



Jesus Begins His Ministry

(based on Mark 1:16–39)

After Jesus was baptized, he went into the wilderness. After forty days, he left the desert and was ready to start his ministry.

He began by finding people to help him. As Jesus walked along the Sea of Galilee, he called out to two fishermen, “Follow me! I will make you fish for people.” Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew, immediately left their nets and followed him. A little way further, Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John. He called them too. They jumped out of the boat, leaving their father with the nets, and followed Jesus.

On the sabbath day, Jesus and his friends went to the synagogue to worship. Jesus stood up and taught the people worshipping that day. People were amazed at what he had to say. He was so confident; he wasn’t like one of the other teachers.

While he was teaching, a man disrupted the lesson with shouting. Jesus was able to calm the unruly man. Once again, the people were amazed. They told others about Jesus, and soon all the region knew who Jesus was and what he could do.

Jesus and his friends went to Simon Peter’s house and found Simon Peter’s mother-in-law in bed with a fever. Jesus took her hand and made her well. She felt so good that she made dinner for them.

By the time the sun went down, so many people had heard about Jesus and what he could do that many, many people gathered outside the home. They brought people who were sick and hurting. Jesus healed them too.

In the morning, while it was still very dark, Jesus got up and went to a quiet place to pray.

Simon Peter, Andrew, James, and John went looking for Jesus. They told Jesus that people were looking for him. Jesus said, “Let’s go on to the neighboring towns. They need me too. I will proclaim God’s good news because that is what I came to do.”

Jesus and his friends went from town to town, healing people and telling everyone about God’s love.



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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 together—imagine and wonder.
- Wonder together how you are doing ministry like Jesus: calling disciples—inviting others to come alongside and join in the excitement of the faith community; teaching—sharing what you've learned about God; healing—laughter, hugs, and empathy all bring moments of healing to another; praying—talking with God and sharing what is on your hearts and minds; and proclaiming—telling others good news.
- Read *Miracle Man* by John Hendrix (Harry N. Abrams, 2016) and marvel at the way this author and illustrator depicts the life of Jesus.



Responding to God's Grace

- Trace feet on colorful paper. Cut them out. Think of ways you follow in Jesus' footsteps. Write one action on each foot. Display where you can see the footsteps each day and remember to follow Jesus.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Play Follow the Leader, Jesus' style! Say, "Jesus was friendly," and shake another person's hand. Have that person repeat that action. Do the same for the following statements and actions:
 - "Jesus was kind." Pretend to tie another's shoelace.
 - "Jesus was giving." Pull a penny or something out of your pocket and give it to another person.
 - "Jesus was happy." Smile at another person.
 - "Jesus studied the Bible." Hand another person a Bible.
 - "Jesus told others about God." Say, "God is good," to another person.
 - "Jesus praised God." Hold up your hands and say, "Praise the Lord!"
 - "Jesus cared about others." Pat another person's shoulder.
 - "Jesus was honest." Hold up one hand like you are going to take an oath.
 - "Jesus was encouraging." Hold up a fist and give a cheer, such as "You can do it."
 - "Jesus prayed." Kneel if you are able, and fold your hands.
 - "Jesus loved everyone." Give another person a hug.
- Pray this prayer each day this week.

Dear God, help us to follow in Jesus' footsteps each day: calling disciples, teaching, healing, praying, and proclaiming. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.