

Walking With God

Following By Faith The Twelve Disciples



Prayer Starter

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit...

Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity every Sunday to grow closer to you. As we learn about your very first followers, help us, also, open our eyes and ears to all you have to teach us. Amen.

Hye-Q

Put a check next to the right answers:

- What were St. Paul's feelings about Christians before he found Jesus?
 - He didn't want to think about them_____
 - He went out of his way to be unfriendly to any Christian he met_____
 - He worked arresting Christians in order to have them put in prison_____
- What happened to St. Paul after Jesus spoke to him on the road to Damascus?
 - He floated up in the air_____
 - He lost his sight_____
 - He screamed out in fright_____
- Who helped St. Paul understand what Jesus wanted from him?
 - A Christian man named Ananias_____
 - The men who traveled with him on the road to Damascus_____
 - His close friend Andrew_____
- Like St. Paul, St. Nooneh was a missionary. She converted the people of
 - Caucasia_____
 - Georgia_____
 - Russia_____
- St. Nooneh's fellow nun chose a life of prayer and meditation and was visited by St. Gregory the Enlightener shortly before her death. Her name was St. _____.
- How do you think you would want to serve God? In prayer in a quiet country setting? Or being a teacher or missionary of the faith?



Daily Bread

Jesus came to earth to bring us a message about God's love. As he gathered followers around him, they themselves were so filled with faith, that it seemed to overflow! Have you ever poured yourself a glass of milk and it overflowed? That is exactly how Jesus' teachings work. You become so filled with his love and faith, you can do nothing but share it with others.

Many people heard him preach and believed in him, but only a few people decided to devote their whole lives to him.

These people were called the disciples. They were all different kinds of people who left their work and families to follow Jesus. Some of them were poor and some of them owned businesses. Some of them were gentle and some of them were tough.

Jesus started preaching to the people of Israel and people started to listen to him as their teacher. Many people heard his teachings and learned from him. There were 12 special men who were disciples of Jesus. A "disciple" is a student who follows his teacher and learns everything from him. Jesus called on them because of their great faith and devotion.

Jesus knew that when he was gone, the Holy Spirit would give the 12 disciples all they would need to share their beautiful new faith. From disciples, they would become apostles! (Remember: an "apostle" is someone who has learned as a disciple and then goes out into the world to teach others.

How are you a disciple?

How are you an apostle?



Well Versed

“Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will make you fishers of people.”

Mark 1:17



SCRIPTURE SOURCE

(Luke 5:4-11)

⁴When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon [Peter], "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵Simon [Peter] answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break.

⁷So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

⁹For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken.

¹⁰and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon [Peter], "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch people."

¹¹So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

In this passage from the Bible, Jesus shows Peter and his brothers what the power of faith could do. These men were all good fishermen. But they had had no success that night. And yet, once Jesus directed them and told them what to do, they were successful. Now they knew they would be able to be good "fishers of people."

What does this tell us about the best way to be strong in our faith?



BIBLE BYTES

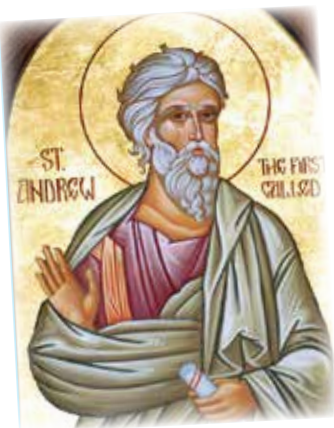
The people who followed Jesus called him "Rabbi." This is the title that the Jewish people call their spiritual teacher, the same way that we call our priest Der Hayr or Hayr Soorp.

CELEBRATE WITH GOD

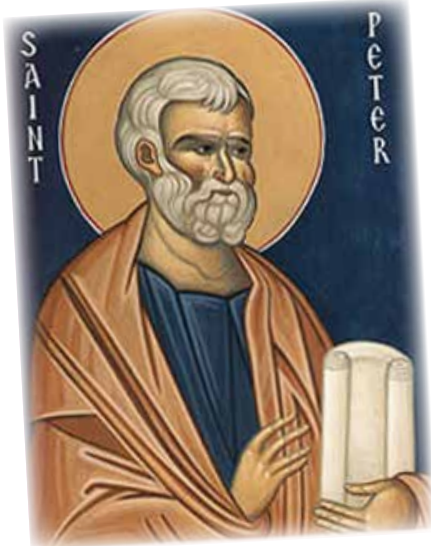
The Twelve Disciples: A Reader's Theater

“He called his twelve disciples to him and gave them authority to drive out evil spirits and to heal every disease and sickness. These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon (who is called Peter) and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus; Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.”

Matthew 10:1-4



Andrew: My name is Andrew. I am a fisherman. I actually knew John the Baptist first. He was the cousin of Jesus, and told us all that Jesus was here. Simon Peter is my brother and our father's name is Jonas. I brought my brother and many others to meet Jesus. Some of them became disciples, too. After Jesus left us, I traveled to many places, including Russia, Greece, and Scotland to tell everyone about him.



Peter: My brother, Andrew, introduced me to Jesus. We both worked together with our father as fishermen. Some people call me Simon. Some people call me Peter. It might be easier to call me Peter, because there is another disciple from the Bible who is called Simon, too. I knew Jesus was special after I spent time with him. I always asked him a lot of questions, because I knew I wanted to get his message right. Along the way, I also had many doubts about him. I get mad easily, but that is because I am a passionate man and believe that Jesus came to save us. Some people say I am the leader of the

disciples because Jesus asked me first to be an apostle. They also know that I spent a lot of time with Jesus and that I understood what he wanted from us.



James (son of Zebedee): James is a very common name where I come from. That is why everyone has to say that I am the son of Zebedee and the brother of John to make sure they know which James I am. My brother and I were also fishermen when we met Jesus. Our family had a very big fishing business. I don't talk as much as the others, but I followed Jesus and went out with my brother to teach about him.

John: James and I worked very hard in our family business with our father. After we met Jesus, we left all of that and devoted our lives to him. I was lucky because after Jesus left us, I lived a very long life. I preached all around the land where, today, Greece and Turkey are. Then one of the kings got very mad at me and he sent me to a small island. While I was there, I wrote a book about Jesus and our experience with him. It is one of the four gospels.

Philip: I came from the same town as James and John. We were friends growing up and when I heard about Jesus, I had to tell my other friends. I went to Bartholomew and told him that we found the Chosen One. I don't like to argue with people. I'd rather just show them what I see. I also helped Jesus feed thousands of people from two loaves of bread and a fish. That was a good one!



Bartholomew: Philip was a friend of mine. When he came to tell me about Jesus, I didn't really believe him. But when I went to listen to Jesus preach and saw all of the miracles he did, I was convinced. I knew I had to let everyone know about Jesus after he left us. I went very far away from Jerusalem to tell everyone about Jesus. I went to Armenia and converted members of the royal family. That helped to start the Armenian Church! After that, I went all the way to India and back. I was the one who discovered St. Mary's empty tomb.



Thomas: My name is Thomas and I am from Galilee. I was with Jesus when he brought Lazarus back from the dead. After Jesus was crucified, we all thought he was gone forever. But he rose again! When I saw him later, I wanted to touch his wounds to be sure it was really him. But I never did. Just seeing him made me know he was my Lord and my God.

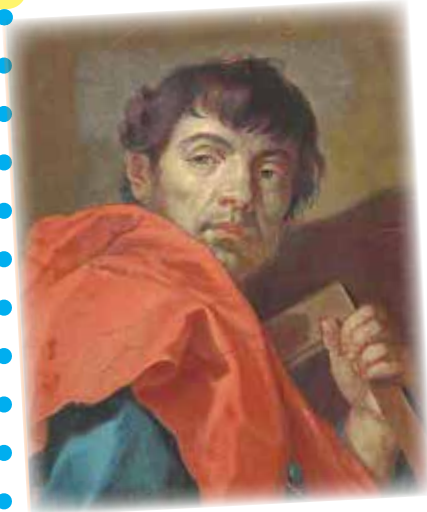
Matthew: Before I met Jesus, I worked for the Roman government. I was a tax collector and everyone hated me! But Jesus saw that I had a good heart and that just because some people did not like the job I did, it did not mean that I could not become his student. My Gospel comes first in the New Testament because I have so many references to the prophecies about Jesus. I wanted the Jewish people to understand that Jesus *was* the Messiah!



James (son of Alphaeus): The Bible doesn't talk about me that much, but I was there and I believed in Jesus all the way. After Jesus left us, many of the other apostles headed east, away from Israel, but I went south. I preached in Palestine and Egypt.

Thaddeus: In the Bible, I have a lot of different names. In some other churches, they call me Jude. I preached in Armenia before Bartholomew got there. I cured King Abgar of Edessa and converted his court to Christianity. Then I went further east to where I taught the daughter of King Sanadrook, Princess Santookht, to become Christian. The King didn't like that very much. The Armenian Church made the Princess their first saint.

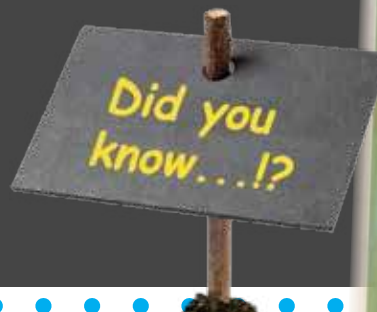
Simon (the Zealot): They call me a "Zealot" because I was part of a group of people in Israel who wanted the Romans out of our country. We were in a war with the Romans because they took our money as taxes and told us what to do. My old friends thought it was strange that I would follow Jesus alongside a tax collector like Matthew, when before I would always fight with someone like him. That was before I knew the love of Jesus.



Judas Iscariot: My name is Judas. All of the other disciples were from Galilee and I was from Judah near the town of Jericho. For a long time, I thought Jesus was going to take over Israel and kick out the Romans. You all probably know that I told the Pharisees where to find Jesus the night he was arrested. I regretted it so much that I killed myself. Jesus knew I would betray him, but he loved me anyway.



According to tradition, St. Thaddeus brought to Armenia the spear with which a Roman soldier pierced Christ's side on the cross. It was kept at Ayri Vank (Cave Monastery, present-day Geghard Monastery) in Armenia. Now, the spear is in Etchmiadzin.



In the Armenian Tradition

Two of the 12 apostles, Thaddeus and Bartholomew, traveled far away from Israel to spread the word of Jesus Christ. They both came to Armenia separately and converted many people to Christianity. Thaddeus cured the Armenian King of Edessa and taught his court about Jesus. He kept going east and entered the kingdom of King Sanadrook, converting his daughter. Thaddeus lost his life because of his beliefs.

Bartholomew came later and converted the sister of King Sanadrook and many others. He went on to India. These two disciples are considered the “First Enlighteners” of Armenia.

Who was the Second?

Thaddeus and Bartholomew are honored as saints and have special feast days dedicated to them in the Armenian Church.



Family Focus

Today we learned all about the 12 disciples and what it means to be a disciple. The children performed a “Reader’s Theater” about these twelve special followers of Jesus.

Living Your Faith

1. Take a moment to talk with your children about what it means to be devoted to learning something. Discuss a special teacher or mentor in your life that helped you in your work or personal life. Compare that to the followers of Jesus.
2. Think of the people you know who bear the disciples’ names. Some of them may be in Armenian: i.e., Bedros=Peter; Hovhanness=John.
3. Show your Bible to your children. Point out the four Gospels and how two of them were written by the Apostle John and the Apostle Matthew, both disciples of Jesus.

Paul (write the name on the board).” Read **Daily Bread** together. At the end of the story return to the initial discussion by following up with: “So St. Paul was **so** excited about Jesus – the complete opposite of how he used to feel – that **now** he was going to convince everyone else to think as he did now. Have you ever done that? Tried to convince people to follow you when you changed your mind?” (Refer back to some of the specific examples from earlier.)

3. Continue: “Paul completely changed his mind about Jesus and it was not only because Jesus talked to him on the road. It was also because Ananias, who was a believer in Jesus, came to him and explained more about who Jesus was and what a difference it had made in *his* life. This is part of being a Christian. The fact that people who are Christians talk to others about Jesus and teach them about Christianity is how this amazing faith has spread throughout the world.” Direct students to the word “witness” in their texts. Ask for their understanding before providing this definition. Write it on the board so they can copy it in their books: *A witness is someone who saw something and will tell others about it.* Ask students: “Isn’t this a great word to describe St. Paul? And all those who come to love Jesus and want to share that with others?” 20 min.

4. Ask students to look at **Scripture Search**. Read and discuss questions. (Guideline to answers: Ananias is telling Paul to share with others his personal encounter with Jesus, all he has “seen and heard.” He should do this because God has chosen Paul to know his will and to actually see and hear him – this is an amazing gift! Third graders can share their faith by example, by talking to parents and relatives about what they learned in Sunday School, by bringing God into their conversations in the everyday world (athletes often cross themselves and kneel before a game or after scoring a point or thank Jesus Christ when they receive an honor). 5 min.

5. Turn to **In the Armenian Tradition**. Read the text and discuss the questions. For some physical movement, have students stand or come to the front of the room and then return to their seats as they provide answers. (Discussion guidelines:

1. Answers might include that she wouldn’t know the language, would need a place to stay, food to eat, might not know the local customs or how to get to different places 2. This is a subjective discussion, but mention to students that we are so used to “busyness” and noise in today’s world that, at first, it might be hard to imagine a quiet life of prayer. But what might be good about it: hear the voice of God better, read more, pray more, enjoy the beauty of nature.) 10 min.

6. Have students complete the **Help St. Paul and St. Nooneh Find Their Way** maze (Distribute larger version). As children enjoy the maze, review the stories of St. Paul and Sts. Nooneh and Maneh.

7. Ask the children to get into a circle. Tell them that you are going to go around the circle and each person will tell us what they will pray for this coming week. Then everyone will say together “Hear our prayer, Lord, amen.” Dismiss the class. 10 min.

UNIT
1
Lesson
Ten

Walking With God

Following By Faith: The Twelve Disciples

Key Concepts

1. The 12 disciples were Jesus’ first followers and eagerly became his students and helpers.
2. We are all disciples of Jesus.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Participate in a review of the last session.
2. Define the word “disciple.”
3. Identify basic facts about the 12 disciples by taking part in a “Reader’s Theater.”
4. Explore the specific mission of the disciples Thaddeus and Bartholomew to Armenia.

Materials Needed

Reader’s Theater scripts copied and cut up in a paper bag (see procedure #4)

Procedure

1. Welcome the students and say the opening prayer. Ask the children to look at the **Hye-Q** section of their lesson. Do it together this time, posing questions one at a time, reading all the answer choices out loud. Call on children to choose the correct answer. Answers: 1. c, 2. b, 3. a, 4. b, 5. Maneh. 6. Discuss. For this last question, you might want to play an “Either/Or” game by designating a different corner of the room for each option and asking students to stand in the appropriate corner. *Then* discuss.
2. Write the word “disciple” on the board. Ask students for their definition. Discuss their answers and try to direct them to the following definition: a disciple is a very devout student of a teacher. It’s not the same as just being a student in a class. It’s more intense, where you devote your whole life to follow a teacher and learn everything possible from him or her. 15 min.
3. Ask them, “What would convince someone to leave their normal lives to follow someone like Jesus?” Discuss some of their answers and conclude with: Well, let’s turn to the Bible to see exactly how Jesus gathered his disciples around him and what he promised they would be able to do. Read **Daily Bread** and discuss questions. (Students are disciples because they come to Sunday School to learn about Jesus and they’re *happy* to do so just as the first 12 disciples were; they *might* already be apostles if they are sharing their faith with others – their parents, brothers and sisters, etc.) Then review **Scripture Source** and discuss question. (Looking to Jesus can help us be strong in our faith just as it helped the disciples be good at what they would become -- “fishers of people.”) 10 min.
4. Ask the children if they can name some of the 12 disciples of Jesus. Allow them some time to come up with names. They might perhaps be able to name Peter and possibly James and John (these were the closest to Jesus and were with him at many special times such as the Transfiguration). Thaddeus and Bartholomew might also be mentioned as the two disciples who went to Armenia. Write as many as they come up with; then have them check the verses from Matthew (in their text) for the rest.

Tell them that they are going to learn all about the disciples because they are the reason that we know about Jesus today. Pass around the paper bag filled with the scripts (with the opening Bible verse, there are 13 parts). If you do not have enough children, assign more than one disciple to each child. Announce that they will be presenting a “Reader’s Theater.” 5 min.

5. Have them read over their roles and then come up and form a semi-circle, or circle if you have room. Let them read by turn, starting with the Bible verse; you might want to pause to discuss each one. The Reader’s Theater can be performed with costumes for a Sunday School assembly or for other classes in the future. 20 min.
6. Congratulate the children on their performances. Read **In the Armenian Tradition** and review the information in the sidebars in the time remaining. (St. Gregory is considered the Second Enlightener of Armenia, after the two apostles). Ask them to pray with you as you say the following closing prayer: “Dear God, thank you for sending your son Jesus to us and for teaching all of the disciples to spread your word throughout the world. Now *we* are your disciples. Amen.” Dismiss the class. 10 min.

UNIT
1
Lesson
Eleven

Walking With God

Good Helpers: Priscilla, Aquila, Lydia, & Me!

Key Concepts

1. Besides the 12 disciples, many people followed Jesus, including women.
2. We, too, are called to learn our faith, and share it with and serve others.

Objectives

During this session students will

1. Participate in a review quiz on the 12 disciples.
2. Discuss how people help each other to accomplish a task and how this applies to achieving the goal of spreading the love and word of Christianity.