FOLLOWING JESUS VBS · TEACHER GUIDE · NURSERY (AGES 0-2)

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)	"Follow Me" (Matthew 4:19) (full verse for helpers: Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.")
Takeaway	Jesus wants me to follow Him!
Daily call	Leader: "Jesus said" Kids: "Follow Me!"

Objectives

- Hear the story of Jesus calls the fishermen in simple words.
- Say the memory phrase: "Jesus wants me to follow Him!"
- Experience God's love through a caring teacher, songs, and play.

Materials

- Bible (NKJV) for the teacher
- An enlarged copy of today's coloring page to use as the story picture
- 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 plates cut into fish shapes (prepare ahead); Large stickers or pre-cut tissue paper squares; Glue stick (teacher use); Googly-eye stickers or a marker dot

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
0:00-0:08	Welcome and free play	Greet each child by name. Offer soft toys that match today's story (a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish).
0:08-0:15	Bible time	Sit in a circle. Hold up the picture and the Bible. Tell the short story with props.
0:15-0:20	Songs and finger play	Sing softly (a cappella) and do today's finger play together.
0:20-0:32	Activity time	Coloring page and the "Find the Picture" sheet with a helper beside each child.
0:32-0:37	Craft	Simple craft (see Craft section). Teachers do any gluing or cutting.
0:37-0:40	Prayer and goodbye	Say the memory phrase, pray a short prayer, and send the take-home story card.

Attention getter

Show a fishing net (or mesh laundry bag) and a few paper fish. Let children touch and explore it while you say a simple sentence about today's story.

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.

- Peter was a fisherman. He had a boat and a big net.
- Peter fished all night long. He did not catch one fish!
- Jesus came to the sea. Jesus got into Peter's boat.
- Jesus said, "Let down your nets." Peter listened to Jesus.
- Splash! The net was full of fish! So many fish!
- Jesus said, "Follow Me."
- Peter, Andrew, James, and John left their boats and followed Jesus.

- Jesus wants you to follow Him too!

Discussion questions

1. Who got into Peter's boat?
2. What did Jesus say to Peter?
3. Can you follow Jesus too?

Review

- Who was in our story today? (Jesus and Peter)
- Say our phrase: "Jesus wants me to follow Him!"

Memory verse activity

Say the short verse slowly and have children echo it. Add a motion for each phrase. Repeat it at the start and end of class.

Finger play: Five Little Fishes

- Five little fishes swimming in the sea, (wiggle five fingers)
- Peter cast his net, one, two, three! (pretend to throw a net)
- Jesus said, "Follow Me!" (point up, then wave "come")
- And Peter said, "Yes!" (nod head)
- Now I will follow Jesus, (march in place)
- Because He loves me best! (hug yourself)

Craft (Craft Time): Paper Plate Fish

Materials: Paper plates cut into fish shapes (prepare ahead); Large stickers or pre-cut tissue paper squares; Glue stick (teacher use); Googly-eye stickers or a marker dot

1. Teacher spreads glue on the fish ahead of time.
2. Help each child press tissue squares or stickers onto the fish for scales.
3. Add an eye. Say, "Peter caught lots of fish when he listened to Jesus!"
4. Write the child's name and "Jesus said, Follow Me" on the back.

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

Find the Picture: the fish.

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).