

Lesson 8

Jesus calls Matthew Matthew 9:9-13

Goals: That the students will:

KNOW:

That Jesus wants them to follow Him.

FEEL:

A desire to follow Jesus.

DO:

Indicate a willingness to begin/continue to follow Jesus.



Attention Getter: (10 minutes)

This activity is designed to give students an experience of following a leader. In the first “round” of categories, students have to match the description, or meet a requirement. In the second “round,” students choose which line they will get in, based on their interests. It is to prepare students to think about the questions, “Does Jesus have requirements for His followers? Would I choose to follow Jesus?”

Three leaders stand in front. (Two for some rounds.) Each holds up a

sign or picture indicating characteristics of people who should stand in his or her line. Once the lines have assembled, each leader “leads the followers” in an action of his or her choice such as “everyone turn around in a circle.”

In these rounds, students and helpers should get in whichever line describes them:

- Blond Hair—Brown Hair—Red or Black Hair
- Lives Alone—Lives with Family—Lives with Friends & Staff
- Wears Glasses—Doesn’t Wear Glasses
- Is a Guy—Is a Woman

In these next rounds, students and helpers can choose whichever line they want to be in:

- Loves Cats—Loves Dogs—Loves Birds or Fish
- Likes Magazines—Likes Music Tapes—Likes Puzzles
- Likes to Have Surgery—Likes to Eat Ice Cream—Likes to Take Hard Tests
- Wants to Eat Raw Cauliflower—Wants to Eat a Peppermint Patty—Wants to Eat Cold Oatmeal

Some of those choices were easy, weren’t they? Not many people like surgery or cold oatmeal! But other choices were harder, maybe because you liked both things. Today in our Bible story, we’re going to meet a man named Matthew who had to decide whether or not he would follow someone.



Bible Lesson: (15 minutes)

Matthew worked as a tax collector. That means that he

collected money from people that they had to pay the government. None of us really enjoy paying our bills. But it's even worse when the person who is collecting the money is stealing from us and keeping some for himself! Well, that's what Matthew and other men who collected taxes did. Let me show you.

Give a student \$3 in play money, and a written bill that says: You owe \$2. Show all the class what you are giving the student. **Now, suppose I'm Matthew. One day, I might come to your house and say, "I'm here to collect your taxes. You need to pay me three dollars." Is that right? (no! \$2!) Give me that bill.** Take the bill and change the amount to \$3. **Here, now it says \$3! OK, I'm waiting...**

Hopefully the student will role-play a bit with you, trying to convince you that's not fair. But in the end, take all \$3. Put \$2 in an envelope marked "Taxes collected," and \$1 in a wallet or envelope marked "Matthew's spending money."

How do you feel about that? How do you feel about this man? Let students respond. **Do you want him for a friend? Would you want to talk with Matthew or have lunch with him? (no) People didn't want to be with Matthew. How do you think that made Matthew feel? (lonely, angry, sad, confused)**

This is what Matthew did for work—he collected taxes and he stole from people. He was a man no one wanted to be friends with. We can understand that. If you knew someone stole money from you or your friends, you wouldn't want to be his friend.

But one day, Someone came by and asked Matthew to be part of His special group, to follow Him. Let's watch the video today

and see what happened.

Show Matthew 9:9-13 on video 2.

Jesus asked Matthew to follow Him, to be one of His friends who would travel with Him and would learn from Him, and be His close friend. Do you think Jesus knew what Matthew did for a job? Let students respond. Yes, He found him at the tax office or collecting booth. Do you think He knew that Matthew sometimes stole from people? Yes, He knew. Why do you think He still wanted Matthew to be His friend, even though he did bad things like stealing? Let students respond.

Remember several weeks ago, we talked about how Jesus loves everyone, all kinds of people! Well, that's true of people who do bad things. Jesus loves people who steal money. He loves people who lie. He loves people who get crabby and talk back to their parents or staff. He loves us, and knows we need His help in order to change—to stop stealing or lying or talking back, or whatever sins we do again and again. Do you think everyone has this problem of sinning, or just some people? (everyone does!)

Let's watch the video again. Next week, we're going to look at and talk more about the dinner party that Matthew gave for Jesus, which we see at the end of this clip. But this time, as you watch it, be looking at how Jesus' other friends react when He asks Matthew to follow Him. Are they surprised?

Rewind and show Matthew 9:9-13 again.

What do you think? How did the other people feel about Jesus

asking Matthew to join them? (they weren't too happy!) **Maybe they thought that only people who act a certain way can follow Jesus. They thought Matthew was too bad to be a friend and follower of Jesus. Earlier, when we first played our "Join the Leader" game, there were certain requirements. You had to be a certain way to get behind a leader. Jesus' friends thought you had to be a certain kind of person for Jesus to invite you to follow Him, such as being a good, honest person. But Jesus wants everyone to follow Him—even people who lie or steal or get crabby and mean!**

Do you think that Matthew was going to continue stealing money from people now? (no!) Because following someone means doing the kind of things they do, saying the kind of things they say. Do you think Jesus would ever steal from someone? (no!) So, Matthew was going to begin learning from Jesus how to live differently. And Jesus was going to help Matthew to change!



Application Activities: *(20 minutes)*

1. Jesus Invites Us to Follow Him *(5 minutes)*

Even today, Jesus is looking for people to follow Him. He's not walking the earth in a human body, but He is here by His Holy Spirit. He wants us to follow Him. Following Jesus means believing that He is the one who can forgive us for the wrong things we do and believing He can help us to change. Today, He is asking us to follow Him, just like He asked Matthew. Let me show you what that's like.

Show the musical section after Matthew 28:20 on video 4.

After the Great Commission, there is a segment, with musical background, of Jesus walking, turning, looking into the camera, and signaling with His hand for us to follow Him.

Remember the last time we played "Join the Leader," you had to choose whose line you would be in. Today, Jesus is giving us a much more important choice to make. He says, "No one is too bad, or too sick, or too young, or too old, or too slow, or too anything to come and follow Me. I love you, and I want you to follow Me! I want to be with you all the time, and to help you to become more like I am."

Isn't it amazing that Jesus wants people like you and me to be His followers! But we have a choice; do we want to follow Him or not?

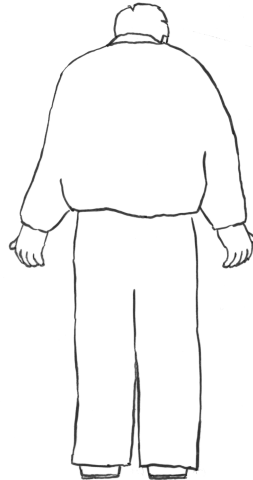
2. First Steps to Following Jesus *(10-15 minutes)*

How would we begin to follow Jesus if we wanted to? He's not here on the earth with a physical body the way He was in our story. It was clear what Matthew needed to do; he needed to get up from his chair and follow Jesus. But we can't start following Jesus by standing up and getting in the right line. So let me show you how we can either start to follow Jesus, or, if you already are following Him, how you can follow Him even more closely.

There are three very simple words that can help us start to follow Jesus. They are words you probably use every day. They

are **“Sorry,” “Thank You” and “Please.”** Hold up a copy of Resource 8-A as you are talking this through.

Like Matthew, we’ve done some bad things, things that hurt other people, or that we did because we wanted to do things our way, rather than God’s way. When Matthew got up from his chair, he was saying, “This isn’t right. I don’t want to keep stealing from people. I’m sorry for the things I’ve done. I want to do things Your way, Jesus.” We, too, need to admit that we’ve sinned, done wrong things, and hurt God and other people by the things we’ve done or said. We need to say “Sorry.”



Matthew followed Jesus that day because he could tell, maybe just in the way that Jesus looked at him, that Jesus loved him! He was so thankful that someone didn’t turn the other way when he passed him! Matthw was so thankful that Jesus loved him, even though he had done some terrible things. Following Jesus was a way of saying “Thank you for loving me, Jesus!” And Jesus loves us just as much as He loved Matthew! If we want to follow Him—to be friends with Jesus forever—we can tell Him, “Thank you for loving me, and for being willing to be punished for my sins.” When Jesus died on the cross, He was taking the punishment that we deserve. We’ll talk about that more later in the year, but an important way to start following Jesus is to say, “Thank you for dying for me!”

And that day, Matthew was saying, “Please, can I stay with you, Jesus?” Of course, he knew the answer would be “Yes!” since

Jesus was the one who had invited him to follow Him! We, too, need to say, “Please, Jesus, would You come and be with me, and let me be with You forever?” And what do you think Jesus’ answer to us will be? (yes!) He wants that even more than we do!

Break into smaller groups. Give each student a copy of Resource 8-A. Have helpers go over it with them individually, asking questions like, “What should we say we’re sorry about? What should we thank Jesus for? What can we ask Him?” Then give students the opportunity to pray, using Resource 8-A as a guide.

For students who are already committed followers of Jesus, you can remind them that these three words are words we can use to help us talk to Jesus every day. Really, this is what prayer is about—confessing sin, recognizing God’s hand in our lives and world and thanking Him, and asking for His help and presence for ourselves and others!



Closing: (5-10 minutes)

Let’s close by looking again at that part of the video where Jesus is inviting us to follow Him:

Rewind and show the final scene after Matthew 28:20 again.

What do you think? Do you want to follow Jesus? Let students respond. **Let’s tell Him that by singing “I have decided to follow Jesus.”**



Supplies Check List:

- _____ **Attention Getter:** pictures or signs to indicate which lines students will get into

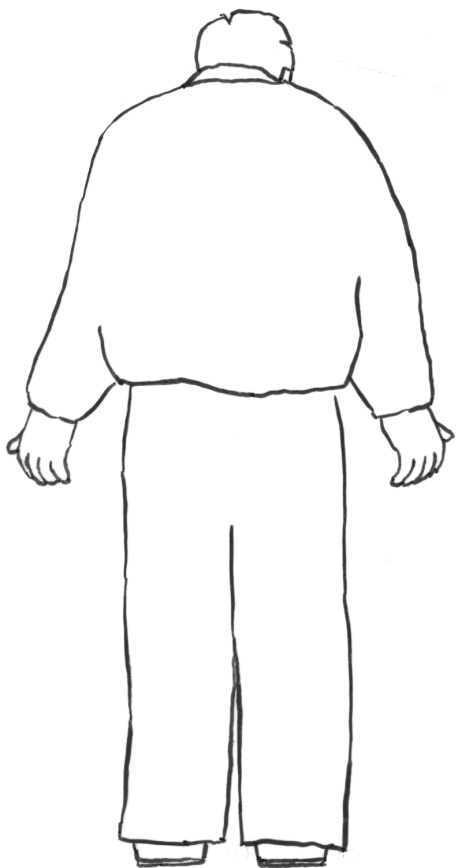
- _____ **Bible Lesson:** video 2 cued to Matthew 9:9, TV-VCR unit, play money, "You owe \$2" bill, envelope marked "Taxes collected," envelope or wallet marked "Matthew's spending money"

- _____ **Application Activities:**
 1. Jesus Invites Us to Follow Him: video 4 cued to the musical section after Matthew 28:20
 2. First Steps to Following Jesus: a copy of Resource 8-A for each student

- _____ **Closing:** video 4 again, words to "I have decided to follow Jesus"

* Return to your students the laminated "I Will Follow Jesus" posters made in Lesson 7.

“Sorry”



“Thank You!”



“Please”