns reading the written statements of each of the followers, and let them decide who followed Jesus' teachings.

Then ask them to color the clothes of the people that followed Jesus' teachings. (They should color those who say, "I believe in him; I am going to do what he says; Listen to him, he's telling the truth; and I like what he says.")

Ask, "Can we follow Jesus from one place to another as Peter, Andrew, James and John did?" (No, because he is no longer in physical form like he was with them.) "So how can we follow him?" (By believing in him, knowing his Word, following his example, and obeying his commands.) Repeat John 15:14 with the children.

What will they do?

Say, "Peter, Andrew, James, and John left their work as fishermen to follow Jesus from one place to another; they learned to follow his example and obey his teachings. Children today must decide what Jesus would like them to do in every difficult situation. For example, let's look at the situation that appears on today's worksheet." Follow the instructions on Student Activity Sheet #133-B.

Define what is happening in the top picture (a girl dropped her tray and food splattered on some of the children, some children are upset, others are laughing). Ask children to write what they think the children are thinking. (Opinions can be varied. Ask why they think that.) Say, "Do you think that this is what Jesus wants us to do? Why or why not?" In the bottom picture, have the children write what a follower of Jesus would do (help the girl collect her belongings and clean up, speak kindly, and encourage others to be nice to her.).

Mention that it is not always easy to follow Jesus; sometimes we are not sure what we should do. Sometimes we do not want to be different from our friends for fear that they will be angry with us.

Some children may not want to admit that they have failed to be followers of Jesus. Discuss some experience in which you failed and did not act as a follower of Jesus. This will help children to know that, in the classroom, we can be honest.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Draw the shape of a large foot and write the memory verse in the middle of it. Tell your children that the shape of a foot represents the footprints left in the sand as you walk through it, and this will remind us that we are following Jesus. You can use several paper feet and put one word of the verse on each shape. Then, place the footprints on the wall of the classroom. (The size of the footprints can be that of a sheet of paper.) Repeat the verse with your children several times.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Conclude with a prayer. Be sure to ask if the children have requests and pray for them.

Encourage

Remind your children to take home any of their activity sheets and encourage them to share the lesson with their family and friends.

Invite

Thank everyone for attending today's session and give them a hint about the next lesson by telling them the title, creating a sense of excitement so that they will not want to miss it. Invite them to come with friends.

