

Life of Christ

Matthew Follows Jesus

Matthew 9:9-13

Younger Verse

The Son of Man came . . . to save people. Luke 19:10 (CEV)

Older Verse

The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost.
Luke 19:10 (CEV)

Lesson Goals

Understand that Jesus came to earth for sinners
Recognize that we are all sinners who need forgiveness
Learn that Jesus can forgive sin and change lives

Welcome Time

Have you ever felt like no one wanted to be around you or liked you? Can you think of someone at school that nobody likes? Today we will see that Jesus looked for people that no one else liked, and He would be their friend.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Last week, we learned that Jesus healed a man and made him walk again. Jesus also forgave the man's sins. The religious leaders did not like Jesus because He said that He could forgive people's sins.

Ask: Do you believe that Jesus can forgive your sins?

One day, Jesus saw a **tax collector** named Matthew. Tax collectors were people who worked for the Roman government. The government officials told these men how much money to get from each citizen. Many times, these tax collectors took more money than they were supposed to. And what do you think they did with the extra money? They kept it for themselves.

People hated tax collectors and did not trust them. Tax collectors had a bad reputation. This means that because some of them did wrong, people did not like any of the tax collectors. They were rejected by the people.

Jesus walked up to Matthew's money table. Jesus asked Matthew to come and follow Him. Immediately, Matthew left the table and followed Jesus! He knew that Jesus was more important than money. He freely gave up his job and possessions and began to walk with Jesus.

That night, Matthew invited Jesus and His disciples to eat dinner at his house. Matthew also invited other tax collectors and "sinners" to the dinner. Once again, the religious leaders criticized Jesus for eating with these people. Jesus responded by telling them that sick people are the ones who need a doctor, not healthy people.

Ask: What did Jesus mean by this statement? Jesus wanted these leaders to know that He came to earth to help sinners be forgiven from their sins. The tax collectors

and “sinners” knew that they needed Jesus’ help to be forgiven for the bad things they had done. And they were grateful that Jesus loved them in spite of the sin. But the religious leaders thought they were already perfect, so they did not realize that they needed Jesus to forgive them, too! Jesus also told the people that He came for sinners, “not those who already think they are good enough.”

Romans 3:23 says that all people have sinned. We all need God’s forgiveness. That is why Jesus came to earth and died on the cross—to pay the price for our sins.

Jesus knew that Matthew needed forgiveness. And He knows that we need forgiveness for our sins. Matthew became one of the twelve disciples, and he wrote the book of Matthew. Like Matthew, we can become a follower of Jesus and live our lives to serve Him! We can help other “sinners” to know His love and forgiveness.

Review Questions

1. What was the name of the tax collector Jesus called to be His disciple? (Matthew)
2. What is a tax collector? (a person who worked for the Roman government to get people’s taxes; many times they took too much and kept it for themselves)
3. Who did Matthew invite to his home for dinner? (Jesus and the disciples, other tax collectors and “sinners”)
4. Why did the religious leaders criticize Jesus? (because He ate with sinners)
5. Jesus responded that He came to earth to do what? (for sinners—to bring forgiveness)

Prayer Time

Thank Jesus that He came to earth for everyone. Pray that we will love all people and help them understand God’s love and forgiveness.

Life Application

Matthew knew that God was more important than money. He left all the “stuff” that had controlled him and he followed Jesus. What about you? Do you love God more than “stuff”? Are there things in your life that you love more than Jesus? Matthew walked away from the “stuff” and he lived for God. Are you willing to do this?

Later in Matthew’s Gospel, he quotes Jesus as He talks about what is really important.

If any one of you wants to be my follower, you must put aside your selfish ambition, shoulder your cross, and follow me. If you try to keep your life for yourself, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for me, you will find true life. And how do you benefit if you gain the whole world but lose your own soul in the process? Is anything worth more than your soul?

- Matthew 16:24-26

Planning for Next Lesson
Jairus’ Daughter/Woman Who Touched Jesus
Matthew 9:18-26

Preschool Lesson For Matthew Follow Jesus

Pass out pennies and tell the kids that they will give them to you at a certain time in the lesson.

One day, Jesus was in a town and He saw a tax collector named Matthew. Matthew's job was to collect taxes from people. Back then, they did not have computers or cash registers that added tax to a purchase. The tax collectors would go to everyone in town and demand taxes for things that they bought. (Ask the kids to give you their pennies) Some tax collectors were sneaky and would ask for more than they would need. They would keep the extra.

Jesus walked up to Matthew's money table. Jesus asked Matthew to come and follow Him. Immediately, Matthew left the table and followed Jesus. He knew that Jesus was more important than money. He gave up these things and began to walk with Jesus.

The Bible tells us that Jesus went to Matthew's house for dinner. Many of Matthew's friends came to listen and learn. Matthew knew that Jesus could change their lives, too. He invited his friends so that they could see that Jesus was more important than anything else in the world.

Sing this to the tune of "BINGO."

There was a man who took money
And Matthew was his name-O
MONEY, MONEY, MONEY is what he collected.

Jesus came into the town
And Matthew followed Him now
JESUS, JESUS, JESUS, He loved Him most of all.

Hands-on Activities For Matthew Follows Jesus

Bring play money. Hand out the money to the students. Then, every time a certain word is used, like Matthew, take different amounts of the students' money. They will probably say this isn't fair; explain that the tax collectors took too much of the people's money, and that REALLY wasn't fair!

Bring chocolate coins to hand out for the snack.

Before class, wrap a piece of paper with the word "God" on it in clear wrap and hide it inside a box or pan of sand. Ask the kids to carefully dig for treasure in the sand. What is the treasure—God! (Teachers: you may want to do this outside so sand is easy to clean up.)

Pass out construction or drawing paper. Have the kids draw some coins on one side of the paper. Then have them turn the paper over and draw a picture of Jesus or write "Jesus." Ask them which one is more important—money or Jesus. Then have them put an X over the coins and hang up the picture of Jesus. They could also write today's memory verse on the paper.

Hide some articles around the room or outside. As the kids look for and find the items, remind them about the Bible verse—that Jesus came to look for those who were lost.

Talk about how Matthew invited his friends to meet Jesus. Ask the kids for ideas on how to invite their friends to church. Think of fun ways to help new people come. Maybe you could plan a dinner.