

What It Means to Follow Jesus

Quarter 11 • Lesson 1

Focus on Spiritual Formation

- 1. Connecting:** Do an activity to learn about leading and following.
- 2. Teaching:** Listen to a story about following Jesus (John 1:35–42; 8:31).
- 3. Responding:** Do an activity to spend time with Jesus.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- *The Action Bible*, image of Andrew talking with Simon Peter
- Crayons

Teacher Devotion

*"Come," he replied. "You will see."
So they went and saw where he was staying.
They spent the rest of the day with him.
It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.
John 1:39*

Jesus invites us to come and see, just as He invited Andrew. Jesus invites us to follow Him. When we commit our lives to the One who came to save us it changes the way we think and the way we act.

Think about your personal decision to follow Jesus. Maybe you grew up in a Christian home or maybe you had a friend invite you to church. Whatever your situation may have been, consider what you learned or experienced that led you to follow Jesus. Was it His love, His promise of salvation, His forgiveness, or something else that caused you to want to know more about Him? Take a moment to thank God for revealing this truth about His Son to you. God desires your heart and wants a personal relationship with you. Praise God for bringing you closer to come and see Jesus!

Family Connection: Encourage families to talk about what it means to follow a leader. If possible, have each member share why he decided to follow Jesus.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Do an activity to learn about leading and following.

Welcome the children as they enter the space. Ask each child to find a partner. Have the partners share with each other what it means to follow someone.

I am so glad you are all here today. Let's do something fun to begin our lesson. You will follow a leader around our space!

In a moment, I will choose some of you to be leaders. The rest of you will be followers. The leader will move, and you will follow everything he does, even the way he moves. Raise your hand if you want to be a leader.

Choose 2 girls and 2 boys to be leaders. Once the leaders are at the front of your space, stand behind one of the leaders and ask her to start walking. Follow her movements. Ask her to continue walking and do something with her arm. Follow the movement she makes with her arm. Thank the leader for helping you demonstrate the activity. Then have her return to the front of the space.

Teacher Tip: You may choose more or fewer than 4 leaders depending on the size of your group. There should be no more than 15 children in each group.

Leaders, begin thinking of ways you can move across our space. You may move by walking, marching, skipping, tiptoeing, stomping, sliding, or other movements. You could also touch your nose or pat your head as you walk. Everyone, line up behind a leader.

Give the children time to line up behind a leader. The groups do not need to be equal. However, if 1 line is significantly longer than another, you may make them more even.

When I say, "Go!" you may begin moving. Ready? Go!

Allow the children to follow their leaders for about 2 minutes. If any of the leaders need ideas for new ways to move, you may suggest some to the whole class. Ideas include: take big steps as you walk, march, skip, and walk backwards.

Great job being leaders and followers. You may sit down now.

- **Leaders, was it difficult to lead? If so, what was difficult about it?**
Allow 1–2 leaders to respond.
- **Followers, was it difficult to follow? If so, what was difficult about it?**
Allow 2–3 children to respond.

It can be difficult to follow everything someone does. It can also be difficult to lead other people.

When Jesus was on earth, many people chose to follow Him. We can choose whether or not to follow Him, too. When we decide to follow Jesus, we do our best to act in ways that are pleasing to Him. Let's learn more about what it means to follow Jesus.

2. Teaching: Listen to a story about following Jesus (John 1:35–42; 8:31).

Jesus was about 30 years old when He began teaching people what it means to love and serve God. As people heard Him speak, they began to follow Jesus. Some followed Jesus by living the way He said to live. Others actually followed Jesus as He travelled from one place to another. The Bible tells us what Jesus said to a group of people who believed in God.

*Jesus spoke to the Jews who had believed him.
"If you obey my teaching," he said, "you are really my disciples.
John 8:31*

People who follow Jesus are called disciples. This means they try to do what Jesus taught us to do while He was on earth. Let's do something fun to learn about Jesus' first disciples. I will divide you into 2 groups: the John Group and the Andrew Group.

Separate the class into 2 groups. As you designate each group, indicate the half of the class you are speaking to.

In a moment, you will hear the true story from the Bible about John and Andrew. They were some of Jesus' first disciples. You all will help me tell the story.

Our story begins with Jesus' cousin John the Baptist. The Bible tells us Andrew and another man were there with John the Baptist. When John saw Jesus walking, he said, "Look! The Lamb of God!"

Have the John Group repeat, "Look! The Lamb of God!" with you.

John called Jesus the Lamb of God because Jesus would offer Himself as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Listen to what the Bible says happened next:

If possible, read this verse directly from your Bible.

*The two disciples heard him say this. So they followed Jesus.
John 1:37*

- **Why do you think the disciples followed Jesus?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

If you were told the man in front of you had come to take away the sins of the world, would you want to follow Him? Jesus saw Andrew and the other man following Him, so He asked them what they were looking for. The disciples asked Jesus, "Where are You staying?"

Ask the Andrew Group to repeat, "Where are You staying?" with you 3 times.

Listen to what Jesus said:

"Come," he replied. "You will see." So they went and saw where he was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon.

John 1:39

Ask the Andrew group to say, "We will follow You."

The men spent the day with Jesus! That must have been amazing!

- **How would you feel if Jesus asked you to spend the day with Him?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

- **What would you have wanted to ask Jesus?**

Allow 2–3 children to respond.

Optional: If possible, share the image from The Action Bible.

While we do not know what the men talked with Jesus about, we can be sure they learned more about Him. When we learn about other people, we develop relationships with them. The first disciples spent the day creating a relationship with Jesus!

After spending time with Jesus, we see that Andrew was ready to share with others that he had seen the Saviour who God had promised to send. Listen to what happened next.

The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon. He told him, "We have found the Messiah." Messiah means Christ.

John 1:41

Simon also chose to follow Jesus. Later, Jesus renamed him "Peter." Both Andrew and Peter later taught others about Jesus and helped to spread the gospel to many places.

Teacher Tip: It may be helpful to explain that following Jesus is a choice. When we choose to follow Him, we begin a relationship with Him that lasts forever.

In this story, we heard about how Jesus spent time with His followers and taught them to live in ways that are pleasing to God. Even though Jesus is no longer on earth, we can spend time with Him and get to know Him. We can do this by spending time reading the Bible, which is His Word. We can also pray and talk to Jesus. And when we need help, we can ask Him for it. When we spend time with Jesus, we grow closer to Him. That is very good news!

3. Responding: Do an activity to spend time with Jesus.

In today's story, 2 men spent the day with Jesus. That must have been exciting and wonderful!

Pretend Jesus has invited you to spend the day with Him. Think about what you would do with Jesus. Where would you go? What would you talk about? Close your eyes and imagine yourself talking to and spending time with Jesus.

Allow about 30 seconds for the children to imagine what they would say and do if they had a day with Jesus.

You may open your eyes.

Think about Jesus and the things you have learned in class. Think about how Jesus showed His love for you by giving up His life on the cross. He died so that you could be forgiven! Think about how Jesus rose and returned to His heavenly Father and sent the Holy Spirit to be your helper.

How can you build a relationship with the Saviour of the world? Here are some ideas: You can spend time with Jesus. You can talk to Him like a friend and get to know Him better. You can share the happy things in your life as well as the sad and difficult things.

Jesus knows you, and He loves you. So you can share your thoughts and feelings with Him.

In a moment, you will take a walk around our space. As you walk, you may whisper or think about what you would like to say to Jesus. Ready? Stand up and follow me.

Lead the children in a quiet walk around your space. After 2–3 minutes, have the children gather around you and sit down.

Optional: If you are using Student Pages, give the children crayons and allow about 1–2 minutes for them to complete the activity.

Teacher Tip: Some children may express interest in following Jesus. If so, be sure to talk with them after class. You may want to use the Salvation Path to explain what it means to follow Jesus, you can download it below.

As you learn more about Jesus and spend more time with Him, you will get to know Jesus more and more. When we get to know Jesus, we will begin to understand how much He loves us. Jesus loves us so much that He died to save us from sin and death! The Bible tells us Jesus' death shows God's love for us.

If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

But here is how God has shown his love for us.

While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Romans 5:8

The next few weeks, we will learn the Gospel in Simple Words to help us tell others God's story of salvation. Let's begin by doing a movement to remind us that God loves us.

God loves—Extend your arms in front of you at shoulder height. Hold your hands together.

Have the children repeat the words and motions with you 3 times. End class by saying this blessing, based on John 8:31, over the children.

Blessing: May each of you follow Jesus and get to know Him as the disciples did. May you follow Jesus so closely that others will see that you are His disciples.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "Holy Forever" by Chris Tomlinson: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lkHgxCemCRk>