

1

Live as a Disciple

MARK 1:16–20; 9:33–37



GOAL

Hearing the stories of Jesus calling his first disciples, children explore what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Lord, make me a disciple that I might follow you more nearly and help others to hear your call on their lives, including the children I serve. Amen.

THIS SESSION

The question “What is a disciple?” is explored in this session. By first understanding what it means to be a follower of Jesus as it is found in the Bible, children can begin to see themselves as disciples today. Guided imagery is used to imagine the initial calling of Jesus’ first disciples and what it might mean to be one too.

THE BIBLE STORY

In Mark 1:16–20, Jesus calls his first disciples to follow him. Two fishermen, Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew immediately respond, drop their nets, and follow. Just a bit further on, the same happens with brothers James and John, leaving their father in the boat. The immediacy and assuredness of these responses may not be everyone’s reaction to the call to follow Jesus, but they reflect the compelling nature of what Jesus was saying and doing that others would follow him. Later, in Mark 9:33–37, Jesus provides an example of what it means to be a disciple: not being the best or the greatest, but being one who serves others, who welcomes the ones who are overlooked.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

While children may often see or feel themselves as overlooked by the adults doing the work of ministry, Jesus called them and welcomed them into discipleship. Children need to be affirmed in their identity, role, and capabilities in an adult-centric church and society.

SESSION PREPARATION

There is no special preparation for this session.



GETTING STARTED

- Card-stock copies of Resource Page 1
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Scissors
- Single-hole punch
- Yarn
- Laminating sheets and laminator or clear contact paper (optional)

DISCIPLE BADGES A C

As children enter, greet them and invite them to sit at a table. Provide card-stock copies of Resource Page 1 and encourage them to put their name on the badge, color it, and cut it out. You may choose to laminate the badges with laminating sheets or clear contact paper. If so, assist the children. Provide a single-hole punch and yarn. Have the children punch a hole in the top of their badge and string yarn through the hole to wear their badge as a name tag.

While the children are working, engage them in conversation about their week. Wonder when there may have been times that they felt like a follower.

- Internet-connected device

HERE I AM M T

Have a leader or volunteer read aloud: “Jesus said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Live like a disciple.’”

Invite the children to sing the chorus to the song “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I Am, Lord).” Show the YouTube video “20201011 Kids Choir Present—Here I Am, Lord” (bit.ly/FMHereIAmChildren, 4:31, beginning at 0:50 and stopping at 1:27).



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

FOLLOW ME GAME G AM

Invite the children to sit in a circle, and tell them they are going to play a follow-the-leader guessing game. Explain how the game is played using the following directions:

- One person will leave the circle and stand away from the group with their eyes closed.
- One person in the circle will be the secret leader and choose a rhythmic tapping of the thighs. The others in the group will follow their pattern.
- The person who left the circle will return and stand in the center of the circle to guess who is the secret leader.
- The secret leader will change to tapping another part of the body like the shoulders or head or feet, while the person in the center is not looking at them. It will help if those in the circle do not look directly at the secret leader, but rely on the group to help them change their actions as the leader changes.
- After several changes of tapping, the person in the center will guess the identity of the secret leader.

Play several rounds, allowing different children to fill the roles of guesser and secret leader.



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?



Display Resource Page 2 and invite a volunteer to read the passage from Matthew 28:19–20 on it. Point out the word *disciples* and ask the children to tell you all they know about what a disciple is. If necessary, explain that disciples in the Bible are those who chose to follow Jesus to learn from him and to try to be like him, loving God and neighbor.

Set the scene for today’s Bible story by telling the children that it was a time when Jesus was beginning his ministry and calling his first disciples. Invite the children to close their eyes and imagine that they are in these scenes with Jesus. Encourage them to consider what they are seeing and hearing, and where they are in the scene.

Read aloud Mark 1:16–20 and then transition to the second reading by telling the children that, after Jesus called many other disciples, they began to argue about who was the best. Read aloud Mark 9:33–37. After concluding the second reading, invite the children to open their eyes and discuss what they saw and heard. Ask them why they think Jesus chose a child to be the model of what it means to be a disciple.

After the discussion, distribute copies of Resource Page 3 and provide colored pencils. Invite the children to write or draw pictures of what they have learned about being a disciple in and around the word *DISCIPLE*.

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- Bible
 - Resource Page 2
 - Copies of Resource Page 3
 - Colored pencils



Keep Resource Page 2 for use in sessions 2–6.



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

MUSIC OF DISCIPLES



Tell the children that they are going to explore two hymns about what it means to be a disciple. Begin by revisiting the hymn “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I Am, Lord).” Show the YouTube video “I, the Lord of Sea and Sky (Here I Am, Lord—3vv+Refrain) [with Lyrics for Congregations]” ([bit.ly /FMHereIAmCongregation](https://bit.ly/FMHereIAmCongregation), 4:54, beginning and pausing at 0:55). Invite a volunteer to read aloud the words to the chorus. Ask the following questions:

- ➔ How are these words like the call of the disciples we explored in Mark’s Gospel?
- ➔ How are they different?
- ➔ What do you think it means to “hold God’s people in our hearts”?

Then show the YouTube video “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples (Lyrics)” (bit.ly/FMCalledToBeDisciples, 2:43, pausing at 0:16). For verse 1:

- Read aloud, or invite a volunteer to read aloud, the words to the verse.
- Wonder if there are any words or phrases that need explaining.
- Ask the children what this song tells them about what it means to be a disciple.
- Play the video, inviting the children to sing along and move as they choose.

-
- Internet-connected device

Repeat the bulleted instructions for each verse (pause at 0:51 for the second verse, 1:26 for the third verse, and 2:02 for the fourth verse).

Ask the children how these songs help them know what it means to be a disciple. Wonder which actions they heard that they feel they could do as a disciple and which ones feel hard to do. Affirm all answers and assure the children that we don't follow Jesus alone; we have one another and the whole community of faith who follow Jesus with us.

- Cards cut from Resource Page 4

DISCIPLE ROLE PLAY

D

Tell the children that it is sometimes difficult to be a follower of someone who we cannot see, so we have to rely on what we know of Jesus to think about how we could be a disciple under different circumstances. Have the children form pairs or triads and invite them to act out different situations provided on the cards cut from Resource Page 4. Give the groups a few minutes to decide who will play what roles. Have the groups take turns acting out their scenes. After each scenario, applaud the actors and ask them on what actions or characteristics of Jesus they based their response to the situation.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- Card-stock copies of Resource Page 1
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils
- Scissors
- Single-hole punch
- Yarn
- Laminating sheets and laminator or clear contact paper (optional)



Helping children to see the qualities of a disciple in others will also help them to identify those qualities in themselves.

DISCIPLE BADGES FOR OTHERS

A C S

Invite the children to make a disciple badge for someone they know as a disciple of Jesus. Follow the instructions from “Disciple Badges” (p. 8) for making the second badge. While they are working, invite them to talk about people they know who they view as disciples. These can be family members, church members, or others they know in the community such as teachers or coaches. Encourage them to share who they want to give the second badge to and why. Ask the children what they will tell the person about why they are receiving the badge.

I AM CALLED

G

Gather the children in a circle. Invite them to think of actions they can do as a disciple of Jesus. Tell them that you will begin a rhythm of pats and claps, and each person will take a turn completing the prompt, “I am called to . . .” Begin a simple rhythm by patting your thighs and clapping: pat, pat, clap, clap. Repeat it several times, encouraging the children to follow you. Once everyone has joined in, say the words to the prompt with the pats and claps and complete it with an action of your choosing. Keep the rhythm going and call on each child to say the prompt along with their own action of discipleship. Actions may be repeated and the pat, pat, clap, clap rhythm may be repeated in between children's answers to give children a chance to be ready to respond.

Once everyone has had a turn, begin again and see if the group can keep the rhythm going without breaks with everyone saying the prompt and their action.



FOLLOWING JESUS

SENDING OUT AS DISCIPLES

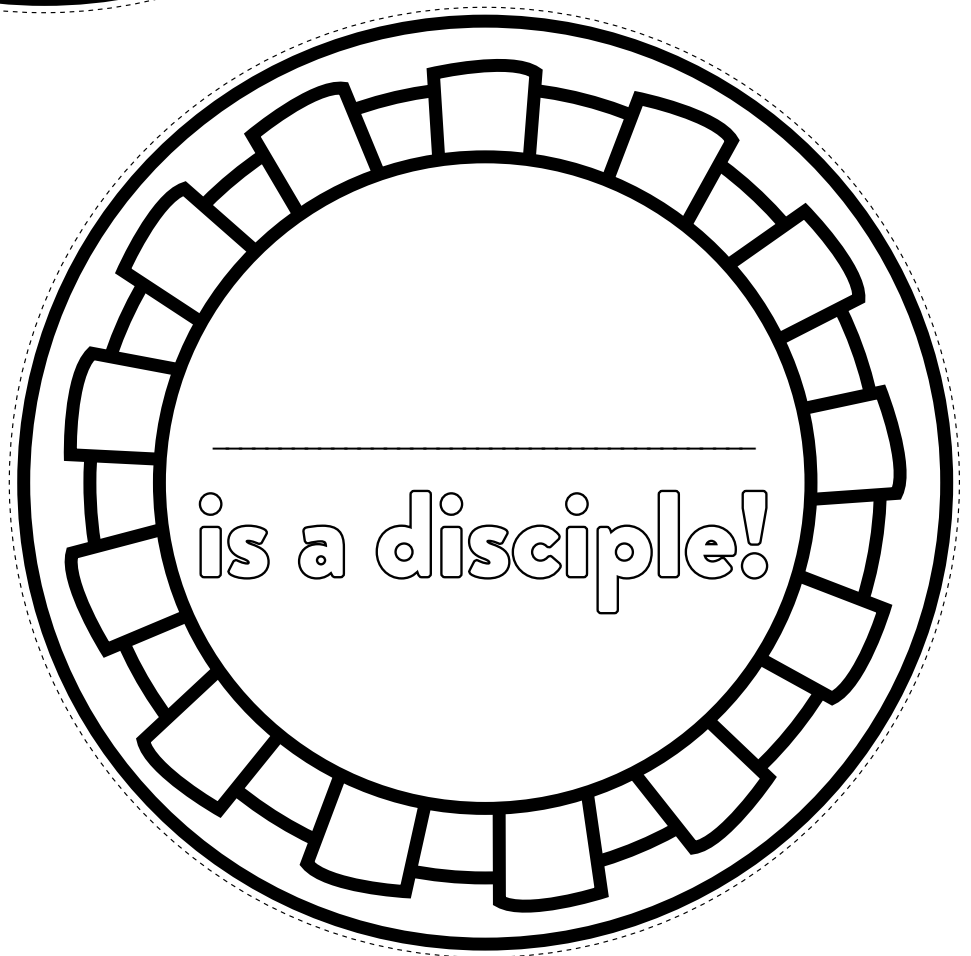
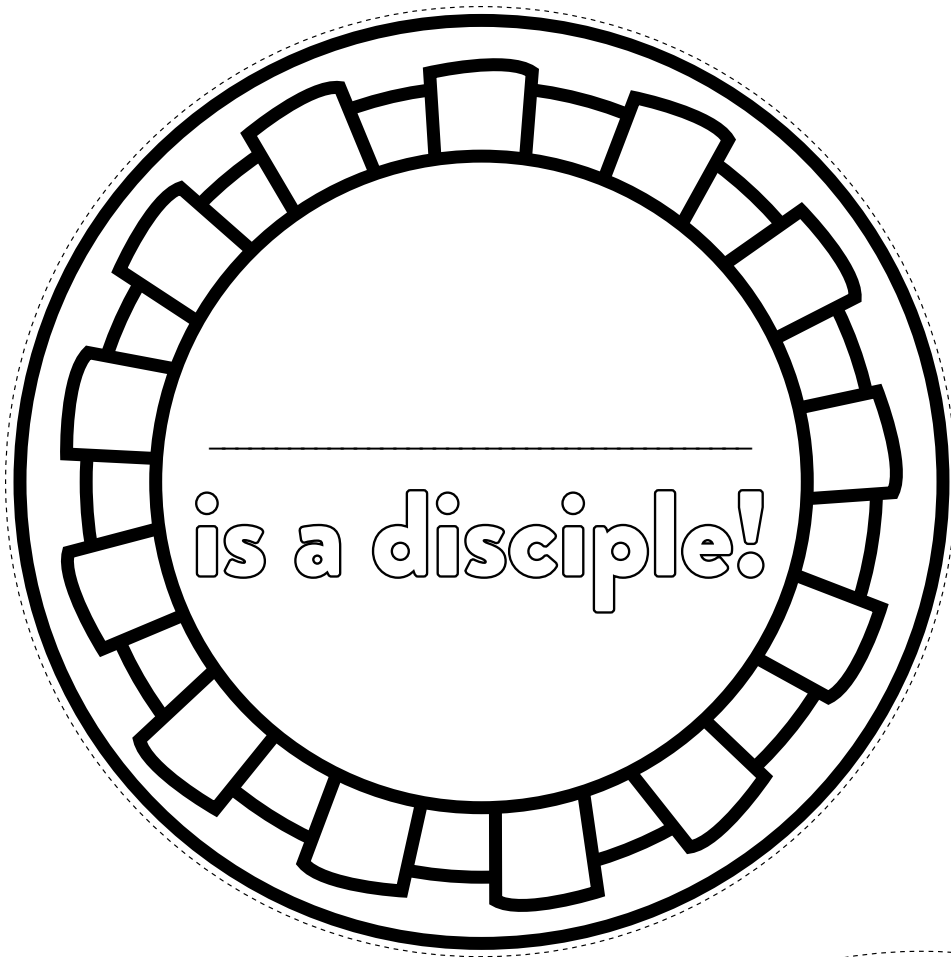
Gather the children together and invite each one to tell one thing that they will do this week to follow Jesus. As each child responds, invite that child to place their disciple badge in a basket for use in the next session. Once everyone has placed their badge in the basket, invite the children to repeat after you:

Even though we leave these badges here, /
it doesn't mean /
that we are not still following Jesus /
into the world. /
Our identity as Jesus' disciples /
beyond this room /
doesn't have a badge; /
it is who we are /
as children of God. /

Keep disciple badges for use in sessions 2–6.



- Disciple badges from “Disciple Badges” (p. 8)
- Basket



GO therefore
and **make**
DISCIPLES
of all nations
BAPTIZING

them in the name of the Father and
of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

and **teaching** them to obey
everything that I
have commanded you.

And remember,
I am with you always,
to the end of the age.

Matthew
28
verses 19-20

DISCIPLES

1

3 people: you, a friend, and another child

You and a friend walk into the lunch room and see a child in your grade who is eating alone. Your friend wants to go eat with your friends like you always do.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

2

3 or more people: you, a friend or friends, and a young child

You are playing at the playground with some friends. You see a young child who is lost from their parent or caregiver. Your friends want to go to get ice cream.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

3

2 people: you and a friend

You are walking home from school with a friend who is eating a snack. They throw the wrapper on the ground and when you say something, they tell you it's not a big deal since there is other trash on the ground.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

4

2 people: you and a friend

You and a friend are playing at your friend's house. You accidentally break the glass in a picture frame. Your friend hides the picture in a closet.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

5

2 people: you and your parent or caregiver

Every day when you walk home from school with your parent or caregiver, you see a parent and a child on the side of the road who are asking for food or money.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

6

2 people: you and a friend

Your friend wants to play on Sunday morning, but your family goes to church then.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

7

2 people: you and a friend

Your friend asks you why you go to church and what you do there.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

8

3 people: you, a friend, and a bully

You and a friend see someone bullying another child on the playground. Your friend wants to go somewhere else.

As a disciple of Jesus, what do you do?

