

LESSON

MEMORY VERSE: "Then Jesus said again, 'Peace be with you! As the Father has sent Me, I now send you.'" John 20:21

Before you start today's lesson, grab your coat and boots and take a walk outside. Look around and see how many different kinds of plants, trees and birds you see. Maybe you can draw pictures of what you see. God created everything you see in creation but He didn't just create a tree or a bird. He created hundreds of different trees and birds!

When God created you, He made you unique as well! You have special characteristics that make you different from anyone else. No one is just like you. When Jesus called twelve men to follow Him and be His disciples, He chose all kinds of men. Some were fishermen and one we know was a tax collector. God still calls all kinds of people to follow Him.

BIBLE STORY

When Jesus began His ministry on earth He was about 30 years old. He had grown up in Nazareth. Jesus went to school and he learned to be a carpenter from his earthly father, Joseph. We don't know a lot of details about Jesus' life between His birth and becoming an adult but Luke 2:52 tells us that "Jesus grew in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." So we know that Jesus grew physically, he grew in wisdom, that he was well liked among the community and that God was pleased with Him.

As the time came for Jesus to begin His teaching ministry, He called a special group of followers to join Him on His three year mission. These were just ordinary people. But they were set apart for a big job! Jesus was going to be their friend and He was going to teach them and He was going to help them fulfill the great work of proclaiming the Good News to the ends of the earth!

So who were these men?

Read Mark 3:13-19

Simon Peter and Andrew – One day, as Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, He saw two fishermen. Jesus called out to the men, "Come! Follow Me!" Without even hesitating, they left their nets and followed Jesus.

James and John - Were also fishermen and on a boat mending nets with their father when Jesus called them. They also responded immediately and left the boat and their father behind to follow Jesus.

Philip and Nathanael (Bartholomew) – Not all of the disciples were fishermen. On His way to Galilee, Jesus found Philip and invited him to come along too. Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter. Philip went to find his friend Nathanael. "Nathanael, we've found the one that Moses wrote about in the Scripture! He is Jesus from Nazareth." When Nathanael met Jesus he was very surprised. He had never met Jesus before but Jesus knew all about him. Because of this Nathanael knew that Jesus was someone very special sent from God. He started following Jesus too. You might know Nathanael by his other name. His other name was Bartholomew.

Matthew – Matthew was a tax collector in the town of Capernaum. Some people thought that Matthew could never be like Jesus. Tax collectors were often cheaters. But Jesus knew that Matthew had a good heart. When Jesus said, "Matthew, come follow me" Matthew got up from the table and began following Jesus.

BIBLE STORY CONTINUED

Thomas, James, Simon, Thaddeus and Judas Iscariot – As these men followed Jesus they observed and learned everything they could from Him. They saw how Jesus cared for people. They saw how He loved people and God. They saw how Jesus responded both to people who showed love and respect to Him and those who hated Him.

For three years these men traveled with Jesus. They ate their meals with Him. As they gathered around the campfire or around a table to eat together, they learned from Jesus. Jesus taught them Scripture and the meaning of God's Word. He showed them how to pray and grow their faith. He told them multiple times who He was but it didn't sink in right away. Even as they saw Him perform miracles and signs it wasn't until the Resurrection that they truly understood who He was and that their ministry was to share the Good News of salvation with people everywhere.

After Jesus' death and resurrection He appeared to the disciples and they were filled with joy. In John 20:21 we read Jesus' words to the disciples as He both comforted them and commissioned them for the job ahead of them. "Jesus said to them again, 'Peace be with you. As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.'"

This is our memory verse today. The words that Jesus said to His disciples are true for us as well. Jesus wants us to have peace in Him. To know Him and trust Him as our Savior. And then to share Him with others. There is no more exciting or wonderful thing than to be used by God to lead someone to faith in Jesus.

Some of you may be thinking to yourselves, "Wait a minute! I'm just a kid! I barely know Jesus. I can't do anything without Mom and Dad's okay! Does Jesus really want me on his team right now?"

Yes he does! Jesus can use you, even at your age, to be a witness to others. Jesus can use you to teach your friends, your siblings, even your teachers and parents about His love. Jesus needs kids who are willing to speak up for the Bible. He needs kids who are willing to love the kids no one else wants to love. He wants us to look for opportunities to serve others and then do it!

Don't let your youth or inexperience keep you from joining God's team. God isn't looking for perfection. Jesus spent three years working on Peter, James, John, Andrew, and the others. They still didn't get it, and none of them did understand fully until they went home to be with Jesus in Heaven. But they were willing to serve, and God used them to do great things.

COLORING PAGES & ACTIVITY SHEETS

We would love to see pictures or video of you working on today's lesson. Please feel free to post them to the First Light Kids page on Facebook.