

# sunday school lesson

# YOUTH

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## Bible Story:

Jesus Calls the Disciples (Matthew 4:18-22)

## Opening Activity

Provide each student with a copy of the "Let's Go Cruisin'" handout (*see page 4*).

Say: "Imagine you have just been offered the trip of a life time – an all-expense-paid cruise around the world. You will be gone for a year. The only catch is that you have only 30 minutes to pack. Make a list of 5 things that you would pack that you feel you could not live without."

Allow time for your students to make their list. Then say: "Now while on your cruise you encounter extremely rough seas which damage the ship and cause the captain to have everyone abandon ship. You are not allowed to take anything with you on the lifeboats. Of the 5 things that you packed that you thought were most essential, which would you miss the most? Why?"

Debrief: "Jesus called his disciples to join him on an incredible journey. We will take some time and look at Jesus' call of four of his disciples and how they responded."

## What is a disciple?

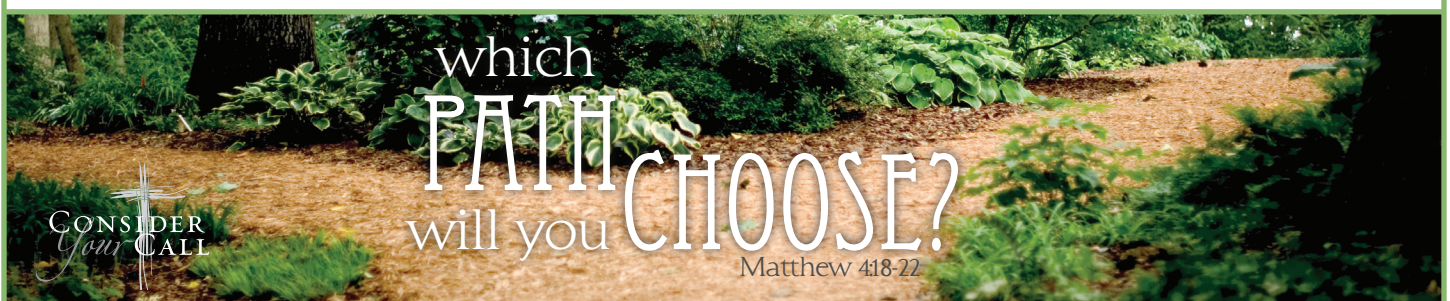
Have a student read the focal passage.

Ask the students to respond to the question: "What is a disciple?"

Merriam-Webster defines a disciple as one who accepts and assists in spreading the doctrines (teachings) of another. Many dictionaries solely equate being a disciple with being a follower of Christ.

Background: "The normal pattern in Israel was for a prospective disciple to approach a rabbi and ask to study with him.... At the inauguration of his kingdom mission, Jesus establishes a new pattern, because he is the one who takes the initiative to seek out and give a call for these brothers to enter into a permanent relationship with him" (Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary, 2002, p. 30).

Ask: "There were many 'teachers and disciples' at this time; why do you think it was important for Jesus to personally choose his disciples and change what it meant to be a disciple?"



## The Call

### Peter and Andrew

Have your students reread Matthew 4:18-20 and also read John 1:35-42.

Ask: "What information is found in the passage in John that gives more insight about Peter and Andrew?"

- Both were looking for the Messiah.
- Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist.
- "The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him" (John 1:41). This verse will be significant later in this study.

### James and John

Have your students reread Matthew 4:21-22.

Ask: "What do you notice that is different about their call?"

- They were going about their regular business.
- They were with their father.

## The Response

### Immediate

Peter and Andrew – "at once they left their nets and followed him" (Matt. 4:20).

James and John – "and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him" (Matt. 4:22).

Peter and Andrew knew of the Messiah and had met him. Being raised in the church, many of us have heard about Jesus and have not become a disciple until we have had a personal encounter with Christ.

James and John followed Jesus immediately after they met him. There is a world out there that doesn't know Jesus but would be willing to follow him if they could meet him and hear his call.

All four of these men followed Jesus without hesitation. Not only did they leave "immediately," but they also never looked back once they left.

### Changed lives

They gave up the family business/chosen career. They left their families.

Jesus said they would become "fishers of men."

Ask:

- Do you think the disciples had any idea of what Jesus was really asking them to do?
- What would you need to become fishers of men? (With fishing, you would first have to know what you are fishing for, what type of bait you would use, the best time and place to fish, and the best method for fishing. Now how would you translate that into being "fishers of men"?)
- How do you learn to fish? (someone teaches you) How did they learn? (someone taught them) Isn't this the definition of being a disciple?
- Do you think they had any fears?

On a white board, chalk board, or poster board, make a list of the things the disciples may have feared. Which "fears" on this list do you have about being a follower of Christ?

Jesus is very upfront about the cost of being a disciple. Read aloud John 15:18-16:4.

## The Results

Each of the disciples was used in an incredible way to spread the Gospel.

Andrew

- Responsible for introducing Jesus to Peter his brother.
- Andrew's first response was to connect someone else to Christ.

- A current ministry example today would be “Operation Andrew,” which began out of a Billy Graham Crusade to reach across racial, ethnic, and denominational lines to bring others to Christ. Their Mission Statement is: “The Operation Andrew Group exists to unite and encourage the body of Christ for furthering the Gospel in word and deed throughout the community to the glory of God.” [www.operationandrew.org](http://www.operationandrew.org)
- Tradition says Andrew was crucified on a “St. Andrew’s Cross.”
- Jesus’ command to each of us is to “go and tell others.”



“St. Andrew’s Cross”

#### James

- Became one of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples.
- Established his ministry in Jerusalem and Judea.
- Beheaded by Herod.

#### John

- Became one of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples.
- Known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” because of their close relationship.
- Wrote the Gospel of John; 1, 2, & 3 John; Revelation
- Banished to the island of Patmos.
- Tradition holds that he was the only disciple to die a natural death of old age.

#### Peter

- Became one of the “inner circle” of Jesus’ disciples.
- Known for acting before thinking.
- The Gospels tell many stories of Peter’s actions that took him to a deeper understanding of who Christ was (e.g., Matthew 16:13-19).
- Wrote 1 & 2 Peter.
- Tradition holds that his ministry reached as far as Rome, where he was crucified, head downward.

### The Challenge

Each of us who are followers of Christ/disciples is called to be a minister. We are to use our gifts to bring others to Christ. Ask: “What gifts do you have to offer in bringing others to Christ?”

Jesus challenged all of those who said they wanted to follow him with the cost of discipleship. Have a student read Luke 14:25-34.

Say: “The disciples gave up everything they had to follow Christ. Earlier in the lesson you were asked about some things that you could not live without. What are some things in your life that you are holding onto now that are keeping you from being a true disciple of Christ? On the back of the handout you were given earlier, take a couple of moments and list some things that are keeping you from being who you know you can be in Christ.” (possible answers: relationships, too many things on my calendar/no time, I don’t think I know enough, etc.)

Give your students a couple of minutes to think through their answers and let them know that what they write will be between them and God.

Jesus called each of his disciples personally to follow him. He is still calling us today through the Holy Spirit to do to the same thing. For some, the call is simply to live our lives each day in faith in honoring our commitment to God. For others, God may be calling you into full-time service in ministry. Your commitment is not without sacrifice, nor is it without reward.

Read Matthew 19:27-30. The disciples left everything they had, including family, without question. They left the known for the unknown. They faced their fears. They followed Christ on the adventure of a lifetime. Jesus promised that they would receive “a hundred times as much” as what they left behind and “will inherit eternal life.”

Ask: “Are you hearing God’s call and are you willing to be called a disciple of Christ?”

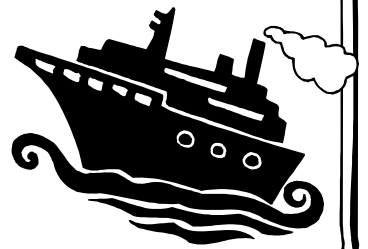
### The Closing Prayer

Close with prayer asking for each student to be open to hearing God’s voice in their lives and to having the courage to follow God’s calling, wherever it may lead.

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- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



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