



Lesson 1

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

Tips for Family Discipleship

- Adapt this content to meet the needs of your family
- Focus on Jesus
- Be a guide, not a general
- Feed your own growth
- Share personal stories/testimonies
- Pray with your child and for your child

Families of younger children might choose to focus primarily on the Bible story of the first disciples, found in Mark 1:16-20. After reading through the story, try to act it out together (or use stuffed animals to act it out). Tell your child that Jesus wanted the men to follow Him so they could learn more about God. We can also follow Jesus, just like the men in the boat.



PLAY the game “Follow the Leader.” (Or talk about a time when your child has played this game in the past.)

DISCUSS: In this game, the person who is the leader is in charge. Is it easy or hard to follow the leader? Is it easy or hard to follow a leader in real life (such as a teacher or parent)? Thankfully, God teaches us how to follow Him through His Word (the Bible) and through the Holy Spirit.

SHARE: Parents, share a time when you have struggled following someone in authority.

In the New Testament, Jesus said, “Follow me,” several times to several people. As followers of Christ, what does that mean for us? What does it look like to follow Jesus?

When we look at some of those verses, we can learn five characteristics of true Christian living. What does it mean for you to follow Jesus and live a Christian life? Let’s find out together! Fill in the blanks on the Activity Sheet as we go through each point.



Point #1 - Following Jesus involves a willingness to change.

Jesus loves us and wants what is best for you and for me. He knows that we all make bad decisions and sin against God. (Sin is anything we say, think, or do that breaks God’s laws.) He doesn’t want any of us to stay the way we are. God wants to restore us and make us new.



READ Mark 10:17-22.

Have your child find Jesus’ words, “Follow me.”

Jesus’ interaction with the rich, young ruler reveals a lot about what’s required to follow Him. In order to follow God, you must be willing to change. We cannot hold on to sin and follow God at the same time. Every day we have to decide to turn away from our selfish desires and turn to God. Nothing can be more important to us than God.

Point #2

Following Jesus involves new life.

**OPEN YOUR
BIBLE**

READ Mark 2:13-17.

Have your child find
Jesus' words,
"Follow me."

Levi (also known as the disciple Matthew) was a tax collector and was greatly disliked because he collected money from God's people and gave the money to the government. When Levi became a follower of Jesus, he showed that your life can be changed when you decide to follow Jesus.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!"
2 Corinthians 5:17

**Stuff to
Talk About**

The Bible tells us that we are changed when we decide to follow Jesus. We become a "new creation." What does that mean to you? Parents, share how your life is different since becoming a Christian. What habits or attitudes have changed?

Talk about how a caterpillar changes into a butterfly. Our change isn't on the outside, but people will notice the change because we will speak, think, and act differently.



Point #3 - Following Jesus involves new priorities.

When we follow Jesus, He should be number one in our life. Sometimes we get off track and spend more time and all our thoughts on toys, sports, friends, money, games, or watching movies than on growing in our relationship with the Lord.



OBJECT LESSON: Have you ever seen the foam fingers that people hold up at sporting events? Fans like to shout, "We're number one!" Our relationship with Jesus needs to be the number one thing in our lives.

We are changed through the Holy Spirit, but we still have to make good choices. Is there anything you regularly say, think, or do that needs to change? Parents, make sure to share your struggles, too!

**Stuff to
Talk About**

Point #4 – Following Jesus involves spiritual endurance.

What does endurance mean? It means that you don't give up and you keep trying! Sometimes, it can be difficult to keep your actions and your words in line with your faith. If we want to follow Jesus well, we have to be willing to endure. The world (our friends, social media, movies, etc.) will urge us to deny Christ. Followers of Jesus will be picked on and mistreated. Being a Christian isn't always popular, but it's important to remain faithful.

OBJECT LESSON: Find a rubber band and stretch it out. Explain that a rubber band can break if stretched too far. Sometimes, when we feel picked on for our faith, it can be hard to endure. We think we might get stretched too far, but we won't. The Holy Spirit will help us endure and grow stronger.



**Stuff to
Talk About**

It can be hard to follow Jesus when your friends aren't making the same choices or they tease you for your faith. Kids, do you ever feel like you are treated differently because of what you believe? How can your parents help you be strong? Parents, how can you help your kids?

Jesus called His first disciples to follow Him as they were fishing on a boat. He used the metaphor of fishing to help the men understand that people needed to be “caught” for the Kingdom of God.

Following Christ means “fishing” for people. If we truly walk with Christ, we will want to tell others (witness) about Jesus. We should be like Peter and Andrew and want to fish for people.

Point #5

Following Jesus involves gospel witness.

**OPEN YOUR
BIBLE**

READ Mark 1:16-20.

Have your child find
Jesus' words,
“Follow me.”

EXPLAIN to your child that **it's important to keep learning about God** through His Word. We have lots of great things to talk about in the next few weeks. It's okay if you don't understand everything we talk about. The Holy Spirit will help you understand what you need to understand for now and for your age. As you get older, you'll grow in your faith if you keep praying, reading, and talking about the Bible.

CLOSE IN PRAYER

Follow Me Challenges

PERSONAL: Let's get started creating a “My 5 List” where we'll build a list of 5 people we know who need the love of Jesus and start connecting with them. This week, begin by thinking of 2-3 people in your family/neighborhood to get your “My 5” list kicked off.

PUBLIC: Participate in, invite folks to, and/or donate for a TBC Backyard Egg Hunt. More information can be found at tabernaclebaptist.org/events.

PRAYER: Pray for...

- the people you added to your “My 5” list.
- God to show you other people you can add to your “My 5” list.
- TBC Backyard Egg Hunts.