

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: God calls everyday people to use their gifts.</p> <p>GIFTS GALORE: Kids help others explore their gifts by creating a class “Follow Me” card for their church family.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Computers with Kid Pix or similar software; printers (color preferred); printer paper, ribbon (optional); buttons, sequins, or pom-poms (optional), posterboard; crayons or markers; glue or glue sticks</p>
Upper Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Everything we do can be for Jesus!</p> <p>CALL STORY CREATIONS: Kids imagine how Jesus may have called them if he were here today.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Pencils</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Computers with word processing and Kid Pix or similar software, printer (color preferred), pencils, Brainstorming Worksheet (page 59)</p>
All Kids		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jesus calls us to fish for people.</p> <p>HELP WANTED: Kids create help wanted ads and signs for Jesus.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Whiteboard, copy of “Uncle Sam wants you” and/or “Rosie the Riveter” signs, classifieds from newspaper, help wanted sign samples, computers with Kid Pix or similar software, posterboard, markers, tape</p>



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation’s story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: God calls everyday people to use their gifts.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksondayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Disciples Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Greet the kids as they arrive. Have them sit with you on the floor. **Welcome to our Computer Lab! I am so glad that you are here! I wonder, what is the best gift you've received in your life?** Allow kids to mention their toys, games, etc. **Those are all really great gifts, but did you know that you have been given even BETTER gifts than those? God has given each of you gifts to use in the world. Some gifts are easily seen, and others are more hidden.**

We each have gifts, talents, and skills that come from God. These gifts can be as different as we are. Some are good at sports or art. Others are great with people, or animals, or computers. What are some of the things you are good at? Have the kids respond.

Today we are going to learn some great things about Jesus and the disciples. Do you know who the disciples were? Allow time for kids to answer. **The disciples were Jesus' closest friends. They left their jobs and their families to go follow Jesus and learn from him. Let's read our story about the disciples!** Read The Disciples from the Spark Story Bible, pages 258-263.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

None

The disciples had gifts that made most of them good followers of Jesus. God gave them those gifts, and God gives us gifts to help us each to be good followers, too. We are going to look at the gifts that God gives us and see how we can use them to follow God in the world!

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Gifts Galore!

Set Up:

- Have the classroom set up in advance with the computers booted up, the program open, but the monitors off (this allows the kids to focus but saves boot-up time later).
- Determine if kids will need to share computers, and plan how they'll work in groups of two or three.
- If you are not familiar with the church's drawing software, be sure to review its functions and commands.
- Fold the posterboard in half to make a blank card. On the front, write "Follow Jesus" in big letters. Underneath write, "Use the gifts God gave you." On the inside of the card, write, "God gives you great gifts!"

Activity Instructions

Jesus chose the disciples to follow him because he knew that they had the right gifts to be disciples. What sorts of jobs did the disciples have before they followed Jesus? (*fisherman, tax collectors, shepherds, etc.*) **And what do you suppose were the gifts that they had that made them good disciples, or what gifts could Jesus use?** (*loving each other, listening, caring, etc.*)

Our gifts come from God. We are not all alike. Some of us are good with at drawing. Some are good at helping people or sharing with everyone. Mention a few of your own gifts here to give the kids an idea. **Because all gifts come from God, all gifts can be used to help God in the world.**

Today we are going to work together to make a big card to give to our church family and friends. Then we'll each make a picture of a gift God gave us. Our card will remind them that God has given gifts to us and to them, and that we are called and they are called to follow Jesus just like the disciples did!

1. Have the kids go to their computers and touch the mouse so the screen comes on. Hold up the posterboard card. **This is a big card for our church family. On the front it says, "Follow Jesus. Use the gifts God gave you."** Open the card. **On the inside it says, "God gives you great gifts!" We are going to give this card to our church family to help them follow Jesus, but I think it's a little plain. On your computers, you are going to make a picture of a gift that God gave you.**

Spark Resources:

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies:

Computers with Kid Pix or similar software
Printers (color preferred)
Printer paper
Ribbon (optional)
Buttons, sequins, or pom-poms (optional)
Posterboard
Crayons or markers
Glue or glue sticks

2. Take the kids step-by-step through the process of making the cards. Help them make pictures of their gifts. Offer ideas. They each have lots of gifts! Some examples might be taking care of pets, loving their family and friends, running and jumping, dancing, or drawing. The older kids can add words to their pictures if they are able.
3. When the kids are finished designing their pictures, print out each picture and help the kids paste their pictures on the posterboard card. Help each kid sign his or her name on the card. If you have extra time, add some buttons, sequins, or pom-poms, to the card.

This is a beautiful card! When we share this card with our church family, let's each tell about the picture of our gift. What will you say about your gift? Allow time for kids to respond.

Jesus called the disciples to follow him, and he calls us, as well. We are all called to use our gifts to help serve God and others, just like Jesus asks us to. Just like the disciples, we get the opportunity to serve God with our gifts in our everyday lives.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

The disciples had Jesus to help remind them of their gifts, and he called them to use their gifts for him. We are called to use our gifts, too. In everything we are doing, we can serve God. We can play sports fairly and be good winners and losers. We can honor our parents. We can use our skills helping others. Everything we do can be for God!

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Let us pray.

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for calling the disciples and us to serve you. Help us recognize our gifts and use them for you every day. All our gifts come from you, so help us give back to you by helping the world. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: Everything we do can be for Jesus!

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksundayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Disciples Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Greet the kids by name as they arrive and have them sit with you on the floor.

Welcome, kids! I'm so glad that you are here in our Computer Lab today. We are going to do some creative writing as we learn about how Jesus called his disciples to come follow him. But first, I wonder how many of you own cell phones? If no one does, ask how many parents or older siblings have a cell phone. **What good things are cell phones used for?** Allow time for kids to offer suggestions.

Cell phones are a great tool. How do cell phones help us? Invite kids to answer. **Very good ideas! I know of people who have cell phones alert them to severe weather coming, or other phones that give directions if they are lost.**

Today we are going to talk about calls, but not on a phone. We can talk about calls from God. Yes, God calls each of us and asks us to do things for God. Let's look up a few of the stories where Jesus called the disciples. Have the kids look up the following passages: Luke 5:1-11 and 8:1-3, and Matthew 9:9-13 and 10:1-4. It might be helpful to have one or two kids look up each section.

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Pencils

Now that we have read these call stories, think about how Jesus called each of these people. Use a sticker to mark one of the stories and write your thoughts in the margin.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Call Story Creations

Set Up:

- Have the classroom set up in advance with the computers booted up, the program ready, but the monitors off. This activity works best if each kid has his or her own computer; however, if sharing is necessary, encourage the kids to write a story using both of them as characters.
- Determine if kids will need to share computers, and plan how they'll work in groups of two or three.
- Make one copy of the Brainstorming Worksheet from page 59 for each kid, as well as a pencil for each.
- If you are not familiar with the church's software, be sure to review its functions and commands.

Activity Instructions

The disciples had Jesus to talk to them and call them directly. Still, it is not always easy to understand and accept a call. The disciples left everything behind to follow Jesus: their families, their jobs, their friends, everything. Do you think you could have done what the disciples did? Take the kids' responses.

When most of us are called today, we don't have to leave everything behind. Jesus still calls us to serve him in the world, but for us right now, it isn't as life changing as it was for the disciples. The disciples literally followed Jesus, but we are called to follow him in prayer, by listening to those who know a lot about him, by reading the Bible, by going to church. Many people work in specific jobs because God has called them to that job. Some people are called by God to become pastors.

We are going to write our own call story. This is going to be a story we write to imagine what might happen if Jesus came today and called us like he called the disciples. We are going to try to answer two important questions:

1. **How would we respond if Jesus called us today?**
2. **What would Jesus call us to do in the world?**

Explain that they have a worksheet to help them brainstorm ideas for the story. Have them work on the worksheet independently for a few minutes. When kids have completed their worksheet, have them move to the computers and begin to write their stories. Remind them that they are to imagine and write what it might be like if Jesus called them to be disciples and what would happen and be said.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Computers with word processing and/or Paint/
Kid Pix
Printer, color preferable
Pencils
Brainstorming Worksheet,
page 59

If groups are necessary at the computers, have each group member fill out a worksheet on his or her own and then have them work together to write a story involving both or all three of them. Encourage them to find a location and activity that they might all be doing or to have a two- or three-part call story.

Remember to think about how the disciples were called. Jesus came to them as they were doing their everyday tasks. Jesus would come to you when you were doing what you normally do.

When the kids have finished their stories, ask them to open a Paint/Kid Pix and illustrate their story, as well.

When you are illustrating your story, what does Jesus wear? Does he wear robes like the pictures we typically see or clothes like we have?

After the kids have written, illustrated, and printed their stories, gather with them on the floor again. **Who would like to tell us about his or her story?** Take volunteers to read their stories. After each kid reads, ask the kids to tell him or her what they liked about the story, and include your own compliments.

I'm very impressed with your stories. Isn't it neat to imagine Jesus coming to talk to us in person? It is fun to imagine a call story like the one that the disciples had. Most call stories are not so visible, though. What are ways we can see Jesus calling us in our lives without literally meeting him on the street? Take some ideas from the kids. Prompt them to think about ways God talks to us today—through others, prayer, dreams, etc.

It isn't easy to hear God's call today, is it? It can be hard to remember to pay attention to what God asks of us. What are some ways we can remember to listen for God's call? Take some ideas. **It is important to live as though God is calling us every day. It is important for us to listen for God's call.**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

The disciples were called directly by Jesus to follow him. They left everything about their lives to go work with him and participate in his ministry. We are not often asked to give up everything to serve God in the world, but we also don't have the luxury of having Jesus call us in person. Instead we have to pay attention and listen carefully for God's call. Only God knows how we are going to be called to work in the world today and as we grow older.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Let us pray.

Dear Jesus,

Help us to listen to your call for our lives. Give us the courage to live your call for us and to help your work in the world. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: Jesus calls us to fish for people.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Disciples Storytelling

Activity Instructions

Greet the kids as they arrive. Have them sit with you on the floor.

Welcome to our Computer Lab! Thank you for coming to be with me today! We have some wonderful stories to learn about, but first let's play a little game!

Explain that you are going to play the game of Telephone. Have the kids sit in a circle and whisper a phrase in the next kid's ear. (Round one: "Jesus says, 'Follow me.'" Round two: "The disciples were told to fish for people.") Have them pass the phrase on; and when it reaches the end, have them say what they heard. Likely the phrase will have morphed during its trip around the circle. If these phrases seem too simple for kids to alter the words, try "Jesus calls to each of us and says, 'Follow me.'" For the next round, try, "Instead of fishing for fish, the disciples were told to fish for people."

Did the phrase change in the circle? Sometimes it can be hard to understand messages from God. We don't see Jesus in person, do we? But in our story today, the disciples don't have any confusion about a message from God because Jesus asks them in person. Let's read their story in the Bible. Have the

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

older kids look up the following passage, Luke 5:1-11. Have a volunteer read, and ask for a younger kid to share the pictures from The Disciples story in the Spark Story Bible (pages 258-263). Also encourage the older kids to use their Spark Bible Stickers, and invite the younger ones to help them choose which sticker to use.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Help Wanted

Set Up:

- Have the classroom set up in advance with the computers booted up, the program open, but the monitors off.
- Determine if kids will need to share computers, and plan how they'll work in groups of two or three.
- If you are not familiar with the church's software, be sure to review its functions and commands.

Activity Instructions

In our story today, what did the disciples do for a living? (*fishermen and a tax collector*) **And how did Jesus show the fishermen that he was special?** (*He had them drop their nets and they were filled with fish.*) **Jesus showed Simon and Andrew that he was sent from God by sending them all the fish. Then he asked them to come with him and fish for people, instead. What do you think it means to fish for people?** Take their ideas.

Yes, fishing for people means to go out into the world and tell others about Jesus. Just think, today there are millions of Christians around in the world and it all started with Jesus and 12 disciples. There are ____ of us here today. Just think how many Christians there could be if we told others about Jesus. That is what it means to fish for people: to go out and look for people and tell them the good news of Jesus.

Jesus knew he needed help to get his message into the world. He asked the disciples for that help. He asks us for help, too! Today we are going to make some want ads and signs to ask others to follow Jesus, as well.

The first sign we are going to make is a help wanted sign. Bring out the examples of the classified ads. **Getting the good news of Jesus out into the world takes help. And sometimes when people need help, they want to advertise for it.**

Split up the kids into groups of two or three and have them make their help wanted signs. Have them brainstorm what they want to say on it—what sort of job should they plan for others to do for Jesus? Encourage them to place on the sign who they would like to apply, what the hours are, and what the “pay” is, as well. Encourage

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles

Supplies

Whiteboard
Copy of “Uncle Sam wants you” and/or “Rosie the Riveter” signs
Classifieds from newspaper
Help wanted sign samples
Computers with Kid Pix or similar software
Posterboard
Markers
Tape

them to think outside the box: what specific things will this person do? How will this person fish for people? What skills does this person need to have? When they have finished their signs, print them and have the kids sign the bottom.

Is there anyone who would like to share his or her sign with the class? Take volunteers to present their signs. **These are great signs. Jesus still needs help getting the good news about him out into the world. Think about all the ways you can answer his call.**

There is another type of sign that we are going to make. Sometimes signs are used to convince people to help others. During World War II, for example, the government needed many people to help since we were at war. These signs convinced people to help. Show the Rosie or Uncle Sam posters.

Now we have even better news that we need help for. We are not promoting war, but instead, peace and good news in Jesus! We can use this style of poster to remind others that Jesus needs their help, too! Have the kids split back up into groups (perhaps working with a different partner this time) and come up with an idea for another poster asking the people of the congregation to follow Jesus like the disciples did.

When all the posters and signs have been made and printed, and if there is time, head out into the hallways of the church and hang your posters for the congregation to see (get permission first!). If possible, send these electronically to the person who creates the church newsletter.

The posters and help wanted signs are great, and they will help the congregation to remember to follow Jesus every day just like the disciples did.

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

In our story today, the disciples left everything to follow Jesus because he asked them to. Sometimes it can be hard to ask for help telling others about Jesus. But when we ask, many people will respond with a joyful "Yes!" The great signs we made today ask the congregation for help telling the good news of Jesus. Let's not forget to ask people in person, and let's not forget to ask for God's help, too!

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Let us pray.

Dear Jesus,

Help us to be like the disciples, and fish for people in the world. Help us to ask for help doing your work, just as you asked the disciples for help. Guide us in serving you and telling all about you. In your name we pray.

Amen.

Brainstorming Worksheet

1. What are descriptive words for a normal day of yours?
2. Who do you see every day?
3. What places do you often go to?
4. What activities do you do with others?
5. What activity might you do that uses some of your gifts?
6. What would Jesus look like if he were here today?
7. What might Jesus say to you?
8. What might Jesus call you to do?
9. How would you respond?

