

# Called to Discipleship by Jesus



## Teacher's Guide

### Materials

audio-visual equipment to play DVD; DVD or video of “The Visual Bible: Matthew”; Bible dictionary or encyclopedia; pens or pencils

### Surveying the Source

Matt. 4:18–22; 5:46; 9:10, 11; 10:5–42; Mark 1:16–20; Luke 5:1–11; 18:10, 11; John 1:35–39.

### Plotting the Course

#### The students will:

- ▶ Reflect on why Jesus is someone worthy of following as a disciple.
- ▶ Explore what it means to be a disciple—a follower, an apprentice.
- ▶ Discover what it means to be a disciple of Jesus today.

### Preparing to Lead

The opening track of Bob Dylan’s gospel album *Slow Train Coming* is “Gotta Serve Somebody.” This song is a summary of the reality that all of us serve someone. Whether we realize it or not,

we are all “discipled” by someone—or, usually, by a variety of influences. The decision we must make is not whether we are disciples but who it is we will follow, learn from, and serve.

### Getting Started

**A.** Obtain a copy of the DVD or video of “The Visual Bible: Matthew” and show the footage of Matthew 4:18–22 (time code 00:22:40–00:24:48) and Matthew 9:9 (time code 01:01:13–01:02:35), which portrays Jesus calling the disciples from their fishing boats and from collecting taxes. Point out that it is likely that these first disciples had heard about Jesus and perhaps even had heard Him preach before He specifically called them to follow Him. Discuss what might have prompted these men to leave their former

lives to answer His call.

**B.** Invite a church member who is a tradesperson, artist, or someone who has completed an apprenticeship or traineeship to visit the class and explain their job and the training process they went through to learn their professional skills or trade. Have this person talk about their teachers, including other experienced tradespeople. Ask the visitor to also reflect on how that experience is similar to their Christian growth and learning. Allow time for questions from the class.

### Delving Into the Word

**A.** Distribute the reproducible activity (p. 33) and have students—either individually or in groups—complete the table with brief descriptions of each disciple before, during, and after their time with Jesus. Have a Bible dictionary or Bible encyclopedia available to help the class

discover some of the history of each of the disciples. Compare and contrast the different backgrounds and experiences of the disciples. Also focus on what they had in common and the difference Jesus made in each of their lives.

When students have completed the

sheet, ask them to identify who of the disciples they identify with the most easily or who they would most like to be like, and why.

**B.** In *The Great Omission*, Dallas Willard points out that the word *disciple* is used 269 times in the New Testament to describe the followers of Jesus, compared with just three uses of the term *Christian*.<sup>\*</sup> Today, however, it seems that most of us know something of what it means to be a Christian, but are less clear on what it means to be a disciple.

Divide the students into small groups. Ask them to read Matthew 10:5–42 as a set of instructions to the newly appointed

disciples and to imagine how these instructions might look if lived out in the students' lives today.

Ask each group to develop a drama depicting the life of a disciple in today's society.

Before the groups perform their skits, have them discuss if Jesus' job description is too bleak. Then have the groups present their depiction of discipleship to the rest of the class. Afterward, ask each group to explain the unique aspects of their presentation. Allow opportunity for interaction between the groups and the different ideas presented.

## Discussing the Ideas

1. Why do you think Jesus chose the specific 12 disciples He did? What made them special?
2. Did Jesus make a mistake in choosing Judas as a disciple? Explain.
3. Do you think you would have responded to Jesus' call to leave your job and follow Him? Why or why not?
4. How might we hear Jesus calling us today?
5. How would you explain discipleship

to a non-Christian friend, who may not be familiar with the terminology?

6. In what ways do the experiences and interactions of Jesus' disciples teach us about being part of the church as a group of people who together follow Him?

7. Why did Jesus' original disciples have some advantages we don't have? What advantages might we have that they didn't have?

## Closing the Activity

The opportunity to spend three and a half years traveling, sharing, and working with Jesus must have been wonderful. Then there was being able to listen to all of His instructions. To give up their former lives, the disciples must have felt that there was something special about Him.

But it seems so much of what they experienced only really made sense to them

later, as they continued to grow in their understanding of who Jesus was and what role they had been invited to play in His kingdom.

Theirs was an apprenticeship only fully appreciated with hindsight. Perhaps that's the way it is with us also, because the life of a disciple is always a life in progress—ever growing toward heaven.

**Nathan Brown, Warburton, Victoria, Australia**

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<sup>\*</sup>Dallas Willard, *The Great Omission: Reclaiming Jesus' Essential Teachings on Discipleship* (Oxford, UK: Monarch Book, 2006), p. 3.

Disciple	Before Jesus	As a Disciple	After Jesus
Simon (also called Peter)			
Andrew (Peter's brother)			
James (son of Zebedee)			
John (James's brother)			
Philip			
Bartholomew			
Thomas			
Matthew			
James (son of Alphaeus)			
Thaddaeus			
Simon			
Judas Iscariot			