



## A New Disciple

(based on Acts 1:12-14, 21-26)

Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus went back to heaven to live with God. Jesus' friends knew they had to carry on without him. Before he left, Jesus gave them an important job to do. They had to share the good news of God's love everywhere. The disciples knew it was time to get organized.

Everyone was afraid of the soldiers because of what had happened to Jesus, so they decided they would meet together in groups to pray and worship God.

At first the gatherings were quite small, but the word quickly spread and the small groups grew into larger ones.

One day, there were 120 people gathered together to pray. All of the disciples were there with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and a lot of other women and men. Peter had called everyone together to choose someone to help the disciples with their important work.

"As you know, Jesus chose twelve of us to become leaders," Peter explained. "Judas was one of us, but he died. We need someone to take the place of Judas so that we can be twelve again. The person we choose needs to be someone who traveled with Jesus from the beginning."

There were two people who had followed Jesus from the beginning. Their names were Matthias (muh-THAI-uhs) and Justus (JUHS-tuhs). The group gathered in a circle around them.

Justus and Matthias were both good people. They were both willing to serve God. Who would it be: Matthias or Justus—Justus or Matthias? How could they possibly decide?

Jesus' friends remembered that he always prayed to God whenever there was a decision to be made. So, they prayed:

"Lord, you know what everyone is like! Show us the one you have chosen to be an apostle and to serve in place of Judas."

They wrote Matthias and Justus's names on small stones. After a lot of praying, thinking, and talking, they tossed the stones and . . . Matthias's name was chosen!

Matthias was glad to join the other eleven disciples. He knew that God would use him to share the good news everywhere. He wanted to help and serve others like Jesus. Matthias couldn't wait to get started.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

### Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Matthias was chosen by casting lots. Talk about the ways different groups choose leaders, such as a school class or student council, the church, a business, our country, and so forth.
- Use a pair of dice to cast lots for happenings in your household—who will go first, who will sit where, and who picks what to eat for supper. Wonder how God can work through casting lots.



### Responding to God's Grace

- The disciples organized the work of the church. Think of ways your family can work together to make household chores more efficient and enjoyable.
- Have a jar with slips of paper describing jobs the children can do. Let everyone draw a slip and complete the chore.
- Send thank-you notes to the members of your church's session, thanking them for serving as leaders of the church.

### Celebrating in Gratitude

- Ask your pastor about your congregation's search process to find a pastor. Ask what circumstances brought your pastor to serve your congregation. Ask how she/he knew that she/he was called to this work. Express gratitude to your pastor for his/her service.
- Decorate graham cracker squares with icing to look like the face of dice. As you enjoy the graham crackers, remind the children how stones were tossed to choose a disciple.
- Play the dice game Yahtzee. You need five dice, a scorecard, and game directions. Do an internet search for a "printable Yahtzee scorecard" and "how to play Yahtzee." You can play with two or more people. Besides being a fun game, it uses math skills and strategy.
- Pray:

*Lord, you know what everyone is like! Show us how to live to serve you and one another. Amen.*