



WEEK TWO – MARCH 2024 – PRESCHOOL

Bible Story: *Follow Me | Matthew 9:9-12; Luke 5:1-11*

Key Question: *Who wants to be your friend forever?*

Bottom Line: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Memory Verse: *“I have called you friends.”– John 15:15 NIV*

Basic Truth: *Jesus wants to be my friend forever.*

Series Overview: Waiting to be picked by a team in grade school is agonizing. If you're some of the last people chosen by a team, it means while everyone else is cheering, "Go team!" you're probably thinking something like, "They don't want me, and I don't want to be here." The truth is, we don't all have the skills to hit home runs or run really fast. And that's okay. What's not okay is being unwanted. Thankfully, for all of us, Jesus wants everyone on His team! Jesus wants everyone everywhere to follow Him and be His friend forever. No matter what we can or can't do, what we have done, what we look like, or where we live, Jesus is alive and He wants to be our friend...forever! And that kind of Good News makes us all want to say, "GO TEAM!"

9:00 - 9:15 | 11:00 – 11:15 | EARLY ARRIVERS ACTIVITY

Opening Small Group Activity

Explore: an activity that channels a preschooler's innate curiosity into a discussion of the week's crucial concepts

What You Need: “Twelve Disciples” Activity Page; craft tubes, tape, freestanding paper towel holder

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Gather children around your circle
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Point out the pictures of the twelve disciples
 - Encourage the children to stack tubes on one of another
 - Talk about how these were the first people Jesus asked to follow Him, they were called disciples and were Jesus' friends
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Introduce the disciples and today's Bible story

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, gather around the SG space!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Look! These rings have pictures on them. Let's count how many friends we have on the table. (*Count the tubes together.*) One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, eleven, twelve! Great! Now let's see if we can stack them up on this paper towel holder like this. (*Demonstrate.*) Can you stack up the rest? Make sure every friend has a turn. (*Repeat as desired.*) Do you know who these people are? (*Pause.*) These are pictures of Jesus' friends! That was really fun stacking up all the people!”
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*

- “In our Bible Story today, we’ll hear about Jesus’ friends, the twelve disciples. They followed Him everywhere. Let’s go find out about them.”
- *TRANSITION*
 - Move to Worship and Story by pretending to walk along a dusty road. Pretend to walk by crowds of people, donkeys, and other animals.

9:15 - 9:45 | 11:15 – 11:45 – LARGE GROUP

Story Focus: Jesus wants everyone to follow Him. Jesus begins forming what would become His team of 12 disciples. Jesus didn’t go to the religious leaders or the powerful political leaders to pick His team. No, instead Jesus went to a fishing boat where He asked Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. Then Jesus went to a tax collector’s booth and asked a very unpopular Matthew to follow Him. Jesus chose 12 people, from different jobs and families, to follow Him and become His friends, the disciples. But that’s not all of this story, because Jesus isn’t done yet! Jesus loves everyone, and Jesus wants everyone to be His friend forever!

9:45 – 10:05 | 11:45 – 12:05 – SMALL GROUP

Jesus and Friends

[Live for God | Application Activity]

Move: an activity that allows preschoolers to review the Bible story, bottom line or memory verse by creating a craft to take home

What You Need: “Jesus and Friends” Activity Page; crayons; scissors; glue sticks; permanent marker

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*

- Give each child a “Jesus and Friends” activity page
- Write each child’s name on their paper
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Encourage the children to color their paper
 - Ask children to cut on the dotted lines and glue the pictures in the marked spots around Jesus
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Review the Bible story

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Friends, come sit at the circle with me! Let’s make a picture of today’s Bible Story.”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Look at your paper and tell me what you see in the middle of your paper. *(Pause.)* That’s right! It’s a heart with Jesus inside! *(Pause.)* Color Jesus and the heart. *(Pause.)* Great! Now look at all the pictures on the side of your paper. Color those too. *(Pause.)* Take your scissors and cut on the dotted lines. *(Help as needed.)* Great job, everyone! Now glue the pictures around Jesus. *(Pause.)* Fantastic! These pictures are of Jesus’ friends, the disciples. Let’s count them together. One, two, three . . . twelve! You have one more thing to add to your picture, and that’s you! Draw a picture of you on your paper. *(Pause.)* Amazing!”
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - “In our Bible Story, we learned about these twelve people—they were the first people who followed Jesus. This is Peter and Andrew. *(Point.)* They were fishermen. One day, while they were fishing, Jesus told them, ‘Follow Me!’ And they did! James and his brother John were fishermen too. *(Point.)* They were working with their dad when Jesus said, ‘Follow Me!’ And they did! In the next town, Jesus found a man named Philip! *(Point.)* Philip followed Jesus and brought his friend Nathanael *(point)* to follow Jesus too! Next, we have Matthew. *(Point.)* He was a tax collector and made a lot of bad choices. But

Jesus still loved Matthew and wanted to be his friend. Jesus said, ‘Come, follow Me.’ And Matthew did! There was also Thomas and James . . . (*point*) . . . Thaddeus and Simon and Judas! (*Point.*) These were Jesus’ twelve disciples! That was His first team. Go team! But Jesus isn’t done yet! Jesus wants YOU to be on His team too . . . and your friends . . . and your family . . . because Jesus loves everyone, and Jesus wants everyone to be His friend forever! Yes! EVERYONE! Yes, Jesus wants to be everyone’s friend forever. **Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever!”**

Journal + Prayer

[Pray to God | Prayer Activity]

Reflect: an activity that creates space for personal understanding + application

What You Need: “Memory Verse Card” Activity Page; Bible; journal

What You Do:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - Place “Memory Verse Card” in Bible at John 15:15
 - Keep this card in your Bible all month long
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - Sit down and gather the children around you.
 - Review the Memory Verse and motions, then encourage the children to help you make a list of people in the journal
- *AFTER THE ACTIVITY*
 - Pray with the children using the list you made in the journal

What You Say:

- *BEFORE THE ACTIVITY*
 - “Now let’s sit down and talk about today’s Bible Story. One, two, three, sit down with me!”
- *DURING THE ACTIVITY*
 - “(*Open the Bible and lay it in front of the children.*) “*In our Bible Story today, Jesus told twelve people to follow Him. Those twelve people became Jesus’ friends, the disciples. Jesus wanted His disciples to help Him tell*

everyone, everywhere that Jesus wants EVERYONE to follow Him! It doesn't matter where you live, what you look like, what your job is, what language you speak, what you've done . . . Jesus wants EVERYONE to be His friend forever! And that means Jesus wants to be YOUR friend forever! Who wants to be your friend forever? Jesus wants to be my friend forever! Yay! Jesus wants to be my friend forever! We're learning a new Bible verse that will help us remember that Jesus wants everyone to be His friend. It says, 'I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,' (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) Stand up with me and let's say Jesus' words together! Just say what I say and do what I do. 'I (point up) have called you (two fingers on top of two fingers) friends,' (hook index fingers twice) John 15:15. (Open hands like a book.) We sound really good together! Go team! (Give two thumbs up.) Now let's sit down so we can write in our prayer journal and talk to God. (Open journal.) Today, we're going to make a list of people. It can be any person you can think of, because Jesus wants everyone to follow Him and be His friend! When I say your name, tell me the name of one person and I will write it in our journal.' (Remember to print as you write in the journal, so the children can recognize their names and the letters.)

- **AFTER THE ACTIVITY**

- *“Look at all the names! Let's use our list when we pray. Would anyone like to pray before I pray? (Give each child who wants to pray the opportunity to do so.) Dear God, thank You for sending Jesus to be friends with everyone. We pray that (read the list the children made) will follow Jesus. And I pray that (name each child) will follow Jesus too. We love You, God. In Jesus' name. Amen.”*