

LESSON 12

JESUS CALLS HIS FOLLOWERS

BEFORE YOU TEACH

Jesus' Disciples

In Jesus' time, all Jewish boys spent a lot of time studying the Scriptures. Some who were more gifted went on to become scholars and, after years of study, these boys would often spend a lot of time with a particular teacher. They would become disciples of that teacher. The word disciple means "student" or "learner."

Jewish teachers would often call talented students to come and study with them. But Jesus was different. The disciples Jesus picked were very different from the types of disciples that other teachers usually picked. Jesus picked ordinary people who not very wealthy and not very educated.

The twelve disciples were ordinary men whom God used in extraordinary ways. Among the twelve were fishermen, a tax collector, and a revolutionary. The Gospels record the constant failings, struggles, and doubts of these twelve men who followed Jesus Christ. After the Holy Spirit descended, the disciples were transformed into powerful men of God who laid a strong foundation for the early church.

Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee has been mentioned in the Bible under three other names: 1) The Sea of Chinnereth in the Old Testament (Num 34:11; Josh 13:27), a reference to its harp-like shape; 2) The Lake of Gennesaret in Luke (Lk 5:1), from the flat district lying on its west coast; and 3) The Sea of Tiberias in John (Jn 6:1; 21:1). The modern Arabs retain this name, calling it Bahr Tabariyeh.

This sea is 12.5 miles long, and from 4 to 7.5 miles broad. Its surface is 682 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. Its depth is from 80 to 160 feet. It is 27 miles east of the Mediterranean, and about 60 miles northeast of Jerusalem. The sea has an oval shape and abounds in fish.

This body of water is mainly associated with the Lord's public ministry, where Capernaum, "His own city" (Mt 9:1), stood on its shores. From among the fishermen who plied their calling on its waters He chose Peter, Peter's brother Andrew, and James and John, to be disciples, and sent them out to be "fishers of men" (Mt 4:18-22; Mk 1:16-20; Lk 5:1-11). The Sea of Galilee is indeed the cradle of the gospel.

Fishermen

Fish was an important source of protein in the Hebrew diet, which seldom included animal flesh. Fishing was an important industry, and some 330 fishing boats worked the Sea of Galilee in the first century. Seven of Christ's disciples were fisherman: Peter, Andrew, Philip, James, John, Thomas, and Nathanael (Jn 21:2).

BIBLE TEXT

Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9-13; 10:1-16;
Mark 1:16-20; 2:13-17; 3:13-18;
Luke 5:27-31; 6:12-16

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus has called us to follow Him today.

LESSON OBJECTIVES

1. To understand that Jesus called twelve disciples to be His closest followers.
2. To identify ways we can follow Jesus today.

MEMORY VERSE

"Serve the Lord with all your heart."

(1 Samuel 12:20b)

PRAYER

In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we pray. We thank You, Heavenly Father, for Your wonderful love and grace. You love us so much that You chose us to follow You and do Your work. Please help us learn from the Bible what it means to be Your good followers. Hallelujah! Amen.

Most fishermen worked at night from small wooden boats. Fishing was arduous work. Rowing the sturdy wooden boats and hauling in the heavy nets demanded strength and stamina. After the fisherman had worked most of the night, they still had to mend the nets and dry, salt, or pickle the fish for transportation to distant markets. Nevertheless, fishing was profitable.

Peter was a successful fisherman who owned a large home in Capernaum where he took care of his own family and his wife's mother (Mk 1:30).

Tax Collectors

A tax collector was a person employed to collect taxes or tolls on behalf of the Roman government. The contractors

themselves were generally foreigners in the region who then hired native inhabitants as collectors. Tax collectors were scorned in Jesus' time because they served the interests of the Romans and frequently charged much more than what was due (Lk 3:12-13; 19:8). Considering the oppressive taxes levied in Judea and Galilee, it is no wonder tax collectors were despised.

Moreover, because tax collectors had repeated contact with Gentiles, they were regarded as ceremonially unclean and considered to be among the worst of sinners. Jesus, however, commended the tax collectors for their willingness to believe Him, unlike the self-righteous Pharisees. He even chose Matthew, a tax collector, to be one of His disciples.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR STUDENTS

In this week's lesson, your students will learn what it means to follow Jesus. If your students have played "Follow the Leader" before, they should already understand what it means to "follow." If not, this would be a great warm-up activity to do with your students before telling the story.

Explain the word "follow" to students. To follow means to do what the leader does and to be like him or her. Help your students understand that Jesus has called all of us to follow Him. He wants us to be like Him and do what He does.

Quickly play "Follow the Leader," with you (the teacher) as the leader. Have all the students line up behind you. You can pretend that you are Jesus Christ, and move around the room while making interesting movements and actions based on His life. Have the students mimic your actions.

Ask the students to pay attention to the different

actions you have them do. They can try to guess who you are pretending to be at the end of the game. Do this for two to three minutes at the most, and have the students settle in their seats to guess who you were pretending to be.

After the game, talk about what kind of person Jesus is through stories they know from the Bible. He is loving, kind, and compassionate, among other beautiful qualities. God wants all of us to be like Jesus. God also wants us to do what Jesus did when He was on this earth.

Besides doing good, another one of His greatest missions was to preach the good news. He wanted to tell everyone about God and how He was going to save them. Encourage your students to also tell their friends, teachers, neighbors, and family members about Jesus. As we become more like Him and do what He commands, God will be glorified and we will show that we are true followers of Christ.

VOCABULARY

- tax:** money that has to be paid to the government
tax collectors: people who represent the government to collect tax money from people
disciples: special helpers Jesus called to follow Him

REVIEW

Last week, we learned about how Jesus was tempted. He went into the desert and He didn't eat anything for forty days. How did Satan tempt Him when He was hungry? (He said that if Jesus was the Son of God, He could turn the stones into bread.) Did Jesus do so? (No.)

How did Satan tempt Jesus the second time? (He said that if Jesus was the Son of God, He could throw Himself from the top of the temple and God would send angels to rescue Him.) Did Jesus do so? (No.)

What was the last thing Satan did to tempt Jesus? (He said he would give Jesus all the kingdoms of the world if Jesus would bow down and worship him.) Did Jesus do so? (No.)

How did Jesus manage to overcome all of these temptations? (He used God's words and relied on God's power.) Today, we also can keep ourselves from committing sins by remembering God's words and praying often for God's power.

BIBLE STORY

Introduction

Before we begin this week's lesson, I have a quick question for all of you. Raise your hand if you have ever gone fishing with your family before. [Wait to see if anyone raises his/her hand.]

- (If yes.) What was it like fishing by the water? Was it easy or hard to catch the fish?
- (If no.) Can you share anything you know about fishing? [Encourage students to respond.]

Today, we will be learning about some fishermen who became good followers of Jesus, and how Jesus chose twelve people to be His special helpers.

Jesus Chooses Twelve Disciples

After Satan tempted Jesus three times in the desert, Jesus went back to His home in Galilee and the power of the Spirit was with Him. Jesus began to do many wonderful things. He healed the sick, gave troubled people peace in their hearts and minds, and taught God's words to people wherever He went. Every day, more people came to Jesus for help and healing. He knew that it was time for Him to choose twelve special helpers to help Him do God's work.

Jesus had important choices to make! He had to decide on whom to choose to be His special helpers. What do you do when you have important choices to make? Do you ask your friends, teachers, or parents for advice? [Get students thinking about the question.]

Guess what Jesus did? He went to a quiet mountain place all by Himself and spoke to His heavenly Father. He prayed to God for a very, very long time—until the sun went down and all through the long, dark night.

Jesus Calls Four Fishermen

When the morning came, Jesus was ready to choose His followers. He walked beside the Sea of Galilee and saw two brothers whose names were Peter and Andrew. They were fishermen, and they were throwing their fishing nets into the lake to catch some fish to sell for money.

Jesus walked up to them and simply said, "Come and follow Me, and I will show you how to be fishers of men." Peter and Andrew left their nets right away and followed Jesus! It was amazing for them to immediately answer Jesus' calling. They were the first two disciples of Jesus.

Do you know what the word "disciple" means? A disciple is a person who follows a teacher and does what he does. Picture yourself as a fisherman on the beautiful Sea of Galilee. As you are casting out your nets into the water, Jesus comes by and asks you to follow Him. Would you just drop everything and go with Him, like Peter and Andrew did? (Have students think about how difficult this decision was, and yet Peter and Andrew made it without any hesitation.)

As they went along, Jesus saw two other brothers whose names were James and John. They were the sons of a man named Zebedee. They were in a boat with their father, getting their fishing nets ready. Jesus called them, too, and they left their boat and father right away to follow Him.

Jesus Calls a Tax Collector

Some time later, Jesus went to a town. A large crowd gathered around Him and He began to teach them. As Jesus was walking along, He saw a man named Matthew who collected taxes. Matthew was sitting in his tax collector's booth.

Back then, they did not have computers or cash registers that added tax to a purchase. The tax collectors would go to everyone in town and demand taxes for things that they bought. Some tax collectors were sneaky and would ask for more than they should. And what do you think they did with the extra money they collected from people? [Wait for students to respond.] They kept it for themselves. Not an honest thing to do, is it?

People hated tax collectors and did not trust them. To the surprise of others, Jesus walked up to Matthew's table and said to him, "Follow Me." Matthew immediately got up and followed Him. He knew that Jesus was more important than money. He freely gave up these things and began to walk with Jesus.

That night, Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to eat dinner at his house. Many other tax collectors and people who were seen as "bad" came and ate with Jesus. When the Pharisees and teachers of the law saw this, they asked Jesus' followers, "Why does your Teacher eat with tax collectors and 'bad' people?"

When Jesus heard this He said to them, "Healthy people do not need doctors, but sick people do. I have not come to call the 'good' people, but the people who have done wrong things." What did Jesus mean by this? [Encourage older students in the class to answer this question.]

Jesus wanted these leaders to know that He came to earth to help sinners who really needed His help. The tax collectors and "sinners" knew that they needed Jesus' help to be forgiven for their wrongdoings. And they were so thankful that Jesus loved them the same, even though they had made mistakes before. Jesus knew that Matthew needed forgiveness and chose him to be one of His twelve special helpers.

Jesus Chooses Seven More Disciples

After calling four fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James, and John) and a tax collector (Matthew) to be His followers, Jesus chose seven more people. They were Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Simon the Zealot, James the son of Alphaeus, Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot who

later betrayed Jesus (he sold Jesus for money).

Jesus Sends Out the Twelve

When Jesus had finished calling the twelve disciples, He gathered them and taught them many great things. Jesus taught that doing what He said was like building a house on a solid ground. Even when the most violent storm comes, the house will stand firm on the ground without being destroyed. But not obeying Jesus' teachings was like building a house on a sandy ground. It will fall easily when the storm arrives.

Some of Jesus' commands were not easy. For example: "If a man slaps your right cheek, offer your left also." He taught people, "Love your enemies. Be good to people even when they are bad to you." Jesus taught His disciples not to worry about their daily living needs, because God would feed and clothe people who trusted Him. Since God gives food to birds and beautiful colors to flowers, His people can trust Him for all their needs.

Jesus also gave power to the disciples so that they could drive out demons and cure the sick. Later, Jesus sent them out to preach about the kingdom of God. So, the disciples set out and went from village to village, preaching the good news and healing people everywhere.

We Are His Disciples, Too

Jesus loves us and wants us to follow Him, just like His disciples did. He knows that if we follow Him with all our heart, He can help us do amazing things we never dreamed of doing to help others know Him. We can become disciples of Christ, too!

It may be easy to know who Jesus is in our mind. He did many wonderful things to help people. However, it is not as easy to know Jesus in our hearts—to trust Him and believe in Him. Let's ask Him to come into our hearts to help us be good followers of God.

Boys and girls, have you decided to follow Jesus and be His good followers? Everyone, close your eyes now. If you think you're ready to be Jesus' follower, raise your hand without peeking at others. [Wait for students to respond.]

Now put your hands down and open your eyes! Some of you might feel that you are too young to do anything for God. Remember the story of Gideon, who was the weakest and smallest of all the tribes in his time? He didn't think he could do great things for God either when the angel called him to be God's mighty warrior. However, God was with him and he defeated the fierce Midianites with only 300 men.

God has called on all of us today to serve Him with all our hearts! Let's ask God to give us the power and strength He gave to the twelve disciples and Gideon, so that we can also do great work for Him. [As a concluding activity, have the students sing a hymn.]

Let's sing "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" together. [You can pick which verses to sing with the students depending on how much class time you have left.]

I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

Tho' none go with me I still will follow,
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,
Tho' none go with me I still will follow,
No turning back, no turning back.

My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
My cross I'll carry till I see Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

1. Who were the first two men that Jesus called to be His disciples? Peter and Andrew.
2. What did Jesus say to these men? "Come and follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."
3. Who were the two other brothers that Jesus called to be His followers? James and John.
4. What did all four of these men do for a living before they followed Jesus? They were fishermen.
5. What is the name of the tax collector who later became Jesus' disciple? Matthew.
6. How can we become followers of Jesus? Believe in Him and receive Him into our heart.

MEMORY VERSE PRACTICE

Please reinforce the memory verse every week.
You can practice the memory verse with your students anytime during class.

"Serve the Lord with all your heart." (1 Samuel 12:20b)

SPIRITUAL TEACHING & LIFE APPLICATION

Become fishers of men for Jesus.

As we learned from the story, Jesus chose His disciples carefully and in a unique way. Instead of choosing people who were rich and powerful, Jesus found poor men who were hard workers. Several of them happened to be fishermen. Jesus knows the hearts of everyone. He knew fishermen would work well when it came to telling others the good news about Jesus.

For one thing, fishermen are patient. Sometimes, they can go for a long time without catching any fish at all. They are also hard workers. In many instances, they must cast the net numerous times before they even catch anything. Fishermen are knowledgeable, and they know how to use the right bait with a strong net.

As God's children, all of us are called to become fishers of men. God wants us to tell others about Jesus. God uses men and women, boys and girls, and even you and me, to spread the good news.

Pause for a minute to think about what you can do to become a fisher of men. Can we hear God telling us when and where to cast the net? He may want us to tell a friend what God is doing for us in the school cafeteria. He may tell us just to be a friend to someone who feels lonely.

Whatever it may be, let's be a willing fisher of men when God wants to use us. [Bring students' attention to Question #10 in the Homework Assignment section, and have them brainstorm on different ways they can tell others about Jesus.]

Turn to your neighbor now to talk about whom you would like to choose as your top three people to tell about Jesus. [If there is sufficient class time, have students start working on this question by writing ideas down.]

Ways to Follow Jesus

1. Believe

- Believe in God's existence and trust in His power
- Acknowledge that the Lord Jesus is the one and only God
- Accept Him as your Lord and Savior. Submit to God's word—the Bible—and the gospel of salvation preached

2. Repent

- Confess to God, with sincerity and humility, all your past sins
- Ask for God's forgiveness
- Determine to change your ways and to obey the commandments of God

3. Be Baptized

- Accept baptism performed by the True Church, according to Biblical instructions, for the remission of your sins

4. Receive the Holy Spirit

- Pray sincerely and earnestly for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit, evidenced by the speaking of tongues
- Live in the Holy Spirit and become a new person

5. Obey the Commandments

- Love God by practicing His word
- Love others as yourself by doing good deeds

ACTIVITIES

1 Fishers of Men

Objective: To remind students to be “fishers of men,” and to tell others about Jesus.

Materials

- Orange, white, and blue construction paper
- Scissors
- Pieces of panty hose the size of the construction paper
- Bubble and shell pattern
- Glue
- Black crayon or marker

Instructions

1. Distribute the construction paper and pattern to each student.
2. Trace one handprint (with fingers together) on the orange construction paper. Cut out. Draw an eye and a fin with a black crayon or marker.
3. Glue the fish in the bottom center of the blue construction paper.
4. Color in the bubbles and cut them out. Glue them near the fish.
5. Pass out one piece of panty hose to each student. Apply glue around the edges and cover the fish scene by pressing around the edges of the paper. Leave some space at the top for lettering.
6. Color the shells and cut them out. Glue them around the edge of the construction paper.
7. Write on the board: “Jesus wants us to be fishers of men.” Have the students copy the phrase at the top of their picture to remind them to tell others about Jesus.

2 Treasure Hunters

Objective: To help students understand what a tax collector did and why they were disliked.

Materials

- 4-5 small treats, such as chocolate coins, fruit candies, crackers, etc.

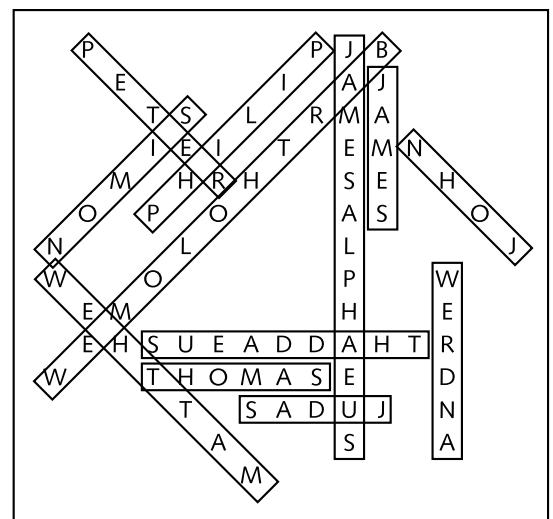
Instructions

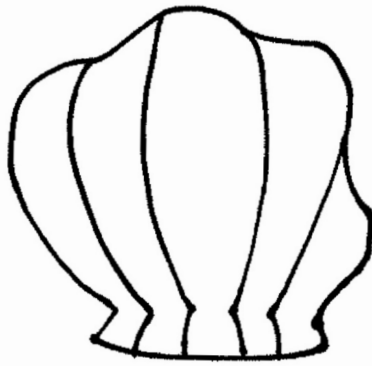
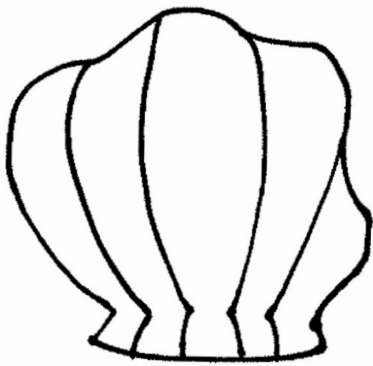
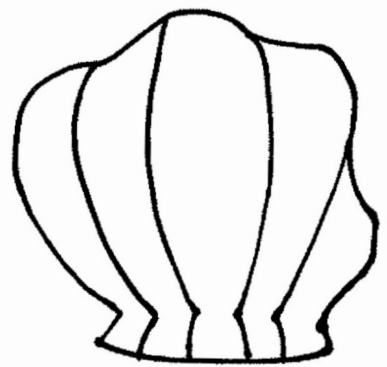
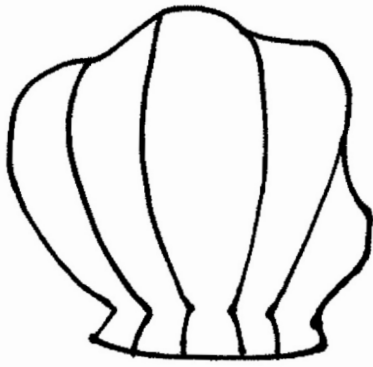
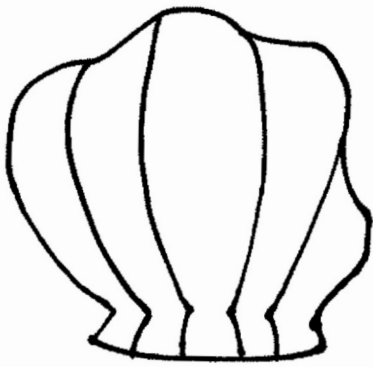
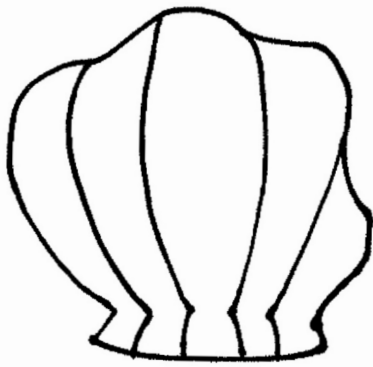
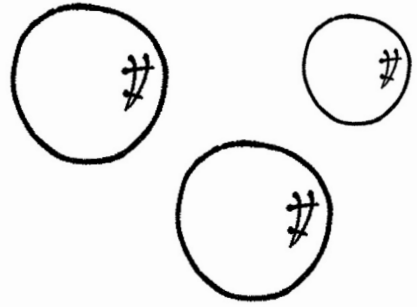
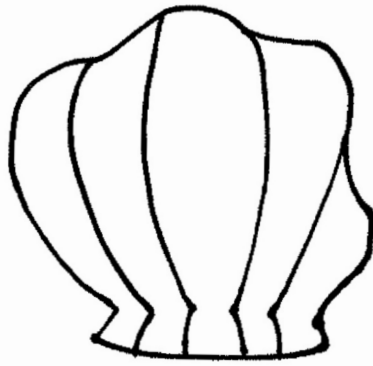
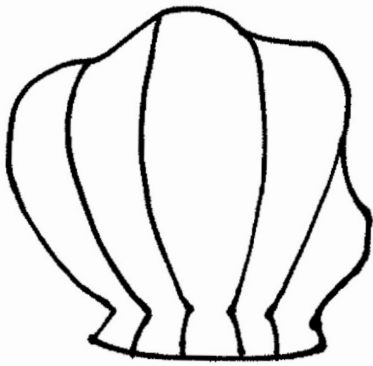
1. Hide the small treats around the room.
2. Tell the students that there is hidden treasure in the room and ask them to find it.
3. After the treasure is found, explain that they must pay the tax collector (you) before they can eat any of the treats.
4. Collect the tax. Make the tax collection unfair to help the students understand why tax collectors were not liked. For example, any student who plays soccer must pay one treat as a tax. Any student whose name starts with an "S" pays one treat. Any student whose birthday is in January must pay one treat. Keep going until the students start complaining about the unfairness of the tax.
5. Explain that they have now experienced why tax collectors were disliked.

Homework Word Search Answer Key

HOMWORK ANSWER KEY

1. “Serve the Lord with all your heart.” (1 Samuel 12:20b)
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. disciple
6. tax collector
7. False; He called four fishermen.
8. True
9. Word Search Puzzle (see right)
10. Answers may vary.





E1 Year 1 Book 4 Lesson 12—Jesus Calls His Followers

Homework Assignment

Name: _____ Parent signature: _____ Date: _____

Bible Truth: Jesus has called us to follow Him today.

Lesson Objectives: 1. To understand that Jesus called twelve disciples to be His closest followers.
 2. To identify ways we can follow Jesus today.

Bible Reading: Please put a checkmark in the space when you complete the reading each day.

Prayer: Please put a checkmark in the space on the days you prayed to God.

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Bible Reading							
Prayer							

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse.

(1 Samuel 12:20b)

What I Learned from the Bible This Week

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Homework Assignment

Understanding What You Have Learned

1. Write down the memory verse for this week. _____

Multiple Choice

2. ____ : How many people did Jesus choose to be His special helpers?
 a. 10 b. 11 c. 12
3. ____ : What were these twelve people called?
 a. Disciples b. Masters c. Warriors
4. ____ : What did the disciples do after Jesus had given them power?
 a. They went home to stay with their families.
 b. They preached the good news and healed the sick wherever they went.
 c. They went back to their old jobs.

Fill In the Blank

5. A person who follows Jesus and does what He does is called a _____ of Jesus.
 6. Matthew was a _____ before Jesus called him to be His disciple.

True or False

7. Jesus called four tax collectors as He walked by the Sea of Galilee. _____
 8. All the disciples left what they were doing and followed Jesus right away when they were called. _____

9. Word Search Activity: The Twelve Disciples

(Matthew 10:2-4)

ANDREW
 BARTHOLOMEW
 JAMES
 JAMES ALPHEUS
 JOHN
 JUDAS
 MATTHEW
 PETER
 PHILIP
 SIMON
 THADDAEUS
 THOMAS



Life Application

10. Jesus wants us to be fishers of men! Are there people you know who don't know about Jesus? List three of them. What are some ways you can tell them about Jesus (for example, read or tell them a Bible story; give them a bookmark with a Bible verse on it; invite them to say a prayer with you; etc.)?

Draw pictures to show different ways you can tell them about Jesus.

Person #1: <hr/> (name)	Draw a picture to show how you can tell this person about Jesus...
--------------------------------------	---

Person #2: <hr/> (name)	Draw a picture to show how you can tell this person about Jesus...
--------------------------------------	---

Person #3: <hr/> (name)	Draw a picture to show how you can tell this person about Jesus...
--------------------------------------	---