

## Jesus Chooses His Disciples

Teacher Pep Talk: This is a great lesson about how Jesus began His ministry and chose His disciples. You will get to teach about the first disciples and how He told them He would make them fishers of men. The lesson is packed with energetic activities and my favorite craft of all time: **Fishers of Men Fishing Poles!**

Jesus decided to choose some disciples. Disciples are people who learn from someone else. Imagine the excitement of getting to be with Jesus every day and to learn directly from Him! As Christians we are taught by the Holy Spirit continually. Jesus said of the Holy Spirit “He will call to mind all the things I have taught you.” Jesus picked 12 helpers/disciples. Let’s get started learning about them.

**NOTE:** *I wish I was there with you to teach this lesson. It contains my very favorite craft idea: The “Fishers of Men Fishing Poles”! The children will be parading through the halls with them after class. Have fun!*

You will need: Cardboard tubes off the bottom of pants hangers from the cleaners (OR thin wooden dowels OR Heavy-duty long plastic straws.)  
Ball of yarn/ Handout page/ scissors/ tape or staples  
Various colors of construction paper for one of the activities

Major Points: Jesus picked out 12 Disciples.  
Some of the disciples were fishermen.  
Jesus told them “Come, follow me.”  
Jesus said that He would make them “Fishers of Men.”

Scripture Ref. Matthew 4:18-20  
Luke 5:1-11 (Jesus picks His first Disciples)

Memory Verse: Matthew 4:19 “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of men.”

Lesson: **NOTE:** *This special lesson BEGINS with an opening activity. It is part of the lesson. Please don’t skip it. It will help!*

### Opening Activity (Do just before you start the lesson)

Do an activity where you all work together to accomplish a task. EX: Dump out a box full of blocks and hurry to put them all back in again. Everyone helps. Have more than one team if you have lots of children in class. Objects must be small and easy to pick up (miniature cars, etc.) Raise the clock. Be excited! Sit down in a heap and breathe heavily afterwards. You are tired out! But you are sure glad you had your helpers!!

Lesson: **Jesus picked out 12 Disciples**

- That was great! You all did so good! We got all of the blocks back into the box!! And we did it so fast!! (That's because there were so many of us working together to get it done!) You are great helpers!!
- Have you ever needed a helper? (Wait for answers.) How did you choose who you would get as a helper? (Wait for answers.)
- In our Bible story today, Jesus was about to start His ministry. He had already started preaching to the people. It was time for Him to choose His Disciples.
- Hey! What's a "disciple" anyway?
- Disciples are at once "learners" and "helpers."

**Some of His Disciples were Fishermen**

- There is a great story in the Bible about how Jesus picked His first disciples.
- They were fishermen and they worked every day by a big lake in their boats. One of them was named Simon, who had a brother named Andrew. Also there were two brothers named James and John.
- One day Jesus was teaching the crowds of people down by the lake.
- There were so many people that they almost crowded Him into the water. So Jesus hopped in Simon's boat and asked him to push back from the edge of the land a little.
- From there it was easier for Jesus to talk to the crowds. Jesus finished his preaching and then started talking to Simon and his brother.

**He told them "Come, follow me"**

- Jesus told the fishermen "Come, follow me"
- Jesus was picking them as His first disciples

Jesus told them He would make them fishers of men

- Jesus told the fishermen that from now on they would be fishers of men (like a little play on words... but Jesus meant it.)
- He didn't mean that they would try and catch men like fish, but that they would be like Jesus, telling people all around how God loves us and cares for us.
- Jesus chose His disciples to be His helpers and also to learn all of the things He was to teach them about God the Father
- What an exciting thing to be chosen by Jesus to follow Him!
- The men left their nets and followed Jesus!!

Let's pray and thank God that each of us is invited to follow Jesus!

Prayer: Dear God,  
Thank you that Jesus came here for us!  
Thank you that each of us can follow Him! Amen.

Suggested Activities: *(Choose a few activities for your class!)*

**Fishers of Men Fishing Poles** *This is my favorite craft of all!!*

**Before Class:** Obtain one short “fishing pole” for each child. I suggest using the cardboard tubes found at the bottom of hangers that come from the cleaners (the ones used for hanging pants.) If you don’t have these at home, consider asking for some at your local cleaners. Take care removing the tubes from the hangers; you will need to bend the hanger to get the tubes off without damaging them. **Alternatively:** Use short thin wooden dowels, heavy-duty plastic straws, or thin sticks from a tree. You will also need a hole punch, yarn, enough copies of the activity sheet so that each child has one paper “hook”, along with scissors, tape or staples, and crayons or markers.

**During Class:** Distribute copies of the activity sheet and allow each child to color a fishing hook and cut it out with scissors. Use a hole punch to punch a hole in the top of the fish hook. Cut an 18-24 inch piece of yarn for each child. Loop one end through the paper fish hook and tie securely. (Alternatively tape or staple it on.) Tie the other end of the yarn to the end of the “fishing pole”. (You may also tape it on.) Now you have your “Fishers of Men” Fishing Pole!

**IMPORTANT RULES:**

- No swatting each other with the poles. (Don’t even pretend to do it!)
- No “sword fighting” with the poles.
- Don’t pull on the yarn... it may come off!

**Sing “Fishers of Men”**

After you have made your fishing poles, sing this song with the children:

**Fishers of Men** *(Words & Music by Harry D. Clarke)*

I will make you fishers of men  
Fishers of men, fishers of men  
I will make you fishers of men,  
If you fol-low me.

**Chorus:**

If you fol-low me!  
If you fol-low me!  
I will make you fishers of men  
If you fol-low me!

This song is really great to sing as you are marching around the room with your homemade fishing poles. You can even march in the hallway *(if you won’t disturb other classes.)* Consider singing and marching to a Senior Adult classroom to show them your new fishing poles. *(Be sure to arrange this with the other teachers in advance!!)*

**Act out the Story** *Older children will love this!*

Tell the Bible story of Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish found in Luke 5:1-11.

Try out these suggestions:

- Use a blue tarp, blanket, or sheet to represent the water of the Sea of Galilee.
- Use a brown box (or construction paper cut out in the shape of a boat) to represent one of the fishing boats of the soon-to-be disciples.
- Place the tarp on the floor and the box on the tarp.
- Have the children represent the crowd and sit right along the “shoreline.”
- You act out the part of Jesus. Stand in the brown box out in the “water” and tell the rest of the story.
- Have a second box, if you wish, to represent the second boat in the story.
- Summarize the story in your own words.

Summary:

Jesus was preaching but the crowd was too big. The people were so crowded that Jesus asked Simon if He could step inside his boat and that they could push back from the edge of the shore a little. They did. From there He finished preaching to the crowds.

After the sermon, Jesus talked to Simon and Andrew. He told them to go out into deep water and let down their nets to catch some fish. Simon said “Master, we have worked hard all night and have not caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

So they did what Jesus said, and they caught so many fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled to their partners (James and John) who came out in their boat. They caught so many fish that they filled both boats and the boats started sinking.

Can you imagine what Simon said after that? (Maybe something like “thank you,” etc.) No! He ran to Jesus, fell at His feet, and said “Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!” He said this because they were all astonished (and a little afraid) because they knew that Jesus had done a miracle!

Jesus told them “Don’t be afraid; from now on you will catch men.”

And this is the most amazing part. The Bible says that then they “pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.” They did! They left their boats, their jobs, their fish... Everything... Just to follow Jesus!

They were fishermen no more. Now they were disciples, and they would become “Fishers of Men!”

And just like Jesus invited the fishermen to “Come, follow me” He invites each and every one of us to come and follow Him! The invitation is ours as well!!! What will you do? Will you follow Jesus? What do you say?

**Collage on Paper**

Create a picture of Jesus speaking to the crowds at the Sea of Galilee using construction paper, glue, and markers. IDEA: Use a blue background paper to represent the Sea of Galilee, brown paper for the boats, and strips of green or white for the seashore. Cut out the various parts and glue them together. Draw Jesus in the boat, speaking to the crowds on the shore.

