

John 1:35-51

“Jesus: Team Captain”

Scripture: John 1:35-51

Memory Verse: Matthew 9:9b “*And Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him.*”

Lesson Focus: We will see how Jesus begins to select the first members of His team and emphasize how they were ordinary guys who were captivated by Jesus and chose to boldly follow their Team Captain. We can learn a lot from their example and will also stress how like them, we are to follow Him and bring others to Him.

Activities and Crafts: Coloring Picture of Follow Me, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Make It Real Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st & 2nd: The 12 Disciples

Starter Activity: Follow the Leader Game

Have all of the kids get in a circle and have them face the middle. You will select one person to be the leader and another person who will guess who the leader is. For the first time, I would suggest selecting one of the volunteers to be the guesser. Pull the guesser out of the circle and have them close their eyes so they do not know who the leader is.

Then the leader will lead by doing motions (i.e. clapping hands, raising arms, stomping feet, etc.) and everyone else in the circle will “follow the leader” by mimicking the leader. Place the guesser in the middle of the circle and have them observe everyone to see if he/she can find out who the leader is. Every five seconds or so the leader will need to change their motions so that the rest of the group will follow. The guesser will need to observe everyone to see who is the one being followed.

Once they figure out who the leader is, then consider playing it at least one more time with a student as the guesser.

1st-2nd Grade Teachers: If this seems too complicated for your class, consider just having the kids “follow you” around the classroom doing various motions.

Afterwards, wrap-up with some discussion about the game’s relevance to our lesson (see below) and then transition into the Bible study.

Q: As Christians, who is our leader that we are to follow? Jesus! He is like our team captain and we are to follow His lead! In our Bible study today, we are going to see how Jesus begins to select members of His “team” and how He instructs them to simply “follow Him”.

Bible Study:

John 1:35-37: John the Baptist continues to point people to Jesus and now begins to fade away so that Jesus can become the central character.

Q: Have you ever been #1 on a team or in a group? If so, how do you feel when someone else comes in who is better than you and you go from being #1 to #2?

A: Maybe jealous and angry! Notice that John the Baptist has many followers, but he is actually sending them to Jesus! His purpose was never to attach people to himself, but to get them ready for Jesus Christ.

Here we have two guys leaving John the Baptist to follow Jesus Christ.

John 1:38: These are the first recorded words of Jesus in this gospel.

Q: What does it mean to “seek” something? It means to really want something and long for something.

Q: Can you imagine meeting and following Jesus for the first time and having Him suddenly turn around and ask you, “What do you seek?” How would you answer?

Jesus asks us all the same question. Are we truly seeking Him or are we seeking other things? Remember Solomon in our study of Ecclesiastes. He was seeking all sorts of other things “under the sun” (wealth, power, fame, pleasure, etc.). Nothing satisfied because God has placed eternity in our hearts (Eccl 3:11).

John 1:39-40: These two disciples wanted to spend time with Jesus.

Q: Does Jesus welcome them in just as they are or does He say come back later after you are more holy or a better person?

A: He takes them and us in JUST AS WE ARE. God will then do the work of changing you and making you into what He wants you to be.

Here we see one of them identified as Andrew, the brother of Peter who became the leader of the early church. Most experts believe the second guy is John the apostle, who wrote this book!

John 1:41-42: Here we see Andrew’s response after spending that afternoon with Jesus.

Q: What was the first thing that Andrew did after being with Jesus?

A: He went to tell someone else about Him!

We don’t know a lot about Andrew and there are only two other incidents in this gospel where he is mentioned. In both cases, he is found bringing someone to Jesus just like he is doing here in bringing Simon Peter to Jesus! Have you ever told others about Jesus? Invite them to church!

Peter comes before Jesus Who gives him a new name.

Q: What are some nicknames that you guys all have? *

Nicknames are given within loving relationship. As we see throughout the rest of the NT, Peter becomes a much-loved disciple of Jesus even though he makes a lot of mistakes. Jesus also knows what Peter is capable of and calling him “rock” he sees what he will become as the leader of the early church.

John 1:43: Jesus continues to select members of His team. Here he selects Philip and simply tells Him, “follow Me”.

Q: What do you think Jesus means when He says “follow Me”?

A: Remember the game we played at the beginning? We are to make it our goal in life to live more and more like He did: loving God, loving others.

Read John 10:27: Jesus says that His sheep hear His voice and they follow Him.

Q: If we are His sheep by trusting and believing in Him, how do you think we are to “hear His voice”?

A: Reading the Bible! We know what He wants because He told us in His word!

John 1:44-46: Here we see a fourth disciple entering the story, Nathanael.

Q: What is the first thing that we see Philip doing? Telling someone else! (just like Andrew did). Notice what Philip says in v. 46: “Come and see”. You can say the same thing to your friends when you invite them to church. Invite them to “come and see” what this is all about!

Also in v. 46, Nathanael has a funny response when Philip tells him that the Messiah is from Nazareth. Apparently, Nathanael did not think much of Nazareth or maybe it was a rival town. Think about a city that you don’t like very much. Then think about how you would respond if you found out that is where Jesus came from!

John 1:47-51: Nathanael is then blown away after he “comes to see” Jesus!

In v. 48 we get a snapshot of the all-knowing nature of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ as God knows all things and here He makes it clear to Nathanael that He knows everything about Him.

Read Psalm 139:1-3: This kind of knowledge is what Jesus had of Nathanael and also what He has of you!

Q: How would you feel if you were introduced to someone who suddenly started telling you everything that you did today?

In v. 49, we see Nathanael’s response is one of faith and worship and it should be our response as well. Jesus lets Nathanael know that he will see even greater things!

So we have seen Jesus putting together His team in these verses. We know from the other gospels that He will select several more. But what we also know is that these guys are ordinary, average, and run of the mill.

Q: How many of you have been part of some game where team captains are going through everyone one by one to pick members of their team? Who do the captains usually pick first?

A: The best players! And whoever is picked last usually feels just awful. *

Key Point: This is not how Jesus picks members of His team! In fact, He does things quite the opposite way, selecting folks who are humble and ordinary.

Q: Why do you think Jesus does it that way?

A: Those are the people who will trust in Him and not in themselves! Then He will change them and turn them into solid “rocks” like Peter. That way He gets the glory!

James 4:6 says that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Jesus wants all of you to be part of His team! Will you come humbly, just as you are? Do not believe the lie that you need to be “better” before you can come be part of His team and used by Him! He knows EVERYTHING ABOUT YOU and He still invites you to be part of His team!

What do you seek? Seek after Him and follow Him!

Bring It Home

Lesson Theme: “Jesus: Team Captain”

Scripture: John 1:35-51

Memory Verse: Matthew 9:9b *“And Jesus said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed Him.”*

Teachers/Parents: We talked about how it is common for team captains to select players for their teams and they always pick the best first. In the schoolyard, that breeds selfish pride for the kids picked high and multiplies shame for the kids picked low. Jesus flips this completely around by choosing ordinary guys without much to offer. Share an experience where you were part of a team that picked players this way and how this process made you feel (either proud to be picked high or ashamed to be picked last).

Discussion Questions:

- 1) While competitive sports have their place and those with the greatest talent and skill are expected to win, we should be careful to remember that Jesus selects people differently for His team. **Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.** Why do you think God operates this way?
- 2) **In John 1:38,** Jesus asks “what do you seek?”. If He were to ask you that questions, how would you answer? **Read Matthew 6:31-33.** What do you think Jesus would have you seek?
- 3) **Read John 1:40.** We know very little about Andrew, but here and the throughout the rest of the gospels he is usually referred as Peter’s brother. Andrew likely lived under the shadow of his brother, yet here we see that it was Andrew who first brought Jesus to Peter. Can it be hard to take second place to someone else? What can we learn from Andrew about being content with humbly serving without recognition?
- 4) **In John 1:39 and John 1:46** we see the invitation to “come and see”. John the Baptist, Andrew, and Philip are quick to tell others about Jesus. Who in your life can you invite to church to “come and see”?
- 5) **In John 1:42,** Jesus gives Simon the name Peter. We discussed that while this was a foreshadowing of what Peter became, it may also have been a nickname. Nicknames are something that are given in love. What are some of your nicknames and do you know that they are given in love just similar to how Jesus loved Peter?
- 6) **Read John 1:43.** Jesus, as our captain, would have us follow Him. What are some practical ways that you can follow Jesus this week?