

1

Come and See!

JOHN 1:35–50



GOAL

Children hear the story of Christ's invitation to the disciples to follow him and how the disciples responded, and explore how they can respond to Jesus' invitation to follow him into a life of love.

- 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

Holy God, bless me as I explore the stories of faith with children, and grant me courage, wonder, and joy, as I shepherd these children. Holy Spirit, bring your peace and wisdom to this work today. Amen.

THIS SESSION

This first session introduces the idea of following Jesus. The children explore what it means to be invited by Jesus into a life of discipleship. The journey of Christian discipleship begins with Jesus' personal invitation to come and see what a life as a follower of God looks like.

THE BIBLE STORY

In the first chapter of John, Jesus calls those who will become his disciples, but it is not the story of the fisherman we know and love. Instead, Jesus invites different individuals to follow him. He gives no big clues about the future or what following him means. He just gently encourages them to come and see what a life with God, full of love, will be.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

In this session, children will hear Jesus' story of invitation to the disciples. By hearing this story, children will practice recognizing Jesus' invitation to follow him and will notice some of the different ways that they can respond to Jesus' invitation into a life of discipleship.

SESSION PREPARATION

- "Follow the Leader Obstacle Course" (p. 8): Gather items and ideas for a simple obstacle course that the children may help set up.
- "Paw Paw Patch" (p. 9): Show the YouTube video "The Paw-Paw Patch" (bit.ly/FMPawPaw, 3:53), stopping the video at :39 to learn the tune of "Paw Paw Patch" so that you may lead the children in singing.

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Singing Our Faith" (p. 10): Show the YouTube video "[Kids Worship]—I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (bit.ly/FMDecided, 2:49) to learn the tune of "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" so you can lead the children in singing.



GETTING STARTED

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- Paper
 - Crayons, markers, or colored pencils

PLAYTIME PICTURES A

As children arrive, invite the children to draw a picture of a time when they have been asked to play with someone. Talk together about how being asked to play made them feel. Encourage children to share their picture and story with one another.

COME AND SEE

Introduce the children to the opening ritual for each of the sessions of this unit. Have the children sit in a circle. Have another leader model the children's responses while you share the words of the leader. Then repeat the responsive reading, prompting the children's responses and encouraging them to turn to a child to their right and say, "I'm going! You come too!" sending this exclamation around the circle.

Jesus says to us, "Come and see!"

What is there to see?

Jesus has so much to show us about God's love.

Where are we going?

Jesus is leading us to God.

(begin with the child on your right and then have them take turns)

I'm going! You come too!



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

This session's practice is accepting Jesus' invitation to follow him. Wonder together how it feels to be invited to play with someone. Explain to the children that Jesus invited people to come and be with him too. He invited people to spend time with him. Wonder how people might have felt to get that invitation. Tell the children that people who followed Jesus became his disciples, which means they learned from him; Jesus invites us to follow him too.

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- Obstacle course items, such as chairs, hula hoop, broomstick, felt strips, and so forth

FOLLOW THE LEADER OBSTACLE COURSE AM C

Invite the children to help set up a simple obstacle course. Some ideas for the course can include: strips of felt to create "sticks" to tiptoe on, a hula hoop to jump into and out of, and a broomstick balanced on chairs to walk under. Include different kinds of body movement: jumping, tiptoeing, walking quickly, sneaking carefully, and so forth.

Lead the children through the obstacle course and then have them take turns following one another as leader. Reflect together on what being a good follower through the obstacle course looks like. Include things such as good listening, self-control, and making your body do what the leader is doing, if they are not mentioned.



You can create an obstacle course out of anything! If a course is challenging for your group or space, you can still be creative with body movements to mimic throughout your room or a game of Simon Says. Don't be afraid to be silly!



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

REFLECTING AND CONNECTING



Resource Page 1

Gather the children together and set the stage for the Bible story. Tell the children that Jesus has just been baptized by John the Baptist, and some of John's followers have heard about Jesus and see him baptized. They are about to meet up with Jesus again. Read the Bible story, based on John 1:35–50, aloud to the children using Resource Page 1.

Reflect on the story with the children. Use the following questions to help spur some conversation about the story. Avoid answering the open-ended questions for the children. Instead, encourage them to wonder by wondering with them:

- What was funny about the first time Simon met Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus gave Simon a new name: Peter?
- How did Nathanael feel when he met Jesus?
- What do you think happened to the people who decided to follow Jesus?
- What do you think you would have done if Jesus asked you to follow him?



Remember that it's OK for some silence to happen after you ask questions. Give the children time to think—up to seven seconds—before you move on with your next question or activity.

PAW PAW PATCH



Internet-connected device

Invite the children to watch and sing along with the YouTube video “The Paw-Paw Patch” (bit.ly/FMPawPaw, 3:53), stopping the video at :39. Once the tune is familiar, have the children take turns being named. Have that child find a place in the room away from the other children. As the children sing the first verse, have them walk in a circle, looking around for the missing child. As they sing the second verse, have them go find the child and bring them back to the circle. Provide the children with the following words, which are slightly different from the video. Have them take turns being the person named and invited to the circle.

Where oh where oh where is dear little (*Name*)? (*repeat two times*)
Way down yonder in the paw paw patch!

Come on y'all, let's go find (him/her)! (*repeat two times*)
Way down yonder in the paw paw patch!

At the end of the singing, reflect with the children on how this song includes an invitation, just like Jesus' invitation to the disciples to follow him.



If the children are curious about what paw paws are, tell them that they are the largest native fruit in North America that can be eaten. Paw paw trees can be found in 26 states, mostly in the East and Great Lakes regions of the United States.



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Tell the children that God’s people all over the world and all throughout history have accepted Jesus’ invitation to follow him. When we follow Jesus, we get to see the world a little bit more like God sees the world—full of love!

Choose one or both options.

- Hymnal with “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” or internet-connected device



As an alternative, invite the children to watch, sing along, and dance to the YouTube video “[Kids Worship]—I Have Decided to Follow Jesus” (bit.ly/FMDecided, 2:49). This is a fun dance and movement version of the first verse with a simple refrain added.

- Resource Page 2
- Assorted colors of tissue papers, cut or torn into ½”–1” squares
- Glue sticks

SINGING OUR FAITH



Some hymns and songs of faith are full of theology for our children, and as they grow older, these hymns might become the bedrock of their faith. Remind the children that, just like Jesus’ new friends, they, too, can decide to follow Jesus.

Teach the children the first verse of “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus.” Go to bit.ly/FMDecidedTune if you need to hear the tune for the song. Sing the song while walking together in a circle or throughout your space.

Encourage the children to sing this song at home throughout the week to remember that it’s their job to follow Jesus too.

FOLLOWING IN JESUS’ FOOTSTEPS



Invite children to think of different ways they can follow Jesus. Display Resource Page 2 and note that it shows two children walking, or following. Tell the children you want to fill in the pictures of the children with colored pieces of tissue paper to represent all the ways they can follow Jesus. Have them take turns gluing a small piece of tissue paper onto pictures of the children’s legs and feet. As they glue, ask each child to share their idea about how they can follow Jesus. Write their idea anywhere on the resource page.

Keep encouraging ideas about following Jesus until the pictures of the children are filled in with colors. Display the poster in your space and refer back to all their good ideas of ways they can follow Jesus throughout the coming sessions.



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

In this introductory session, children have been introduced to the idea that Jesus invited his new friends to follow him. Jesus extends that same invitation to us—even the youngest in our midst—today too!

Choose one or both options.

- Copies of Resource Page 3
- Crayons, colored pencils

“COME AND SEE” COLORING PAGE



Hand out copies of Resource Page 3 and explain to the children how it can help them remember and practice today’s story with their families at home. Look at each picture together and read the captions. Notice how one invitation encourages people to follow and invite others. Invite the children to color the pictures.

As the children color the pictures, use the time to reflect further on how each child can practice following Jesus at home. Wonder together to whom they would like to say, “Come and see!” Suggest that they can say, “Come and see my church” or “Come and see who Jesus is” or “Come and see my Sunday school class.” Encourage the children to look at the pictures with family members and practice inviting others to “come and see!”

IS THIS FOLLOWING JESUS?



In the John text, Jesus asks the people he meets to follow him, but he does not share with them all that will be expected of them. It is important to help the children shift from the literal story to drawing connections with the ways they can follow Jesus today.

Share with the children that the story today was just the beginning of the disciples’ lives of following Jesus. They spent time with Jesus. They learned from him. They followed his example. They told others about Jesus. Explain that Jesus wants the children to follow him too. Suggest that we follow Jesus by doing what we think he would want us to do.

Tell the children that you are going to share an instruction with them, and they have to decide if this instruction is something that Jesus would ask them to do to follow him by standing and walking in place. Have the children be seated between instructions. Use the following suggestions and add some of your own. Make note of which suggestions were easy to identify as ways to follow Jesus and which ones seemed more difficult to decide. Talk together about the suggestions.

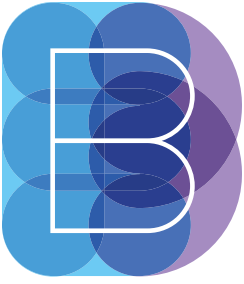
- Going to church
- Using unkind words
- Learning stories about God, Jesus, and God’s people
- Getting frustrated with a friend or sibling
- Not being a good listener
- Being a helper at home
- Being kind to a sibling
- Not sharing with a friend or sibling
- Planting a garden
- Taking care of a pet
- Not doing what a trusted adult asks you to do
- Telling someone about Jesus
- Making cards for someone who is sick or lonely



FOLLOWING JESUS

Gather the children together in a circle. Encourage the children to listen for invitations this week and think about how they would respond to Jesus’ invitation to follow him. Invite the children to repeat after you as you pray:

Jesus, thank you for our friends in this circle. /
Thank you for asking us to follow you. /
We want to be your disciples. /
Amen. /



BIBLE STORY

BASED ON JOHN 1:35–50

One day long ago, a man named John was standing with two of his friends. John was a prophet—someone who listened for God and shared God’s words with other people. His friends were two of his followers who helped him. People who follow someone, help them, and learn from them are called *disciples*. John and his two disciples saw Jesus just walking along, and said, “Wow! Look! It’s Jesus!” John’s two disciples remembered what John had told them about Jesus, so they started to follow him.

Jesus looked at them and said, “Hey! What are you looking for?”

The disciples asked, “Teacher, where are you staying right now? At a house? An inn?”

Jesus said, “Come and see.”

The disciples were curious, so they followed Jesus to where he was staying. They didn’t leave him until the end of the day.

After he left Jesus, one of the disciples, Andrew, went back to his brother, Simon, and said, “Hey! We met someone special today. He has been sent from God to us. His name is Jesus. Come and see!”

So Simon came and met Jesus. The funny thing is that, even though Jesus hadn’t met Simon, Jesus already knew who he was. He said, “You’re Simon. I’m going to give you a new name: Peter.”

The next day, Jesus went into the city of Galilee, and he found a man named Philip. He told Philip, “Follow me.” Philip was from the same town as Andrew and Peter, so maybe they knew each other.

Philip was curious about Jesus and, just like Andrew, he told his friend Nathanael, “I met someone special today. He has been sent from God to us. His name is Jesus.” Nathanael wasn’t so sure about this, but Philip was excited. He told Nathanael, “Hey, just come and see!”

When Nathanael got to Jesus, even though they hadn’t met, Jesus knew Nathanael, just like he knew Peter. Nathanael was confused, “How do you know me?”

Jesus said, “I’ve seen you before, even before you came here.”

Nathanael was amazed, and he knew Jesus was special and important, even if Nathanael didn’t understand why.

Jesus told Nathanael, “Do you believe that I’ve seen you before? If you follow me, you will see amazing things. I promise you that you will learn about God and learn more about me, if you come and see.”

