2026-04-12 Jesus Calls Sinners

Introduction

In this lesson, children will discover that Jesus chose ordinary, helpless sinners to be His friends. He didn't go looking for the smartest, strongest, or most popular people. Instead, He called fishermen: ordinary, smelly, dirty-handed workers who had nothing special to offer. Through the story of Jesus calling Simon Peter and his friends (Luke 5:1-11), children will learn that Jesus doesn't need our help, but He lovingly chooses to save weak and helpless sinners. This is the most hopeful news of all: you don't have to be good enough, because Jesus came for people who know they need Him.

Main Ideas:

- **Glory:** Jesus displays the greatness and worth of God by choosing and saving sinners.
- **Choice:** Jesus chooses sinners to be His friends, not because He needs them, but because they need Him.
- **Power:** Jesus is all-powerful. Nothing is too hard for Him.
- **Hope:** Jesus came to save helpless sinners who know they cannot fix their own hearts.

Praise and Worship (15 mins)

> **Parents:** The parent and child scheduled for this week will lead us in singing on Sunday. Please take time to practice the songs together at home, helping your child feel confident and joyful as they prepare to lead.

https://www.youtube.com/embed/oBNGHccTyaE

https://www.youtube.com/embed/lmgUKoFKM60

Prayer and Offering (5 mins)

> **Parents:** Please encourage your children to bring an offering to church. You may help your child prepare by setting aside a coin for them to bring on Sunday. This is a great opportunity to teach them about giving to God with a thankful heart and trusting Him to provide.

> “ What is Offering?

> Offering is when we **give something to God** to show our love and thankfulness. In church, we often give money as an offering, but we can also give our time, talents, and kindness to God and others.
>
> ### Why Do We Make an Offering?
>
> **To Thank God** – Everything we have comes from God! Giving back is a way to say, “Thank You, God!”
> **To Trust God** – When we give, we show that we trust God to take care of us.
> **To Help Others** – Offerings help the church teach about Jesus, help people in need, and share God’s love.
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> The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 9:7,
> *"God loves a cheerful giver!" That means God is happy when we give with a joyful heart!*

Prayer for Offering

> “ Dear God, thank You for giving us everything we need. We want to give back to You with joyful hearts. Please use our offering to help others and share Your love. Help us to always trust You. In Jesus’ name, Amen!

Review Verse from Last Week

John 8:31b

"[Jesus said,] 'If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples.'"

Bible Story (10 min)

Introduction (2 min)

Props Needed:

- Two baseball bats (or hockey sticks, badminton rackets, or any sports equipment)
- A toy fishing net or piece of fabric mesh
- A piece of dark cloth or a dirty rag (to represent a fisherman's rough clothing)
- A picture or toy fish (or a real fish from the grocery store in a bag for dramatic effect!)
- Darkened Heart visual (from previous lessons)

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> *(Hold up the two baseball bats or sports equipment. Choose one adult helper and one child to come to the front.)*

> **Teacher:** "OK everyone, I need your help! Let's pretend we're going to play baseball. I get to pick ONE more person for my team."
>
> *(Hand a bat to the adult and a bat to the child.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "Now, [adult's name] is really big and strong and can hit the ball super far. [Child's name] is still learning. If I want to WIN the game, who should I pick?"
>
> *(Wait for kids to answer. They'll likely say the adult.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "Right! If you want to win, you'd pick the strongest player. But how would it feel to be the one left out? To hear, 'Sorry, you're not good enough'?"
>
> **Interaction:** "Make a sad face. ? Have you ever been left out? That doesn't feel good."
>
> **Teacher:** "Now, here's a big question: When Jesus picked His special friends, did He go looking for the strongest, smartest, most popular people?"
>
> *(Pause dramatically.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "Let's find out from the Bible!"

Story Telling: Jesus Calls His First Disciples (8 min)

Props / Visuals Suggested:

- Fishing net or mesh fabric, dark cloth/dirty rag, toy fish
- Darkened Heart visual

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> ### Part 1: A Fisherman Named Simon (2 mins)
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> **Teacher:** "Last time we learned that Jesus is the best teacher ever. He uses simple stories to teach us about God. Today we're going to meet someone named Simon Peter."
>
> *(Hold up the dark cloth/dirty rag.)*
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> **Teacher:** "Simon Peter was a fisherman. Does anyone know what a fisherman does?"
>
> *(Wait for answers.)*
>
> **Teacher:** "That's right! He catches fish! But being a fisherman wasn't a fancy job. Fishermen got up really early, worked really hard, and came home smelling like..."
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> **Interaction:** "Everyone hold your nose! Pee-yew! ? Fishermen were smelly!"

Teacher: "Fishermen weren't rich. They weren't famous. Nobody looked at them and said, 'Wow, what an important person!' They were just ordinary, regular people."

Teacher: "One day, Jesus was by a big lake and a huge crowd came to hear Him teach. Jesus saw two boats by the shore. He got into Simon Peter's boat and asked Simon to push it out into the water a little bit. Then Jesus sat down and taught the crowd from the boat!"

Interaction: "Everyone pretend you're rowing a boat! Row, row, row!"

Part 2: The Amazing Catch of Fish (3 mins)

Teacher: "After Jesus finished teaching, He said something surprising to Simon Peter. He said: 'Push your boat out to the deep water and put your nets down to catch some fish.'"

Teacher: "Now, Simon Peter was tired. He had been fishing ALL night long and hadn't caught a single fish. Not even one tiny little fish!"

Interaction: "Hold up ZERO fingers. Zero fish! After working all night!"

Teacher: "But Simon Peter said something important. He said: 'Master, we worked hard all night and caught nothing. But because YOU say so, I will put the nets down.'"

Teacher: "Did you hear that? Even though he was tired and hadn't caught anything, Simon obeyed Jesus. He trusted that Jesus knew something he didn't."

Interaction: "Everyone pretend to throw a big fishing net! Heave... ho! Splash!"

(Toss the net/mesh fabric out dramatically.)

Teacher: "And guess what happened? The nets filled up with SO MANY FISH that the nets started to BREAK! There were so many fish that Simon had to call his friends James and John to bring another boat. And BOTH boats were so full of fish they almost sank!"

Interaction: "Wiggle like a fish! Wiggle wiggle wiggle! There are fish EVERYWHERE!"

Teacher: "Who made all those fish swim into the net? Was it Simon Peter's fishing skills? No! It was JESUS. Jesus is God, and He is all-powerful. Nothing is too hard for Him!"

Part 3: Simon Peter's Response (1.5 mins)

Teacher: "When Simon Peter saw all those fish, do you think he said: 'Wow, look how great I am!'?"

(Wait for kids to say no.)

Teacher: "No! Simon Peter fell down on his knees in front of Jesus."

Interaction: "Everyone drop to your knees like Simon Peter!"

Teacher: "And he said: 'Go away from me, Lord. I am a sinful man!' Simon Peter wasn't proud. He knew that standing next to Jesus, the perfect Son of God, he was just a weak, helpless sinner."

(Hold up the Darkened Heart visual.)

Teacher: "Simon Peter had a darkened heart, just like all of us. He couldn't fix it by himself. He wasn't smart enough, strong enough, or good enough to fix his own heart. He knew he needed help."

Teacher: "And what did Jesus say to this smelly, ordinary, sinful fisherman? Did Jesus say, 'You're right, go away'?"

(Wait for kids to respond.)

Teacher: "No! Jesus said: 'Don't be afraid. From now on, you will be catching people!' Jesus was saying: 'Come with Me! I'm choosing YOU to be My friend!'"

Part 4: Why Did Jesus Choose Sinners? (1.5 mins)

Teacher: "So Simon Peter, James, and John left everything behind. Their boats, their fish, their jobs. They followed Jesus!"

Interaction: "Stand up! Now take a big step forward, like you're following Jesus! One step, two steps, three steps!"

Teacher: "But wait. Why did Jesus choose these ordinary fishermen? Did Jesus NEED their help? Was His job too hard for Him to do alone?"

(Wait for kids to answer. Shake your head.)

Teacher: "No! Jesus is GOD. Nothing is too hard for Him. He didn't need helpers. Jesus chose Simon Peter and the others, not because of what they could do for HIM, but because of what HE could do for THEM."

Teacher: "Jesus was saying: 'I know you are weak. I know you are helpless. I know you can't fix your sinful heart. That's exactly why I came! I love you, and I am able to save you!'"

Interaction: "Point to yourself. Jesus says: 'I came for YOU.' Point to your friend. 'And YOU.' Point to everyone. 'And ALL of us!'"

Teacher: "Let's remember this with actions!"

- **Teacher:** "Jesus doesn't need..." *(Kids flex muscles and shake heads.)* "...strong helpers!"

- **Teacher:** "Jesus doesn't need..." *(Kids point to their heads and shake heads.)* "...smart helpers!"
- **Teacher:** "Jesus CHOOSES..." *(Kids point to themselves.)* "...helpless sinners!"
- **Teacher:** "Because HE..." *(Kids point up to heaven.)* "...can save us!"

Teacher: "One more time, louder!"

- "Jesus doesn't need strong helpers!" *(Flex and shake.)*
- "Jesus doesn't need smart helpers!" *(Point to head and shake.)*
- "Jesus CHOOSES helpless sinners!" *(Point to self.)*
- "Because HE can save us!" *(Point up.)*

Wrap-up & Discussion (4 min)

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> *(Gather children close for reflection.)*
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> ### Discussion Questions:
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> **Teacher:** "Let's think about what we learned today."
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> **Question:** "What kind of people did Jesus choose to be His friends? Were they rich and important?"
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> **Teacher Key:** No! They were ordinary fishermen. Smelly, not rich, not famous. They were helpless sinners.
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> **Question:** "Did Jesus need Simon Peter's help to do His big job of saving sinners?"
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> **Teacher Key:** No. Jesus is God and He is all-powerful. He doesn't need anyone's help. He chose them because THEY needed HIM.
>
> **Question:** "What did Simon Peter do when he saw all those fish? Why did he fall on his knees?"
>
> **Teacher Key:** He knew he was a sinful man standing in front of the perfect Son of God. He humbly admitted his sin.
>
> **Question:** "Do you have to be good, strong, or smart before you can be a friend of Jesus?"
>
> **Teacher Key:** No! Jesus came for weak, helpless sinners. He wants people who know they need Him. That is the best news of all!
>
> **Teacher:** "You don't have to be the best at anything to be Jesus' friend. You don't have to be the smartest kid in school, or the fastest runner, or the one with the most friends. Jesus says: 'I came for you, just as you are. I know you need help, and I love you!'"

Closing Thought & Prayer

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> **Teacher:** "This is the most wonderful news for all of us. Jesus doesn't wait for us to be good enough. He comes to us when we are weak and helpless and says: 'Follow Me. I will save you.' What an amazing, loving Savior!"
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> *(Fold hands and bow heads.)*
>
> **Prayer:** "Dear Jesus, thank You for choosing sinners to be Your friends. Thank You that we don't have to be strong, smart, or perfect. Thank You that You came for weak and helpless people like us. Help us to be like Simon Peter: to know we need You, and to follow You with all our hearts. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Memorizing Verse: Luke 5:32

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> **Luke 5:32**
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> [Jesus said,] "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance."
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> **Hand Gestures:**
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> - **"I have not come..."**: Shake your head and wave your hands side to side (saying "no, not for that reason").
> - **"...to call the righteous..."**: Stand up tall and proud, flex your muscles like a strong person (the "righteous" who think they don't need help).
> - **"...but sinners..."**: Drop your shoulders, look down, and point to yourself humbly (that's us, sinners who need Jesus).
> - **"...to repentance."**: Turn your whole body around in a circle (repentance means turning away from sin and turning toward God).

Craft & Game (10 mins)

Game: "Jesus Calls Sinners" Missing Word Game

Children take turns picking cards to find the right word that completes the memory verse.

? **Time:** 5 minutes

? **Age Group:** 4-6 years

? **Lesson Connection:** Reinforces that Jesus came to call SINNERS, not people who think they are already good enough.

? Setup & Materials Needed:

- A whiteboard or large piece of paper
- Markers
- 6 word cards (face down): "Good People," "Smart People," "Kind People," "Strong People," "Nice People," "Sinners"

? How to Play:

Step 1: Write the memory verse on the board with a blank: "[Jesus said,] 'I have not come to call the righteous but _____ to repentance.' (Luke 5:32)"

Step 2: Place the 6 word cards face down on a table. Mix them up.

Step 3: One child picks a card. Read the verse with that word filling the blank. For example: "I have not come to call the righteous but SMART PEOPLE to repentance." Ask: "Is that right?"

Step 4: If wrong, put it aside and let the next child pick. If correct ("Sinners"), everyone cheers and says the full verse together!

Step 5: After finding the right word, ask: "Why did Jesus say 'sinners' and not 'good people' or 'strong people'?" (Because Jesus came for people who know they need help!)

Craft: "Jesus Chose Me!" Fishing Boat

Children make a simple paper fishing boat to take home as a reminder that Jesus calls ordinary people.

Materials: Half sheet of blue construction paper (the sea), a pre-cut boat shape from brown paper, small paper fish shapes, glue sticks, crayons or markers, the memory verse printed on small strips of paper.

The Activity:

- **Step 1:** Glue the brown boat shape onto the blue paper (the sea).
- **Step 2:** Draw stick figures of Simon Peter, James, and John in the boat.
- **Step 3:** Glue lots of little fish shapes around and below the boat (the miraculous catch!).
- **Step 4:** Write or glue the memory verse strip at the bottom: "I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (Luke 5:32)
- **Step 5:** On the back, children can write or draw: "Jesus chose ME to be His friend!"
- **Take Home:** Children can show their family the boat and tell the story of how Jesus called ordinary fishermen to follow Him. Ask: "Did Jesus need strong, smart helpers? No! He chose weak sinners because HE can save them!"

Response Song

https://www.youtube.com/embed/v54IJLT171w

Closing Prayer & Snack Time (10 mins)

> "Dear Jesus, thank You for calling sinners to be Your friends. Thank You that we don't have to be perfect or strong or important. You love us just as we are, and You are powerful enough to save us. Help us to always remember that we need You. Amen."
>
> Now, let us thank You for the snack we're about to enjoy.
> We fold our hands.
> We bow our heads.
> We thank You, God,
> for this daily bread.
> Amen.

Free Time & Children Pickup (15 mins)

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