

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Distance makes a difference.</p> <p>DROP IT! Kids experiment with distance by dropping a coin into a cup at various lengths away.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Comic strip, tape</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Yogurt cups, copy paper, scissors, tape, crayons, buttons or other small objects</p>
Upper Elementary		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: Being a disciple means being open to change.</p> <p>SWITCHING GEARS: Kids make and investigate simple gears.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Paper cups, pencils, rulers, stiff straws, index cards, scissors, staplers, sturdy cardboard sheets, paper fasteners (brads)</p>
All Kids		
<p>WORKSHOP FOCUS: React positively to God's word.</p> <p>THINK FAST! Kids test their reaction times to visual and auditory clues.</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles</p> <p>SUPPLIES: None</p>	<p>SPARK RESOURCES: None</p> <p>SUPPLIES: Rulers, paper, pencils</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: Distance makes a difference.

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

Set Up: Tape the comic strip to a wall far from where the kids will gather.

Activity Instructions

Welcome to Science. Sitting right where you are, look at the comic strip I taped to the wall. Describe what you see. Answers will vary. **Do you like it?** (*It's hard to tell. I can't see it well enough to decide.*) **What could you do to see it better?** (*get closer, bring it over here*)

Distance makes a difference. It can be hard to see and know if you like something if it is far away. This was true for Jesus, as well. People traveled long distances to see Jesus and hear him speak. Jesus also traveled a lot so he could be near more people. Let's find out what happened to some people who got very close to Jesus. Turn to page 258 in your Spark Story Bibles, and we'll read about the disciples.

Where were Simon and Andrew when Jesus asked them to be his disciples? (*in the boat with him*) **They weren't standing at the far edge of the crowd. They were physically very close to him.**

How can we be close to Jesus? (*go to church, pray, appreciate all the things God has made, talk about Jesus with other people*)

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles

Supplies
Small comic strip
Tape

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Drop It!

Set Up: Create a large, open area. Wrap the copy paper around each yogurt cup and secure it with tape.

Activity Instructions

When Jesus asked Simon and Andrew to follow him, they dropped their nets full of fish. When Jesus asked Matthew to follow him, Matthew dropped his coins. Although people had heard about Jesus, many didn't follow him until they saw and heard up him up close. We're going to see what difference distance makes.

1. **Each of you will decorate a cup to represent Jesus.** Distribute cups and crayons. **Put Jesus' name on the cup, and make two lines about 2 inches (5 cm) apart going from the top of the cup to the bottom.** Demonstrate as needed.
2. **Every one of you needs 10 buttons and a crayon in your cup.** Distribute buttons.
3. **Find a partner. Switch cups. Stand back to back in the middle of the area, holding the cup of buttons. Everyone walk 10 steps away from each other.** Adjust distance as needed. **Turn around so you are looking at your partner.**
4. **Take the buttons out of the cup and hold them in one hand. Put the cup on the floor at your feet. Move back so that your hand can be directly over it when you hold your arm out.** Demonstrate as needed.
5. **We're going to do an experiment called Drop It. One kid is the caller. The caller is trying to get the buttons into the cup. One kid is the dropper. The dropper puts one button in one hand and stretches that arm out in front while facing forward. The dropper moves that arm from side to side until the caller says drop it. Instantly, and without looking down, the dropper drops the button. Do this for all 10 buttons, and then switch roles.** Demonstrate as needed. You can increase the challenge by having the caller cover one eye.
6. **Count how many buttons landed in the cup. Write that number down between the two lines near the top of the cup. Pick up all the other buttons.**
7. **Each team should take three steps toward each other. Play Drop It again.**
8. **After recording the results below the first ones, clean up the buttons and take three steps toward each other. Play another round of Drop It. Don't forget to record your results.**
9. If time and distance permit, play a fourth round of Drop It. You may need to adjust how many steps closer they can move.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Yogurt cups, 1 per kid
Copy paper, cut horizontally to height of yogurt cups
Scissors
Tape
Crayons
Buttons or other small objects, 10 per kid

10. **Switch cups with your partner so you have the cup you made with your results on it. Did more buttons make it into the cup when you were close to it or far from it?** Answers vary. Most will do better the closer they are.

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.

Distance makes a difference. It was easier to aim our buttons at the cup the closer we got to it. It is easier to follow Jesus the closer we are to him. Let's pray that Jesus will teach us how to draw closer and closer to him now that we know that distance makes a difference.

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

Dear God,

We know you are very close to us. Help us to know how to get very close to you. Draw us to church. Draw us to the Bible. Draw us to other people who love you and know a lot about you. Draw us to pray to you every day. Distance makes a difference, Lord. May there be very little distance between you and each of us. Amen.

Workshop Focus: Being a disciple means being open to change.

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.
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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Disciples Storytelling

Welcome to Science. What does the word *change* mean to you? (*you do something different, something is not the same, the money you get back when you pay someone too much, loose coins*) **Today we're going to focus on changes that mean something is different. What changes you have seen since you got out of bed this morning? For example, have you changed clothes? Have you changed places since you got up? How many times?** Answers will vary.

Some changes are temporary. We change our clothes many times. Other changes are permanent, like growing taller; we can't grow shorter again. Some changes are voluntary; we choose to change our hairstyle. Other changes are out of our control, like growing older. What is the biggest change you have ever been a part of? (*My family moved to a new state. I became an older sibling.*) **Did you have a choice in this change?** Answers vary.

Today's Bible story is found in several different places. In all of them, Jesus asks people to make big changes. Let's find out what the changes were by turning first to Luke 5:1-11. Then, we'll read Luke 8:1-3, Matthew 4:18-22, 9:9-13, and 10:1-4. Ask for volunteers to read each passage.

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles

Supplies
None

What change did Jesus ask of people? *(to stop fishing, to follow him, to leave their families, homes, and jobs to follow him)*

Did the disciples have the choice in this change? *(yes)*

Do you think some people chose not to follow Jesus? *(yes)*

Besides changing their jobs and their distance from their families and friends, what other changes did Jesus ask of his disciples? These changes occurred inside the disciples' hearts and mind. *(what they believed about God, what they believed about other people who they may have judged unfairly, what they believed about success, etc.)*

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Switching Gears

When the disciples started following Jesus, they left behind everything they knew. They traveled to new places, learned new ways to think about things, and practiced new skills. There is a saying for when you start something new. You are said to be "switching gears."

Do you know what a gear is? *(It's a circle that looks jagged around the edges.)* **Gears are simple tools that are found in lots of common items. Pencil sharpeners, clocks, and bicycles all have gears. We're going to experiment with switching gears today.**

- 1. Find a partner to work with. Pick up 3 cups of different sizes, 12 straws, a ruler, and a pencil.**
- 2. Make a line all around each cup about 2 inches (5 cm) from the bottom. Draw a symbol, like an arrow, star, or cross, at the same place on each cup.**
- 3. The jagged edges on gears are called teeth. You'll use straws and cardboard to make your teeth. Use the pencil to poke a hole into each cup on the line you just drew. Push one straw into each hole. When you see where it hits the other side, use the pencil to poke a hole there. Each cup gets a total of four straws. Try to space them evenly around the cup. You will have to bend the straws over and under each other in the middle of the cup.**
- 4. Place the cups on a large sheet of cardboard so the teeth on one will touch the teeth on only one of the other two. Distribute cardboard sheets and scissors. Draw a circle around the bases so you can put them back in the right place. Check to see if any of the straws are so long that they hit other cups instead of the straw teeth. Trim any straws that need to be shorter.**

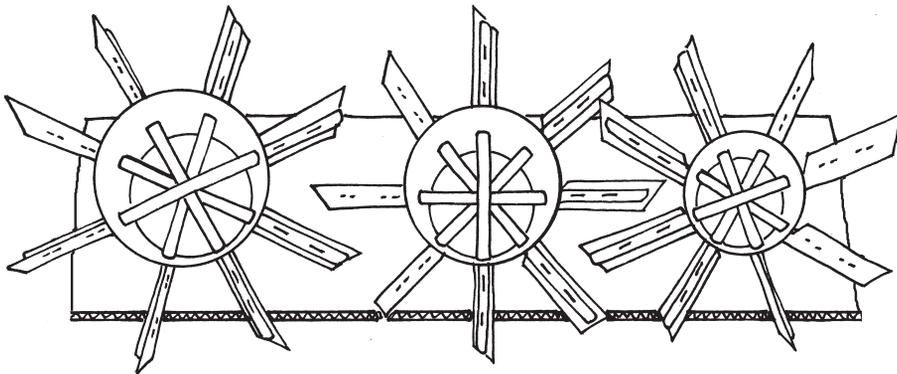
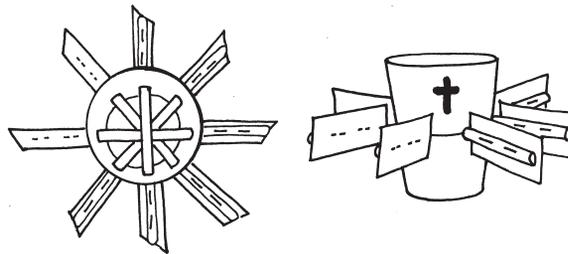
Spark Resources

None

Supplies

3 oz (90 ml) paper cups, 1 per 2 kids
5 oz (150 ml) paper cups, 1 per 2 kids
8 oz (240 ml) paper cups, 1 per 2 kids
Pencils, 1 per 2 kids
Rulers, 1 per 2 kids
Stiff straws, 12 per 2 kids
Index card strips, cut 1" (2.5 cm) horizontally, 24 per 2 kids
Scissors, 1 per 2 kids
Staplers, 1 per 2 kids
Sturdy cardboard sheet, 8" x 10" (20 x 25 cm), 1 per 2 kids
Paper fasteners (brads), 3 per 2 kids

5. **To make it easier for our gears to mesh, we need to add small paper tabs to each tooth.** Distribute index card strips and staplers. **Cut each strip the same length as your straw teeth. Staple these strips to the straws.**
6. **Poke a hole in the middle of each circle on the large piece of cardboard and in the middle of the bottom of each cup. Line up the holes and put a paper fastener through the holes to hold the gears in place.** Note: it doesn't matter whether the head of the paper fastener is in the cup or on the bottom of the cardboard piece.
7. **Turn one cup. Watch what happens to the other cups. Are they turning in the same direction? (no) Do the cups move at the same speed? (No; the smaller cups turn faster than the larger cups.)**
8. **How could you switch gears? (change their location, use gears that are all the same size) What would happen if you switched gears by adding two more straws to the largest cup? (It would go faster. It would take more or less effort. I don't know.)** Encourage kids to "switch gears" and observe what changes came about. Walk around so they can share their findings.



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.

You had choices in how you placed your gears today. If you didn't like how they worked, you could "switch gears" until you were pleased with their performance. Jesus gave everyone choices, as well. They could follow him, or not. They could follow him just a little, or follow him completely. By being open to change and accepting Jesus' call, the disciples experienced awesome changes in themselves—changes that they wouldn't have ever known about had they said no to Jesus or just followed him a little.

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Dear God,

Throughout our lives, we will face changes that require us to switch gears in order to follow your call. Help us to choose our actions wisely so that you will be pleased with our efforts. Help us to see the awesome changes in ourselves that being around you creates.

Amen.

Workshop Focus: React positively to God's word.

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

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

The Disciples Storytelling

What does it mean to react positively to Jesus' call? Does *positive* mean good or bad? (*good*) So, if I react positively to Jesus' call, does that mean I do what Jesus asks? Or do I walk away from him? (*do what Jesus asks*)

Spark Resources
Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles

Let's read about Jesus calling the disciples, and see how they reacted. Those of you with Spark Story Bibles, turn to page 258 and share with the older kids sitting around you. Look at the pictures as I choose older kids to read from their Spark Bibles.

Supplies
None

Those using Spark Bibles, we'll be jumping around a bit to get all the parts of the story. Let's start with Luke 5:1-11, page 1135. Read this aloud to the group. On what page in the Spark Story Bible do we see this huge catch of fish? (*page 259*) Now, turn back to Matthew 4 and let's read verses 18-22. Choose one kid to read. This passage tells about Jesus' call to all of the disciples, doesn't it? Turn to chapter 9, and we'll read verses 9-13. On what page in the Spark Story Bible do we see the words about Matthew? (*page 261*) Now, turn to chapter 10 and let's read verses 1-4. Choose one kid to read. This is a list of all of the disciples, just like we read in Luke. Can we see a picture of Jesus with all of his disciples and some other important people in the Spark Story Bible? (*yes, pages 262-263*)

The writers of the Gospels really wanted us to know how Jesus called his disciples, and who they were! Jesus wants us to know that he calls us, too, to be disciples. Those disciples reacted positively to Jesus' call. Are we reacting positively to his call?

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Think Fast!

Set Up: Create a large, open area.

Activity Instructions

It took a bit of time for Simon Peter to react positively to Jesus. First he didn't really believe Jesus was going to help at all with catching fish. Then he wanted Jesus to leave him because he didn't feel good enough for Jesus to pay attention to him. But, eventually, Peter reacted positively to Jesus, didn't he? Today, we're going to test your reaction speed and see if it improves over time like Simon Peter's did.

1. **Find a partner of a different age to work with.** Give each pair a ruler, piece of paper, and pencil. **Fold the paper in half. Write one of your names on the top of each half. Write the letters A through I going down the side.**
2. **First, we're going to test your general reaction time. One partner should hold one hand out like he or she is going to pinch something between his or her thumb and index finger.** Show kids which fingers you are referring to. **The other partner should hold the ruler so the 0 mark is level with the tops of the pinching fingers.**
3. **Without talking or giving any other cues, the partner holding the ruler should let it drop between the pinching fingers. The pinching partner should try to catch it as quickly as possible. Record the number where the fingers caught the ruler by the letter A.**
4. **Do this test two more times, recording the results by letters B and C. Then switch roles.**
5. **Now we're going to do the test again, but this time using a word cue. Look in your Bibles, and pick one word that will be your cue. Tell your partner what your word cue is. This time, the partner will say a bunch of words and release the ruler when the word cue is said. For example, if your word cue is "fish," your partner might say, "I was at Sunday fish school this week." She or he would release the ruler when she or he heard "fish." Do this test three times, recording the results by letters D, E, and F. Then switch roles.**
6. **Compare your results so far. Do you get faster each time? Are you faster when there is a word cue or not?**

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Rulers, 1 per 2 kids

Paper, 1 per 2 kids

Pencils, 1 per 2 kids

7. **Let's do one final set. In this test, there will be a word cue at the same time as the ruler drops. In addition to catching the ruler, you must respond. The word cue will be *follow*. When you hear that word, you catch the ruler and say, "Yes" at the same time. You must do both actions at the same time to record the results by letters G, H, and I.**
8. If time permits, encourage kids to design other reaction tests. Do they react faster if they are responding to a specific word in a predetermined sentence? For example, if "boat" was the cue word, the sentence might be, "Immediately they left the boat and followed Jesus."
9. **Have the groups share their results and experiences with the entire group.**

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.

We saw that we can improve our reaction speed with practice. With time and repetition, our reactions to certain words become habits. If someone says, "Stop," we halt whatever we are doing. We can use this knowledge to develop a habit of reacting instantly to God's call with a great big positive "Yes!"

Spark Resources
Family Pages



Supplies
None

Prayer Time

**Dear God,
Sometimes we are like Simon Peter. We hesitate in answering your call because we don't feel good enough or because we don't believe you would really call us. Help us to realize that you do call each of us and we have only good things to gain by following your call. May we react with an instant, positive "Yes."
Amen.**

