FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · GRADES 1-3

Day 1: Jesus Calls Me

Follow Me! | Jesus Calls the Fishermen

Bible story	Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51)
Memory verse (NKJV)	Then He said to them, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19)
Takeaway	Jesus calls me by name to follow Him, and I can say yes and trust Him.
Daily call	Leader: “Jesus said” Kids: “Follow Me!”

Objectives

- Retell the main events of Jesus Calls the Fishermen (Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51).
- Say Matthew 4:19 from memory.
- Name one way to follow Jesus this week.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher and for each student
- Prop for the attention getter: a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish
- Copies of today’s student lesson and activity sheets (one per child)
- Crayons, pencils, and name tags
- Craft supplies: Paper cups or small paper boats (pre-folded); Fish cutouts with paper clips; Magnet on a string tied to a craft stick (fishing pole); Markers

Teacher preparation

- Read Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51 in your own Bible at least twice this week.
- Read the matching “31 Days with Jesus” devotionals at The Preacher’s Pen: Day 11: Calling the Disciples (Answering the Call); Day 16: The Great Catch (Trusting Jesus with Your Future).
- Make copies, prepare craft pieces, and set out the prop before children arrive.

Background for the teacher

- The Sea of Galilee is a freshwater lake about 13 miles long and 8 miles wide. Luke calls it the Lake of Gennesaret (Luke 5:1).
- Fishing was usually done at night with large nets. In the morning the nets were washed and mended (Luke 5:2; Matthew 4:21).
- Peter and Andrew were brothers. James and John were brothers, the sons of Zebedee, and partners with Peter (Luke 5:10).
- John 1:35-51 shows that some of these men had already met Jesus earlier. Luke 5 is the day they left their work to follow Him full time.
- Jesus calls ordinary people, like fishermen, to follow Him (Matthew 4:18-22).
- Following Jesus means trusting Him even when we do not understand (Luke 5:5).
- Jesus knows each of us by name (John 1:47-48; John 10:27).
- Following Jesus means leaving behind anything that keeps us from Him (Luke 5:11).

Lesson plan (40 minutes)

Time	Segment	What to do
0:00-0:05	Welcome and review	Take attendance. Review yesterday's verse and call.
0:05-0:08	Attention getter	Show a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish. Ask the opening question.
0:08-0:18	Bible story	Tell the story from your Bible (script below). Show the coloring page as a picture.
0:18-0:23	Discussion	Ask the discussion questions.
0:23-0:28	Memory verse game	Write the verse on the board. Read it together, then erase one word at a time until the class can say it from memory.
0:28-0:37	Activity sheets	Word search, maze, fill-in-the-blank, matching, coloring.
0:37-0:40	Wrap-up and prayer	Ask, "How will you follow Jesus this week?" Close with prayer.

Attention getter

Show a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish. Ask: Have you ever been fishing? What would it feel like to fish all night and catch nothing?

Bible story

Teach from an open Bible so students see that the story comes from God's word. Use this script as a guide; tell it in your own words.

One morning Jesus was standing by the Sea of Galilee. A big crowd pushed close to hear Him teach the word of God. Jesus saw two boats by the shore. The fishermen were washing their nets.

Jesus got into one of the boats. It belonged to a fisherman named Simon Peter. Jesus asked Peter to push out a little from the land. Then Jesus sat down in the boat and taught the people.

When He finished, Jesus said to Peter, “Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch” (Luke 5:4). Peter said, “Master, we have toiled all night and caught nothing; nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net” (Luke 5:5).

Peter obeyed. The net filled with so many fish that it began to break! Peter waved for his partners, James and John, to come help. They filled both boats so full that the boats began to sink.

Peter fell down at Jesus’ knees. He knew Jesus was the Lord. Jesus said, “Do not be afraid. From now on you will catch men” (Luke 5:10). Jesus was going to teach them to bring people to God.

Jesus said, “Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:19). Peter, his brother Andrew, James, and John pulled their boats to land. They left everything and followed Jesus (Luke 5:11).

Jesus called others too. He found Philip and said, “Follow Me” (John 1:43). Philip ran to tell his friend Nathanael, “Come and see” (John 1:46). Jesus is still calling people to follow Him today.

Discussion questions

1. What was Peter’s job?
2. Why was Peter surprised when Jesus told him to let down the nets?
3. What did Peter, Andrew, James, and John leave to follow Jesus?
4. What does it mean to follow Jesus at home or at school?

Review

- Jesus got into _____’s boat. (Answer: Peter)
- Peter fished all _____ and caught nothing. (Answer: Night)
- The _____ was so full of fish it began to break. (Answer: Net)
- Jesus said, “_____ Me.” (Answer: Follow)
- They left everything and followed _____. (Answer: Jesus)

Memory verse activity

Erase-a-word: write the verse on the board, read it together, then erase one word at a time until the class can say it from memory.

Craft (Craft Time): “Follow Me” Footprint Boat

Materials: Paper cups or small paper boats (pre-folded); Fish cutouts with paper clips; Magnet on a string tied to a craft stick (fishing pole); Markers

1. Children write one word of the memory verse on each fish (Follow, Me, fishers, of, men).
2. Decorate the paper boat and write “Matthew 4:19” on the side.
3. Use the magnet pole to “catch” the fish and put the verse in order.
4. Take the boat and fish home to practice the verse.

Recreation and snack

Game: Fishers of Men Tag: one child is “Peter”. Tagged children join hands and become part of the “net” until everyone is caught. For little ones, play Follow the Leader.

Snack: Fish-shaped crackers in a small paper boat or cup (“nets full of fish”) with water. Always check allergy information on registration cards before serving food.

Songs (a cappella)

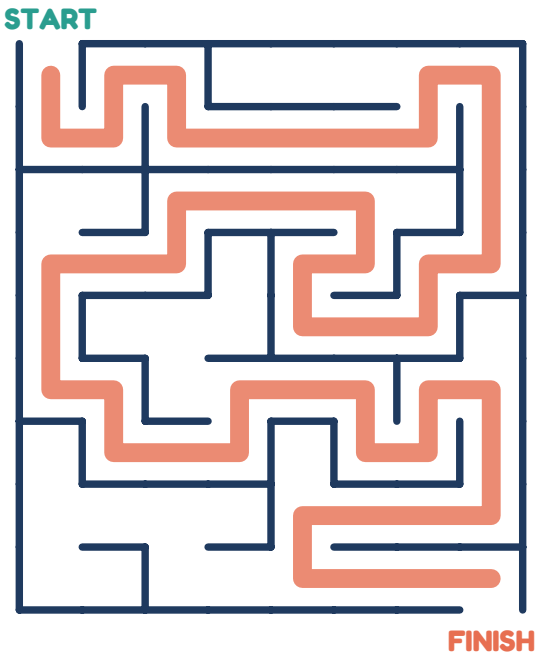
Sing without instruments. Suggested titles: I Have Decided to Follow Jesus; I Will Make You Fishers of Men; Footprints of Jesus; Jesus Loves Me; Where He Leads Me.

Answer keys

Word search

P	I	U	J	N	E	I	J	K	P
C	A	L	L	U	B	B	U	F	U
L	V	T	M	I	Q	O	L	K	O
W	M	S	Y	F	P	Z	E	L	Y
Z	P	E	T	E	R	B	J	E	G
F	O	L	L	O	W	B	E	V	O
I	I	S	G	C	X	O	S	G	L
S	E	A	J	P	X	A	U	Z	Z
H	E	K	V	N	E	T	S	U	T
V	H	M	J	X	K	E	X	R	Z

Maze



Fill in the blank

1. Jesus got into PETER's boat.
2. Peter fished all NIGHT and caught nothing.
3. The NET was so full of fish it began to break.
4. Jesus said, "FOLLOW Me."
5. They left everything and followed JESUS.

Matching

- Peter: a fisherman who obeyed Jesus
- Andrew: Peter's brother
- Zebedee: father of James and John
- Philip: told his friend, "Come and see"
- Jesus: said, "Follow Me"

Sources for this lesson

- "31 Days with Jesus" by Christopher Gallagher, The Preacher's Pen: Day 11: Calling the Disciples (Answering the Call); Day 16: The Great Catch (Trusting Jesus with Your Future) (preacherspen.org/courses/31-days-with-jesus/)
- Preaching Library lessons and outlines: Why Do You Follow Jesus? (Matthew 7:28-29); Who Is Jesus? (John 20:30-31)
- Scripture: Luke 5:1-11; Matthew 4:18-22; John 1:43-51. All quotations from the New King James Version (NKJV).