



Disciples Follow Jesus

Mark 1:14-20



First- and second-graders haven't had enough life experience to know what it means to follow Jesus. One of the ways children gain life experience is through observation. They're looking at the significant adults in their lives and observing what it means to follow Jesus. Be prepared not only to teach this truth, but also to live it! Use this lesson to demonstrate tangible ways to follow Jesus, and encourage the children to apply them as well.



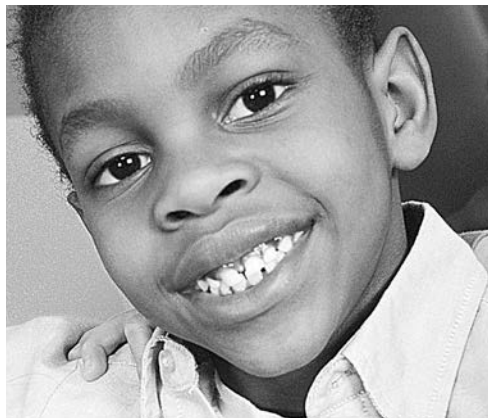
► **Bible Point**
Follow Jesus.


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

Weaving Faith Into Life
Kids will follow Jesus in their choices and actions and tell others about him, too.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Follow Me <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game with a flashlight to learn about following Jesus.	flashlight Teacher Pack: Bible Timeline 	
2 Bible Exploration	A Fishy Tale <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Hear what happened with the disciples by the Sea of Galilee to explore how we follow Jesus.	Bible, My Bible Fun, several pairs of scissors, markers, staplers, small paper plates, slips of paper Teacher Pack: "Fishing for Men" poster, "Disciples Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each My Bible Fun student book. Fold the "Fishing for Men" poster on the dotted lines.

***Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.*





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>3</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life</p>	<p>Whom Can I Tell? <i>(about 25 min.)</i> Make a fishy craft, and learn the Key Verse.</p>	<p>Bibles, chenille wire, one 16-inch length of yarn per child, card stock, several pairs of scissors, markers, hole punch Teacher Pack: fish stencils</p>	
<p>4</p> <p>Lasting Impressions</p>	<p>Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	<p>My Bible Fun</p>	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

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.





Follow Me Supplies

flashlight
Teacher Pack
Bible Timeline

1 GETTING STARTED

Follow Me

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

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

Gather everyone together.

Show the Bible Timeline. Say: **Today we'll learn what it means to ► FOLLOW JESUS.**

Say: **Let's start today by playing a fun game. I'll turn out the lights and turn on this flashlight. As I move the flashlight around on the walls, ceiling, and floor, follow the spotlight with your eyes.** Demonstrate by showing the children how to watch the spotlight where it hits each surface, rather than the actual flashlight.

Say: **The object of the game is to keep your eyes on the spotlight. Ready?** Turn out the lights and turn on the flashlight. Start the game by moving the spotlight along the walls, ceiling, and floor slowly. Increase your speed as time goes by. Continue for about a minute.

Say: **Thanks for following the spotlight! I'm going to make this game a little more difficult.** Put the children in pairs, and have them sit, facing each other. Have one face your direction and the other face away from you. Then say: **If you're facing me, you'll still follow the spotlight with your eyes. If you're facing away from me, you'll try to get your partner to look away from the spotlight. You may not move your hands, arms, legs, or body in any way. You must only use your head to do this. You can make silly faces or move your head around in silly ways. You can also make noises or talk.** Check for understanding. Have kids play for about a minute; then let kids switch roles and play again for the same amount of time.

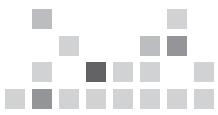
Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was it like to follow the light the first time we tried it?
- What was it like to follow the light when your partner was trying to distract you?
- What helped you to follow really well?
- What do you think it means to follow Jesus?

Say: **You had to concentrate and pay careful attention to the light to play this game well. Today we'll learn that when we ► FOLLOW JESUS, we want to pay careful attention to him, too. Let's learn what that means.**



2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION

A Fishy Tale

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Mark 1:14-20, and show kids the passage. Show the “Disciples Follow Jesus” poster. Read the title, and then say: **A disciple is someone who follows. Jesus was ready to tell everyone the good news about God’s love, and he told some friends to follow him and help him spread the good news. Here’s what the Bible says.** Read aloud Mark 1:14-15.

Say: **Jesus didn’t just want the disciples to follow him, he wanted *everyone* to follow him. Tell about a time you thought Jesus was asking you to follow him.** Let a few kids share. If kids are hesitant to share, tell about a time you sensed God telling you to follow him in general or in a certain area of your life. Say: **We might not always know how, but we do know that Jesus wants us to follow him. Today, let’s look at what that means.**

Give each child a My Bible Fun page. Put kids in pairs, and give each pair a paper plate. Say: **Jesus was good at fishing. In fact, he was a fisher of fish, and he was a fisher of men. Think about how a fishing net gathers fish.** Have the pairs cut the plates in half, leaving half a plate for each child. Point out that the half plates look kind of like fishing nets. Then have kids staple the plates next to Jesus on the My Bible Fun pages.

Say: **Let’s catch some ideas in our nets—as we learn some things about what it means to follow Jesus, we’ll put those ideas in our fishing nets. As I read the Bible to you, if you hear an idea you can “catch” to help us know how to follow Jesus, make this motion:** Demonstrate a gathering motion with your arms, as if your arms are a big net bringing in lots of fish.

Say: **Actually, I think we’ve already caught a couple of things. Listen.** Read Mark 1:15 again, and lead kids to motion when you say: **“Repent and believe the good news!”**

Say: **Repent means we say sorry for wrong things we do. I think that’s a first step in following Jesus.** Encourage kids to draw a basic fish on a slip of paper and then write or draw the first idea inside that fish. They might write “repent” or “pray for forgiveness,” or they might draw praying hands or a person on his or her knees. Have each child staple the drawing to his or her fishing net.

Say: **Jesus also said to believe the good news.** Lead kids in a gathering motion to show that you’re catching another idea. **Another way to follow Jesus is to believe that he’s good news!** Encourage kids to write or draw “believe” inside another fish on a slip of paper. They might draw a heart or a brain, or both—encourage them to write or draw “believe” using their own thoughts and creativity. Have kids staple the fish to the nets.



A Fishy Tale Supplies

- Bible
- My Bible Fun
- scissors
- markers
- staplers
- small paper plates
- slips of paper
- Teacher Pack**
- “Fishing for Men” poster
- “Disciples Follow Jesus” poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)

A Fishy Tale Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 8 pages from each My Bible Fun student book.

Fold the “Fishing for Men” poster on the dotted lines.





Show the left third of the “Fishing for Men” poster. Say: **Let’s keep reading. If you hear an idea you can “catch” that shows us how to follow Jesus, remember to make the motion.** Read aloud Mark 1:16-17. Encourage kids to make a gathering motion when they hear, “Come, follow me.”

Check that kids understand that “come” is another “catch.” Say: **Jesus told Simon and Andrew to go with him. We don’t see Jesus as a man on earth these days, but we can *move toward* Jesus by going places we can learn about him, by reading about him, and by doing things we know he wants us to do. That’s a way to follow him.** Encourage kids to write a word or draw a picture that symbolizes “come” to them inside a fish on a slip of paper. They might draw a picture of a Bible, church, or a person walking. Have them staple the fish to the nets.

Unfold the middle section of the poster, and show it to the children. Say: **Let’s see what Simon and Andrew did when Jesus told them, “Come, follow me.”** Read Mark 1:18. Encourage kids to make a gathering motion.

Check that kids understand that Simon and Andrew stopped what they were doing and immediately followed Jesus. Say: **Whenever Jesus or God asks us to do something, we can always stop what we’re doing and obey.** Encourage kids to write or draw pictures to symbolize obeying inside fish shapes and staple them to the nets. Here’s an idea: Draw a person dropping something and turning away from it.

Unfold the final third of the “Fishing for Men” poster, and show the entire poster to the children. Say: **Let’s continue reading.** Read Mark 1:19-20.

Say: **James and John also dropped what they were doing and followed Jesus right away. They were working for their father, but they knew following Jesus was even more important.** Encourage kids to make the gathering motion.

Say: **They knew that to follow Jesus, they had to make him most important.** Encourage kids to write or draw pictures to symbolize making Jesus the most important thing in their lives. Again, they’ll draw the idea inside a fish and staple it to the nets. They might write a number “1” or draw an arrow pointing up.

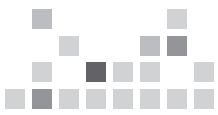
Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Explain which way to follow Jesus stands out most to you.
- What do you want to do this week to ► FOLLOW JESUS?

Say: **We caught all kinds of things to help us know how to ► FOLLOW JESUS. We learned to repent, believe, take action, obey, and make Jesus the most important. Like the disciples, we can be very excited that Jesus wants us to follow him. Let’s work on following him this week!**



3

WEAVING FAITH
INTO LIFE

Whom Can I Tell?



Tip You can play various songs on the CD as kids work.

What You'll Do

Say: **We learned today that Jesus was a fisher of fish, and he's a fisher of men. Let's make some fish now.** Tell children to trace the fish stencils on the card stock. Have each child color and then cut out at least four fish. As kids work, use the hole punch to make an eye on each of their fish.

Say: **We have a lot of fish now! When people go fishing and catch lots of fish, they put the fish on what's called a stringer. A stringer holds their fish for them, and that way they can keep track of how many fish they've caught.**

Give each child one 16-inch length of yarn. Show kids how to make a knot through the eye of the fish to hold it on the yarn. Have them put all their fish on the yarn in that way. Then help children form a loop with the chenille wire and attach the top of the line to the loop, as shown here.



Say: **Now that we have our fish in place, let's look back at what Jesus said about being a fisher of men.** Help kids find Mark 1:17 in their Bibles. Say: **Our Key Verse says that if we follow Jesus, we can become fishers of men.** Have children repeat the Key Verse with you: " 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men' " (Mark 1:17).

Say: **Being a fisher of men means we can tell others about Jesus, and we can show them how we FOLLOW JESUS.** Encourage kids to put people's names on the fish and to tell those people about Jesus.



Whom Can I Tell? Supplies

- Bibles
- chenille wire
- one 16-inch length of yarn per child
- card stock
- several pairs of scissors
- markers
- hole punch
- Teacher Pack**
- fish stencils





Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Fun

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Tell about some people you wrote on your fish.
- Why do you want them to know about Jesus?
- What can you do to be a fisher of men this week?

Say: Jesus is so awesome, we want others to know about him—we want to be fishers of men like the disciples. We can help others know that following Jesus is the most important thing we can do. As we ► FOLLOW JESUS, we can do what our Key Verse says and become fishers of men, too.

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

Say: Let's think about how to ► FOLLOW JESUS.

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

- On the back of at least one of your fish, write a way you plan to tell a person about Jesus—and be sure to follow through!
- Ask a family member to follow you. Lead him or her around the house, ending at a Bible. Then tell what you learned about following Jesus.
- Each morning, pray and tell Jesus that you're going to follow him that day.

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: Jesus asked the disciples to follow him. And we learned ways that we can ► FOLLOW JESUS in our lives. This week, let's ► FOLLOW JESUS through our Daily Challenges.



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 My Bible Fun 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, thanking Jesus for being someone we can follow and asking him to help your kids follow him. Then invite the children to pray silently or aloud for the people they wrote on their fish. If the children choose to pray aloud, have them take turns. Then close the prayer.



