

# sunday school lesson

# PRESCHOOL

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### Purpose:

Preschoolers can learn that they can be helpers, just as Jesus' disciples were helpers.  
Preschoolers can also learn how people in our community help us.

### Bible Story:

The calling of the first disciples (Matthew 4:18-22)

### Bible Background

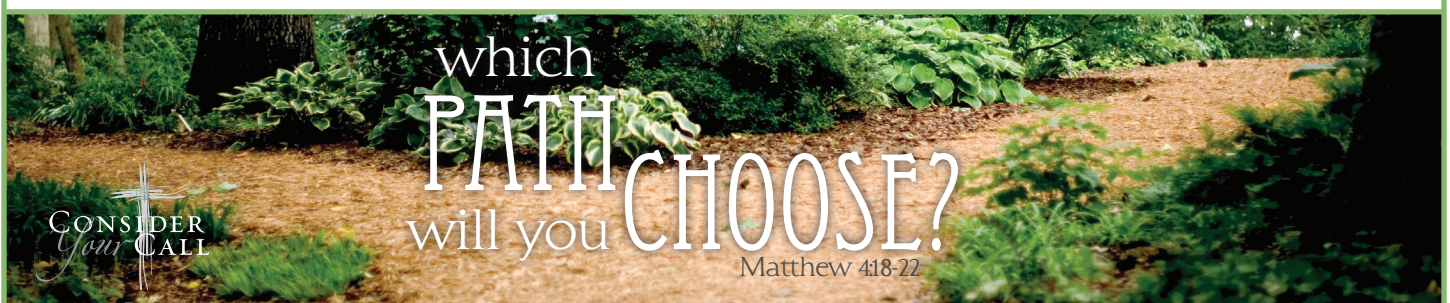
Jesus was walking by the Sea of Galilee one day and saw two brothers, Peter and Andrew, fishing. Jesus told them to follow him and he would make them "fishers of men." What happened next is quite amazing. Matthew writes that Peter and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed Jesus. They asked for no explanation of what following meant. It must have been clear that to follow Jesus meant to accompany him on whatever Jesus' mission was. They didn't try to figure out what the costs or benefits of following Jesus would be. They didn't ask for a day or two to put their affairs in order. Apparently, they didn't even concern themselves with the fishing gear they had been using. They simply followed Jesus.

The word "follow" means to come after someone. In some instances in the Gospels, it simply means that people were going to the place where Jesus was in order to hear him teach or to see the miracles he did. But when it is used to describe Jesus' individual call to people, it means that they were being called to become disciples of Jesus. To Peter and Andrew, it almost certainly meant that they would go with Jesus wherever he was going and participate with him in whatever he was doing. And they didn't hesitate. They followed.

Thank you for following God's call to teach preschoolers. Your role is very important as you lay the foundation for preschoolers to hear Jesus' call to follow Him.

### Preparing the Learning Environment

1. Read Matthew 4:18-22 so that you are familiar with the Bible story.
2. Read through the suggested preschool Bible study lesson.
3. Gather materials needed for learning centers.
4. During the session, use teachable moments to tell the Bible story in your own words.



## **Bible Learning Centers (40 minutes)**

### **Art: Golf Ball Painting**

Resources: Bible, large shoe box with a top (or copy paper box with a top), two paint smocks, two colors of washable paint, two bowls, two spoons, two golf balls, white paper

Have the Bible in the art area open to Matthew 4:18-22. Underline or highlight the passage in the Bible so that it is easy to find. Write the child's name on a piece of white paper and place the paper in the box. Using the spoon, have the child cover the golf ball with paint and place it in the box. Place top on the box. Guide two children to hold the box together and roll the golf ball in the box. Remove golf ball with the spoon and repeat with another color.

Say: "Jesus had helpers, and we can help our friends. Allie, you are helping Kirsten with the golf ball painting. The Bible says, 'I can be a helper.'"

### **Homeliving: Dress Up as Community Helpers**

Resources: Bible, dress up clothes and other items related to community helpers (for example: a police officer, a firefighter, a doctor/nurse, a post office worker), a standing, nonbreakable mirror.

Place the Bible in the homeliving area so children may see it. Open the Bible to Matthew 4:18-22. Have a picture of a community helper as your bookmark. Provide dress up clothes in the homeliving area near the mirror. Have the children try on the different items and pretend to be the different community helpers. Encourage the postal worker to deliver the mail to friends and the nurse to take care of the baby doll.

Say: "Frances, you are dressed up like a doctor. A doctor is a special helper in our community. They can help us when we are sick and don't feel well. I am thankful for people in our community who help us."

### **Books: Read Books about Community Helpers and about Children Helping**

Teaching Hint: Board books work well for younger preschoolers. Older preschoolers may have a more detailed storybook.

Arrange four or five books in a quiet area of the room. Invite children to look at the pictures in the books. If the child is interested, read a book to him or her. Ask the children how the people in the book help us. Ask them how they, too, may help. Open the Bible and place a bookmark at Matthew 4:18-22. Tell the Bible story of Jesus calling the disciples as the children are interested.

### **Blocks: Build a Fire Station, Hospital, or School**

Resources: cardboard blocks for younger preschoolers, wooden blocks for older preschoolers, rescue vehicles, school bus, family figures, community figures

Encourage the children to build a fire station to house the rescue vehicles or build a hospital. Place community figures and family figures nearby. Allow the preschoolers to build a school. Permit pretend play to occur between the children as the emergency vehicles drive to the hospital. Allow the school bus to take the children to school.

Say: "I know someone who helps. It is the school bus driver who takes the children to school every day. Firefighters and Emergency Technicians help us too. They take very sick people to the hospital. Thank you, God, for special helpers in my community. Jesus had special helpers too."

### **Puzzles**

Resources: Bible, community helpers puzzles (a police officer, a firefighter, rescue vehicles, a post office worker, a nurse, a doctor), Judy puzzle "Helping Others"

Teaching Hint: Puzzles for younger preschoolers should have 6-8 pieces. Peg puzzles make it easier for young preschoolers to pick up the puzzle pieces. Puzzles for older preschoolers should have 8-12 pieces.

Place three or four puzzles in a quiet area of the room. Have the children work together or individually to put together a puzzle. Have the Bible visible to the children. Open to a picture of Jesus calling the disciples as found in the *Read to Me Bible for Kids* (Holman) or to Matthew 4:18-22.

Say: "Will, you are working with Caleb to put the firefighter puzzle together. Thank you for being a helper this morning. Jesus chose special helpers. You are a helper too."

**Music: Sing a Helping Song**

Tune: "Are you sleeping?"

Words:

*Hayden is helping. Hayden is helping.*

*Pick up toys, Pick up toys.*

*We can all be helpers. We can all be helpers.*

*Girls and boys, girls and boys.*

Teaching Hint: The line "pick up toys..." can be changed to whatever the child is doing.

**Clean Up Time (5 minutes)**

Allow the children to continue to learn in the centers until approximately three minutes before group time, and then let them know it is time to clean up. Guide the children to finish up their activities in the centers and cleaning up the area they are in. If you like, have the children sing the "clean up song" or sing the helping song learned in the music area. Remind them how they have been helpers today during the session.

**Group Time (15 minutes)**

Resources: Bible, picture of Jesus calling the disciples as seen in the *Read to Me Bible for Kids* (Holman), community helper figures or pictures of community helpers

Invite the children over for group time. As you wait for all of the children to join you, hold up a community helper figure and ask the children how this person is a special helper. Allow for responses. Continue to play until all have joined the group.

Open your Bible to Matthew 4:18-22. Show the children where today's Bible story is found in the Bible. It is found in the New Testament. Matthew is the first book in the New Testament. With the Bible open, tell the Bible story in your own words.

**Jesus Calls the Disciples: Based on Matthew 4:18-22**

One day Jesus was walking by a big lake called the Sea of Galilee. It was a great place to catch lots of fish. There were many men with their boats and fishing nets out in the water.

Jesus saw two brothers fishing. Their names were Peter and Andrew. Jesus said, "Come with me. I want you to be my special helpers." The brothers put down their fishing nets and went with Jesus. Peter and Andrew were the first two men that Jesus chose to be his disciples. This means that they would be Jesus' special helpers.

Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John. They were in a fishing boat with their father, Zebedee. They were getting their fishing nets ready to go out and fish on the lake. Jesus called out to them. Jesus also asked them to be his special helpers. James and John got out of their boat and went with Jesus. They also became disciples of Jesus.

**Story Review**

Show a picture of Jesus calling the disciples, if there is one in your Bible.

Ask: What were the names of the special helpers in the Bible story?

(Peter, Andrew, James, and John)

What were their jobs? (They were fishermen)

What did Jesus say to these men? (Come, be my special helpers)

**Application**

Reflect on how the preschoolers were being helpers today.

Say: "We had many children helping in our classroom today. I saw Will share fire boots with Sam. I saw Allie helping Frances put away the blocks. I saw Noah clean up the paint from our art center. Did you see anyone else helping in our classroom? You can be special helpers just like Jesus' disciples. How can you be a helper at home? How can you be a helper at church? How can you be a helper at preschool?"

Allow preschoolers to respond.

**Prayer**

Say: "Thank you for the story in the Bible that tells us about Jesus choosing his special helpers. Help us to be special helpers, too. Amen."

**Closing Game (5 minutes)**

Play "Imitation." Pretend that you are a community helper. For example, act out being a firefighter who is putting out fires with a hose. Have the children imitate what you are doing. Describe your actions (e.g., "I am a firefighter putting out fires"). Imitate another helper by hammering nails and pretending to use a saw. Say, "I am a carpenter building a house." Some additional ideas are farmer, teacher, and mechanic. Continue playing the game until all of the children have been picked up or until the teachers for extended session have arrived.