



LESSON 4

Jesus calls the disciples

MARK 1:16-28



Respond to Jesus' authority by following Him.



“And Jesus said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.’ And immediately they left their nets and followed him” (Mark 1:17–18).

Supporting Truths

1. Follow Jesus.
2. Follow Jesus because Jesus is in charge.
3. Follow Jesus by putting Jesus first.
4. Follow Jesus by doing His work.
5. Jesus calls followers with authority.

Objectives

1. Recite Mark 1:17.
2. List three examples of Jesus' authority.
3. Describe how the disciples followed Jesus.
4. Explain what it means to be a fisher of men.
5. Compare how Jesus called the fishermen with John 6:37.



Lesson Summary

Because Jesus is the Son of God, He comes with the authority of the Father. So when Jesus came to the northern shore of the Sea Galilee, He proved His authority by calling four fishermen, teaching with great power in the synagogue, and driving out a demon. In response to His authority, the fisherman followed Him. They responded immediately, leaving behind their boats, nets, and even their family in order to follow Jesus.

Spotlight on the Gospel

Since Jesus has supreme authority, the only right response is to follow Him. This is what it means to be a Christian, and there is no such thing as a Christian who does not follow Him. To become a Christian, you must first be called by Jesus with irresistible authority. Then you must respond by making Him your leader, trusting Him, doing His work, and letting nothing get in the way of following Him.

LAST WEEK



Jesus overcomes
temptation
Luke 4:1-13

THIS WEEK



Jesus calls the disciples
Mark 1:16-28

NEXT WEEK



Jesus commends the
Centurion's faith
Matthew 8:5-13

Lesson Commentary

Respond to Jesus' authority by following Him.

Mark wrote His gospel to reveal Jesus Christ, “the Son of God” (Mark 1:1). We have already seen that the Father called Jesus His beloved Son when Jesus was baptized (Matt 3:17). Then we saw that Jesus proved to be God’s faithful Son when He resisted Satan’s temptation (Luke 4:1–13). Both events show that being God’s Son means that Jesus submits completely to the Father (John 5:19). But being God’s Son also means that Jesus has all authority, because He comes in the Father’s name (5:43). So to show us that Jesus is the Son of God, Mark shows us that He has supreme **authority**. And since Jesus is in charge, the only right response is to follow wherever He leads.

Jesus called four fishermen to follow Him (1:16–20)

Since Jesus is the promised King and the Son of God (Mark 1:3, 11), He leads with all authority. People who follow His lead and submit to His authority are called **disciples**. Discipleship is at the heart of Christianity. No one can be a **Christian** who is not a disciple of Jesus. So what is discipleship? What does it mean to be a Christian, a true follower of Jesus?

First, discipleship begins with Jesus’ personal call. And whom did Jesus call? Instead of choosing noble and majestic followers, Jesus chose fishermen (1:16, 19)! Fishermen weren’t necessarily poor; after all, Zebedee

was wealthy enough to employ day-laborers (1:20). But fishermen were common; they were ordinary men, nothing special. So why fishermen? Jesus’ choice reveals an important truth about discipleship: it’s all about His glory, not the disciple’s. He chooses the foolish, the weak, and the unimpressive, so that the one who boasts can boast only in the Lord (1 Cor 1:26, 31).

Jesus, of course, often does things differently than we would. Unlike the rabbis, who could not command people to follow them, Jesus did command. And when Jesus calls, His listeners hear and respond. While all people are called to come to God (Isa 45:22; Matt 11:28), many reject this general call because of their stubborn blindness (Exod 7:13; Rom 1:21; 1 Cor 2:14). Yet there is another call, God’s **effectual call**, when God calls a sinner to Himself so powerfully that the sinner always comes. When God calls in this way, He opens the sinner’s heart to receive the gospel (Acts 16:14). He bursts through the spiritual blindness with light so glorious that it is irresistible (2 Cor 4:4–6). All those called in this way always come to Him (John 6:37). They have tasted that God is good, and so they respond by finding refuge in Him (Ps 34:8). So a **Christian** is a person who has been drawn to Jesus by the authoritative call of God.

Second, discipleship involves following (Mark 1:17a). Since Jesus has supreme authority, a **Christian** is a person who obeys Jesus as the leader and ruler of his life. Instead of getting distracted by the worries, wealth, and wants of this world, a true follower hears and obeys every word of Christ (4:19–20). He stops trying to control his own life and instead lets Jesus take the lead (8:34)—not just on Sunday or during quiet times, but all day, every day, in every area of life. Do you follow the Leader?

Third, discipleship involves a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus commanded Simon and Andrew to follow Him, not tradition or money or fame (1:17). He didn’t even tell them to follow a creed or a church or a preacher, just Him. So a **Christian** is a person who lives in a close relationship with Jesus (John 15:4; Gal 2:20). Is this true of you? Like a branch drawing life-giving nourishment from the vine, is your life closely connected to Jesus and dependent upon Him (John 15:5)? He who remains in Jesus will bear much fruit, while he who does not remain will be cast aside (5:6). Are you a true disciple of Jesus? Do you know a lot about Him, or do you really know Him?



THINK ABOUT IT

When treasure is in clay pots, people pay attention to the treasure, not the pots (2 Cor 4:6–7).

THINK ABOUT IT
Do you follow the Leader?



STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus calls the disciples • Mark 1:16–28



THINK ABOUT IT

There can be no discipleship without a relationship.

God (Mark 1:15). So He called Simon and Andrew to do the same. Instead of laboring to get fish into a boat, their new mission in life was to get people into God's kingdom (1:17). So a **Christian** is a person with a mission from God to bring others into His kingdom (Matt 22:9; 28:19–20).

Fifth, discipleship requires immediate and complete devotion to Jesus, as illustrated by the disciples (Mark 1:18). In fact, when it says that James and John “followed him,” it literally says they “came away after Him” (1:20). Following Jesus involves a radical departure (Luke 9:26). James and John did not let anything—even family and career—come between them and Jesus. That does not mean we have to get rid of our jobs, family, or possessions. After all, Simon still had a house and still cared for his mother-in-law (Mark 1:29–31). But it means that a Christian's life is now defined by something else—by a relationship with Jesus Himself. So a **Christian** is a person who puts Jesus first and does not let anything else get between him and Jesus. Anything less fails to treat Jesus as the authoritative Son of God.

Jesus proved His authority (1:21–28)

The call to discipleship is hard! Who would want to give up his freedom and bind himself to one Master? Becoming a disciple of Jesus involves great sacrifice (Luke 14:26–33). However, in the rest of the book of Mark, Jesus will show that the sacrifice is worth it (Mark 3:34; 10:29–30). But here at the beginning of Mark's gospel, he gives just one reason: Jesus deserves to be followed.

We see Jesus' authority first in His teaching (1:21–22). He began teaching in Capernaum, a fairly large town (perhaps around 10,000) on the north shore of the Sea

of Galilee. Capernaum was also on a trade route, so news about Jesus was able to spread quickly. It was customary to gather in the synagogue on the Sabbath to listen to several respected men read and teach from Scripture. Jesus entered the synagogue and began to teach, but instead of repeating the oral traditions of the scribes, He spoke by His own authority. The difference between His teaching and the scribes' was unmistakable—the people were “astonished” (1:21–22).

But Jesus didn't just sound different than the scribes. When a screaming, demon-possessed man rushed into the synagogue, Jesus demonstrated His authority by casting out the demon (1:23, 25–26). He spoke one word and the demon could speak no more. He spoke just four more words, and the demon was forced out (1:25). The people were amazed; Jesus had absolute authority in both words and actions (1:27). Even the demon himself admitted Jesus' great authority, recognizing His sinlessness and deity (1:24). But why command the demon to be silent (1:25)? While the demon's words were true, Jesus rejected his testimony in order to guard against charges that He cast out demons by the power of Satan (3:22; cf. Acts 16:16–18).

The watching crowd was amazed because they got the point: Jesus has great authority (Mark 1:27–28). But they missed the bigger picture: if Jesus really is the Holy One of God, if Jesus really does have supreme authority, then He is to be followed. Do you recognize His authority? Have you responded by becoming His follower? Do you follow completely, or are there areas of your life where you still resist His authority? You must follow Jesus, because He is in charge.

THINK ABOUT IT

Since Jesus has all authority, the only wise response is to accept Him as your leader.



Lesson Outline

Respond to Jesus' authority by following Him.

AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Follow Jesus completely (1:16–20).
2. Follow Jesus because He is in charge (1:21–28).

AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus called four fishermen to follow Him (1:16–20).
 - Jesus' followers are ordinary people called by God (1:16–17, 19–20).
 - Jesus' followers follow His lead (1:17a).
 - Jesus' followers follow Jesus Himself (1:17a).
 - Jesus' followers do His work (1:17b).
 - Jesus' followers put Him first in their lives (1:18–20).
2. Jesus proved His authority (1:21–28).
 - Jesus taught with authority (1:21–22).
 - Jesus cast out demons with authority (1:23–26).
 - Jesus' authority was obvious to everyone (1:27–28).





Lesson Questions

Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.



Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who did Jesus command to follow him?**
Four fishermen: Simon, Andrew, James, and John.
- 2. What did Simon, Andrew, James, and John do when Jesus called them?**
They left everything and followed Him.
- 3. Why should we follow Jesus?**
Because Jesus has authority. Jesus is in charge.
- 4. In what three ways did Jesus prove His authority?**
(1) He called the disciples with authority. (2) He taught with authority. (3) He cast out a demon with authority.



Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. What does “disciple” mean?**
It means “follower.” This is what it means to be a Christian.
- 2. What kind of people does Jesus choose to be His followers?**
He chooses ordinary people.
- 3. Where does discipleship begin?**
It begins with Jesus. He chooses the ones He will call, and those He calls always come to Him.
- 4. What work did Jesus call the fishermen to do?**
He called them to fish for men—to bring others into the kingdom of God.
- 5. How quickly did Simon and Andrew respond?**
They followed Jesus right away.
- 6. What did James and John leave behind?**
They left behind their boat, their nets, and their father Zebedee.
- 7. What was different about Jesus' teaching?**
Instead of repeating what other people said about the Bible, He taught with His own authority.
- 8. What did the demon recognize about Jesus?**
That Jesus was the sinless Son of God.

Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

GREATER AUTHORITY

When the children disobey their parents, do their parents say, "It would be nice if you would stop disobeying, but you do not have to"? Or do they say, "(Child's name), stop disobeying"? When parents want children to do something, do they say, "I would like you to make your bed, but only if you feel like it"? Or do they say, "(Child's name), please make your bed right now"? Parents have authority over children. They do not suggest; they command. And it is the child's job not to argue, but to obey immediately and completely. But there is someone with even more authority than parents—Jesus. Let's look at a story that shows us how we must respond to His authority.

THE STEPS OF JESUS

Draw and cut out several drawings of footprints. Place the footprints on the floor throughout the room. The footprints should be placed so that a traveled path is revealed. As children arrive, instruct them to follow the path as closely as possible. Challenge them to walk the path without letting their feet touch any of the floor around the footprints. Use this activity to introduce what it means to be a disciple (follower) of Jesus.



ILLUSTRATE

"DO NOT MAKE ME COUNT TO THREE!"

Sometimes parents give their children until the count of three to obey. However, being a follower of Jesus means that we obey Him immediately. When Jesus called Simon and Andrew to follow Him, they "immediately...left their nets and followed" Jesus (Mark 1:18). Give the children a command and tell them to try to obey before you can count to three. After the activity, talk about why it's important to obey God, and our parents, right away.

FISHING FOR...LEGOS?

Before class, construct a miniature fishing pole using a small, wooden dowel and white yarn. Attach a paper clip to the end of the yarn. Next, glue a small magnet to the back of a Lego person (or other small, plastic figurine). Place the Lego person in a small aquarium (without water) and surround with underwater scenes (seaweed, fish, sand, etc.). "Fish" for the Lego person in class and talk about what Jesus meant when He said He would make the disciples "fishers of men" (Mark 1:17). If time allows, allow the children to "fish" for the person after the lesson.



APPLY

FROM FISHERMEN TO FISHERS OF MEN

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1.

Materials: Craft sheets, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out the pictures from the craft sheet. Glue the pictures to the appropriate places on the other craft sheet. Draw an arrow in the middle of the pictures pointing toward the right.

From Fishermen to Fishers of Men
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1



TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

Jesus calls the disciples • Mark 1:16–28



AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

STUDENT TEACHER

At the beginning of class, ask for a volunteer to serve as your disciple during Sunday School. This individual will follow you everywhere you go, helping you with every activity. Try to involve them as much as possible. During the lesson, talk about how the child followed you everywhere you went and did everything you did. Note the child's obedience: did he follow your commands immediately and completely? Explain that this is what it means to be a disciple. Then talk about what it means to be Jesus' disciple, following His commands immediately and completely.

FISHERS OF PLASTIC SOLDIERS

Before class, place a number of plastic army men in an aquarium filled with water. Before the lesson, read Mark 1:17 and tell the children they will be playing a game called "fishers of plastic soldiers." Call children up one by one, blindfold them, and see how many plastic soldiers they can catch with a small net in ten seconds. After all the children have had a turn, award a prize to the best fisherman. Ask the children what it means to be a "fisher of men." Tell them that we'll learn what it means in today's lesson.



ILLUSTRATE

CLAY POTS

Bring in a plain clay flower pot and a beautiful jewelry box. Ask: "Which do people normally put their expensive jewelry in?" Explain that they normally choose the beautiful jewelry box. What about Jesus? Does He put His glory inside ordinary people (hold up the pot) or only inside the smartest, richest, most famous, or most religious people (hold up the jewelry box)? Read 2 Corinthians 4:7 and explain that God often chooses ordinary people to display His glory. So if you realize you aren't anything special (hold up pot), have hope! Jesus can use you! But if you think you are extra special and can serve Jesus better than others (hold up box), be warned. Jesus does not want people who brag about themselves.

PHONE A FRIEND

The hit television game show, *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, allowed contestants to call a friend to help them answer one question. If you had to answer one question about the Bible, who would you call? What about science? Or math? You would call an authority on that subject. However, most experts can usually only speak about one subject with authority. In contrast, Jesus has complete authority over everything.



APPLY

JESUS CALLS THE DISCIPLES

See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1*.

Materials: Craft sheets, straws, hole punch, tape, glue, scissors, and crayons.

Directions: Have students color and cut out pictures on craft sheet. Then color and cut out the boat from the second craft sheet and fold up along the dotted lines. Use tape to connect the flaps together. Cut out the sail and use a hole punch on the dotted circles. Stick a straw through the holes. Attach the straw to the inside of the boat with tape. Glue the boat to a piece of blue cardstock. Glue the picture of Jesus onto the blue cardstock in front of the boat, and glue the picture of the disciples inside the boat. Make a net out by gluing on several pieces of yarn.

Jesus Calls the Disciples

See *Year 3 Craft Book, Book 1*



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

GOING FISHIN'

Come to class prepared to fish. Wear waders and a fishing hat. Carry a fishing pole, net, and tackle box. Ask the children if they have had any success fishing in this class. Fix a candy bar to the end of your fishing line and hold it out over the children. When a child reaches up to grab it, pretend to set the hook and reel them in. Next, try a small prize. Finally, try a dollar bill. Talk about how much fun it is “fishing for men.” Tell the children that we will talk about what it actually means to fish for men in today’s lesson.

COPY CAT

Ask a child how they’re doing. After they respond, repeat what they say. Do this with everything the child says. As far as you are able, copy the child’s words, expressions, body language, and movements. After the activity, explain that copying someone is, in a small way, like becoming their disciple, or follower. You try to do what they do and say what they say. This is what we do when we become a disciple of Jesus. In today’s lesson, we’ll learn about four men Jesus called to follow Him.



ILLUSTRATE

COMPLETE OBEDIENCE

Talk about some situations in which it is especially important to follow the directions exactly as they are given: building a bridge, packing a parachute, disarming a bomb, administering medications, or fixing the breaks on your car. Talk about the consequences of not following the directions. Explain that being a disciple of Jesus means striving to obey Him completely, like the disciples did when they left everything to follow Him (Mark 1:18, 20). Talk about the danger of partial obedience to Jesus’ commands and why He deserves complete obedience.

MASTER TEACHER

Read the story of Jesus’ post-resurrection appearance to two disciples on the Road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). Talk about the disciples’ reaction to Jesus’ teaching (24:32). Compare this to the people’s response to Jesus’ teaching in the synagogue (Mark 1:22).



APPLY

DISCIPLESHIP CHECKLIST

Have you become a follower of Jesus? If you have, it should be obvious in your life. Ask the children to silently think about what their answers would be as you read the following questions:

- Do you enjoy reading the Bible?
- Do you desire to obey your parents?
- Do you pray on your own?
- Do you like church?
- Do you always desire and work hard to do what is right?
- Do you recognize sin in your life?
- Do you repent quickly when you realize you have sinned?