

Lesson 14: From Fishermen To Followers

Key Takeaway

Jesus asked the fishermen to leave everything and follow him, and he calls me to do the same.

Scriptural Basis

Luke 5:1-11

Bible Verse

"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." (Matthew 5:16, NLT).

Learning Objectives:

- Children will recognize that Jesus chose ordinary people to follow him.
- Children will understand that the fishermen trusted Jesus and gave up everything.
- Children will identify one way they can obey and follow Jesus in their own life.

Materials Needed for Small Group:

- ☐ A Bible
- ☐ Name tags
- ☐ A snack per child

Activity: Follow Me to See It Clearly

- ☐ A short phrase written backwards on a strip of paper (example: "em wolloF" for "Follow Me")
- ☐ Clear drinking glasses (one per group or a few to share)
- ☐ Water
- ☐ A table or flat surface

Activity: Yes or No? Decision Dash

- ☐ Printout 1, one per small group

Activity: Follow Me Fish

- ☐ 1 paper plate per student
- ☐ Safety scissors, 1 per student
- ☐ Glue stick, per 1-2 students
- ☐ Markers or crayons, 1-2 boxes per small group
- ☐ Googly eye (optional)
- ☐ Triangle fin pieces pre-cut from construction paper (optional)
- ☐ A label or strip per student that says: "Jesus said, 'Follow Me'"

Materials Needed for Large Group:

- ☐ A Bible

Materials Needed for Games:

Game: Fishermen Net Relay

- ☐ Towel or sheet per team
- ☐ Paper or plastic fish or soft balls
- ☐ Basket or box for the "boat"

Game: Net Breakers

- ☐ Parachute, sheet, or tarp
- ☐ Small balls or balloons

Game: Boat or Shore? (True or False Movement Game)

- ☐ None
- ☐ Optional: Use signs for "Boat" and "Shore"

Small Group Session 1

15 Minutes

Distribute name tags and snacks. Choose one of the following activities to do together while children eat their snack.

Share and Listen

Option 1

Ask the children to share their highs and lows (the best and worst things that happened to them either today or from the past week).

Option 2

Ask the children to take turns sharing how they are feeling today using the [“How Are You Feeling?” chart](#).

Pray Together

Collect prayer requests from the students. The leader or a student can pray for the entire group, or a leader can pair up students and invite them to pray for one another.

Opening Questions

- ***“Have you ever done something simple—like helping a friend or cleaning up—and someone thanked you or gave you a reward for it?”***
- ***“Can you think of a time when someone did something small but kind, and people noticed it in a big way?”***
 - Example: Maybe a kid who always brought extra snacks – One day another kid forgot their snack, and he quietly shared. Later, a teacher shared the story as an example of generosity.)
- ***“Have you ever been asked to do something and you did not know why—but later you realized it was really important?”***
 - Example: Helping set the table for a family dinner – They did not know their grandparents were coming and that it would be a special memory.
- ***“Can you think of a time when a parent or teacher told you to do something, and it made more sense later on?”***

Activity: Follow Me to See It Clearly

Have a phrase written backwards. Put water into a glass and place it over the phrase to make it ready correctly.

Materials Needed for Large Group:

- ☐ A short phrase written backwards on a strip of paper (example: “em wolloF” for “Follow Me”)
- ☐ Clear drinking glasses (one per group or a few to share)
- ☐ Water
- ☐ A table or flat surface

Instructions:

1. Gather the kids and say: ***“Sometimes when we try to understand something, it can seem confusing—kind of like this phrase I will show you. But when we follow the right steps, it becomes clear.”***
2. Hold up the backwards phrase and say: ***“Here is your challenge. This message is written backwards. But if you Follow me and do what I do, you will be able to read it clearly!”***
3. Demonstrate the steps:
 - Place the backwards phrase face up on the table.
 - Take an empty glass and slowly pour water into it.
 - Hold the glass of water in front of the phrase at eye level.
 - Watch as the message appears the right way around through the water!
4. Let kids try it in small groups or pairs.
5. Ask:
 - ***“Could you read the message before the water was in the glass?”***
 - ***“What changed when you added the water?”***
 - ***“How is this like following Jesus even when things do not make sense right away?”***

“Sometimes God’s plans do not make sense to us right away. But when we choose to FOLLOW HIM, things start to become clear. Just like the water helped us see the message, trusting Jesus helps us understand the right path to take—even if it seems backwards at first!”

Large Group

10-15 Minutes

Welcome the students to Crossroads and tell them you are glad they came this week.

Optional Starters

Feel free to choose one, two, or even all of these ideas to start Large Group!

“Who is Jesus” call and response

Prayer Prompt: “God, I want to follow you by...”

(Tell God how you want to follow him today—maybe by obeying, being kind, or telling others about him.)

Opening Song: “Jesus Loves Me!” by Go Fish

Opening Prayer

Tell kids that closing their eyes and folding their hands together can help keep them focused and not distract those around them.

Introduction

“Today’s story is all about listening and obeying—even when the instructions do not totally make sense at first. But before we hear what happened on the water with Jesus and some fishermen, let’s try a little activity where you will have to follow instructions quickly and carefully.

There is just one thing that is different this time...Let’s pretend we are crabs today—we’ll try moving like them while we follow instructions! You will need to listen and obey right away so you do not bump into each other. Let’s see how well we can move as a team!”

Activity: Crab Walk

Explain that you will be talking about how a school of fish made a surprise appearance. You will ask kids to pretend they are fish, but there is no water. So instead, they are crabs. Crabs who will walk in formation.

Have kids assume the “crab walk” position: stomachs aimed toward the ceiling, feet and hands flat on the floor, bottoms lifted into the air. If a child—or you—cannot hold the position, it is okay to scoot around instead.

Tell kids you will give them instructions about which direction to move—forward, backward, to their left, or to their right. The goal is for them to obey every instruction immediately so they can avoid crab collisions.

Run kids through switching directions at least 10 times, at an increasingly fast pace, until they get too tired to keep going.. Then sit together on the floor and discuss:

- ***“That was a tough workout! When it comes to obeying orders, would you rather be giving orders or taking them? Why?”***
- ***“When is it hardest to obey? When is it easiest?”***
- ***“What is an order you would love to give and have everyone obey?”***

“Nice job, crabs! That took a lot of listening and quick obedience. Sometimes it was hard to know which way to go, right? But when you listened carefully and followed directions, you worked together really well.

That reminds me of something that happened to some fishermen a long time ago. They were tired, frustrated, and did not think anything would change—but then Jesus gave them a surprising instruction. And what happened next? Well, let’s find out...”

(Then jump into reading Luke 5:1–11.)

Helpful Hint: To keep students more engaged when reading the passage, consider asking another leader to read the part of Peter.

The Story – Luke 5:1-11

One day as Jesus was preaching on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, great crowds pressed in on him to listen to the word of God. He noticed two empty boats at the water’s edge, for the fishermen had left them and were washing their nets. Stepping into one of the boats, Jesus asked Simon, its owner, to push it out into the water. So he sat in the boat and taught the crowds from there.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Now go out where it is deeper, and let down your nets to catch some fish.”

“Master,” Simon replied, “we worked hard all last night and didn’t catch a thing. But if you say so, I’ll let the nets down again.” And this time their nets were so full of fish they began to tear! A shout for help brought their partners in the other boat, and soon both boats were filled with fish and on the verge of sinking.

When Simon Peter realized what had happened, he fell to his knees before Jesus and said, “Oh, Lord, please leave me—I’m such a sinful man.” For he was awestruck by the number of fish they had caught, as were the others with him. His partners, James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were also amazed.

Jesus replied to Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you’ll be fishing for people!” And as soon as they landed, they left everything and followed Jesus.

“Peter and his friends had been fishing all night and caught nothing. But when Jesus told them to try again, they listened and obeyed. And what happened? They caught so many fish the boats almost sank!

Jesus showed them that something amazing happens when we trust and obey him. And then, he invited them to follow him—not just to catch fish, but to help people know God’s love. And they did! They left everything and followed Jesus.”

Ask:

- ***“Why do you think Peter obeyed Jesus, even when he was tired and did not think it would work?”***
- ***“What is something Jesus asks us to do that might feel hard sometimes?”***
- ***“How can we practice listening and obeying Jesus every day?”***
- ***“If Jesus asked you to follow him like he asked Peter, what do you think you would say?”***

“The amazing part is that Jesus does ask you to follow him. Just like he called Peter, James, and John, Jesus is calling you. He wants you to know him, trust him, and follow him with your whole life.

You get to decide: Will you listen and obey, like Peter did? Will you say “Yes, Jesus, I want to follow you”?

You do not have to have it all figured out. Jesus just wants your heart and for you to say “yes” to him.”

Close in Prayer

Pray: ***“Jesus, thank you for calling us to follow you. Sometimes it is hard to listen or to trust, but we want to say yes—just like Peter did. Help us to obey you, love you, and share your love with others. We are ready to follow you. Amen.”***

Small Group Session 2

20-25 Minutes

Share the Key Takeaway: We can obey and follow Jesus just like his first disciples.

Activity: Yes or No? Decision Dash

Objective: Helps kids practice quick decision-making based on right and wrong.

Material Needed (per child)

- ☐ 1 paper plate
- ☐ Safety scissors
- ☐ Glue stick
- ☐ Markers or crayons
- ☐ Googly eye (optional)
- ☐ Triangle fin pieces pre-cut from construction paper (optional)
- ☐ A label or strip that says: "Jesus said, 'Follow Me'" – Matthew 4:19

Instructions:

"Jesus told some fishermen to Follow Me—and they did! Today we are going to make a fish to remind us that Jesus calls all kinds of people to follow him—even us!"

Say each of the following steps to help kids complete their fish.

- ***"Step 1: Fold your paper plate in half."***
(This makes it easier to cut a triangle for the mouth.)
- ***"Step 2: Cut out a triangle from the edge to make a mouth."***
(Show them how this also creates a leftover triangle to be the tail fin.)
- ***"Step 3: Glue the triangle to the back for a tail fin."***
(Kids can also glue on extra fins or decorations.)
- ***"Step 4: Use markers or crayons to decorate your fish."***
(Let them add colors, stripes, or scales.)
- ***"Step 5: Glue on a googly eye or draw one."***
- ***"Step 6: Glue on the verse strip: 'Jesus said, Follow Me – Matthew 4:19.'"***

Discussion While Crafting:

- ***"Who did Jesus call to follow Him in this Bible story?"***
(Fishermen—like Peter and Andrew!)
- ***"Were they famous or rich?"***
(No—they were ordinary people!)
- ***"Does Jesus call you to follow him too?"***
(Yes! He calls everyone!)

- ***“What is one way you can follow Jesus this week?”***
(Let them respond: helping someone, praying, being kind, etc.)

“Your fish is a reminder that Jesus chose fishermen—just regular people—to follow him. He did not look for perfect people—He looked for people willing to obey. And when they followed him, amazing things happened! Just like the disciples, you can follow Jesus and do amazing things too!”

Going Deeper

- ***“Why do you think Jesus chose fishermen like Peter and Andrew to follow him?”***
- ***“What do you think it felt like to leave everything behind and follow Jesus?”***
- ***“What does this story teach us about who Jesus wants on his team?”***
- ***“What amazing thing happened after Peter obeyed Jesus and threw his net in the water again?”***
(Luke 5:6-7 — they caught so many fish the nets began to break!)
- ***“Have you ever obeyed something your parent or teacher asked—even if you did not understand it right away—and something good happened?”***
- ***“Why is it sometimes hard to obey Jesus?”***
- ***“What might happen when we choose to obey him anyway?”***

Ending Together

5-10 Minutes

- ***“Can kids follow Jesus just like grown-ups? How?”***
 - You can follow Jesus by listening to him and doing what the Bible says.
 - You can pray and talk to Jesus, just like adults do.
 - You can be kind and love others the way Jesus teaches.”
 - Even as a kid, you can help others and tell them about Jesus.
- ***“What is one way you can follow or obey Jesus this week—at home, at school, or with your friends?”***
 - You can obey your parents the first time they ask.
 - You can include someone who is sitting alone at lunch.
 - You can help your teacher without being asked.
 - You can be nice to your little brother even when he is being annoying.
 - You can pray for someone who is sad or hurting.
- ***“How can doing something small—like helping someone or being kind—show that you are following Jesus?”***
 - It shows people that I care like Jesus cares.
 - They might ask why I am so kind, and I can say it is because I love Jesus.
 - Even small things can make a big difference in someone’s day.
 - Jesus did lots of little kind things too—like healing people and feeding them.
- ***“Look at our Bible verse again: “In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see...” What is a “good deed” you could do that might help someone see God?”***

(Listen to students and encourage them to do “good deeds” even when no one is watching.)

“Take your fish home as a reminder to obey and follow Jesus.”

Response and Reflection

- ***“If Jesus came to you and said, ‘Follow me,’ what would you do?”***

Close by inviting kids to say one thing they want to do this week to follow Jesus.

Close in Prayer

“Jesus, thank you for calling people like Peter and Andrew—and for calling us too. Help us obey you, follow you, and let our good deeds shine so others can know you too. Amen.”

Print out the memory verse.

Practice the memory verse for this unit (Matthew 5:16). Take a look at the [Memory Verse Game Ideas](#).

Games

25 Minutes

Game: Fishermen Net Relay

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Towel or sheet per team
- ☐ Paper or plastic fish or soft balls
- ☐ Basket or box for the "boat"

How to Play:

- Divide kids into teams.
- Provide each team with a "net" (a towel, sheet, or large piece of cloth).
- Scatter soft balls or paper "fish" on the floor.
- Teams must work together holding the net to scoop up as many "fish" as they can and bring them to the boat (a basket or marked area).
- The challenge is they can only use the net—no hands touching the fish!

Connection to Lesson: Reinforces the idea of teamwork, obedience, and following Jesus' call to "fish for people."

Talk about how the disciples had to trust Jesus and work together to obey His call.

Game: Follow the Leader—Fishing Edition

Materials Needed: None

How to Play:

- Play a themed "Follow the Leader" where the leader is "Jesus" leading fishermen.
- Include silly fishing-themed movements (cast nets, row the boat, reel in a fish, climb into the boat, etc.).
- Occasionally, the leader makes a surprising call like "Leave your nets!" and everyone has to freeze and shout, "I will follow you!"

Connection to Lesson: Shows how the disciples had to be ready to follow Jesus immediately—even when it was surprising or didn't make sense.

Game: Net Breakers

Materials Needed:

- ☐ Parachute, sheet, or tarp
- ☐ Small balls or balloons

How to Play:

- Have kids hold the edges of a parachute or large sheet (like a fishing net).
- Place as many light balls or balloons on the net as possible.
- The goal is to work together to bounce the "fish" into the air but keep them inside the "net."
- Gradually add more fish until the net is overflowing—like the story!

Connection to Lesson: Helps kids experience the overwhelming blessing of obedience when the disciples caught more fish than they could handle.

Game: Boat or Shore? (True or False Movement Game)

Materials Needed:

- ☐ None
- ☐ Optional: Use signs for "Boat" and "Shore"

How to Play:

- Designate one side of the room as the "Boat" and the other as the "Shore."
- The leader calls out statements related to the story.
- If it's true, kids run to the "Boat."
- If it's false, they run to the "Shore."
- Example: "The fishermen caught lots of fish at first." (False—go to the Shore.)

Connection to Lesson: Helps kids review the story while staying active and making quick decisions—like the fishermen had to.

Printout 14.1

DECISION DASH



YES



NO