

THE LORD CALLS HIS DISCIPLES

And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."
(Matthew 4:18-20)

The Lord called twelve disciples, and they readily followed Him. During the three years of His ministry, the disciples had ample opportunity to learn from the greatest Teacher of all. They were not perfect men, but they grew through this time with the Lord.

READ: "Follow Me" by the Rev. Peter M. Buss, Jr.

Are we willing to keep the commandments of the Lord and allow Him to direct our day to day lives with the same level of devotion as the disciples?

READ: "The Story of the Twelve Apostles" (a family talk by an unknown author)

FAMILY WORSHIP: Calling His Disciples

Read Matthew 4:18-25.

Discussion Ideas:

- What were Simon and Andrew doing when the Lord called to them? (fishing)
- What did the Lord say to them? ("Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.")
- How did they respond? (They followed Him immediately)
- Who were the other brothers called by the Lord? (James and John)
- What were they doing when the Lord called them? (mending fishing nets with their father)
- What would it be like to have someone call you to do something if it meant stopping what you were already doing? Would it be easy? Why do you think these men followed the Lord immediately? (Answers will vary. Obviously, the disciples realized that the Lord was someone special and felt drawn to follow Him.)
- How does the Lord call us to be His disciples? (We hear His call when we learn about Him and the teachings of His Word. We follow the Lord when we try to do what the Lord says is good and true.)

PROJECT: Follow Me (for ages 4-7)

When the Lord called Simon and his brother, Andrew, they immediately left their fishing nets and followed Him. Children can illustrate this with a collage made with a slit between a boat and the Lord. Attach Simon and Andrew to a craft stick to move them along the slit and reenact the story.

SING: "Cast Your Net on the Right Side" by Lori Odhner

PROJECT: Calling the First Disciples (for ages 6-9)

PROJECT: Disciples of the Lord Mobile Project (from Level 3 of the Family Lesson)

Make a mobile with the pictures provided of the twelve disciples (fronts and backs). Write the name of each disciple on the figure and follow the directions to assemble the mobile.

COLORING PAGES: **Fishermen** by Lisa S. Buss
 Jesus Calls the Disciples by Marguerite L. Acton
 The Lord Calls Simon and Andrew by Lisa S. Buss

SING: **Twelve Disciples** by Lori Odhner

PROJECT: A Stained Glass Window Project (*from Level 4 of Family Lesson*)

Color a stained glass window showing the Lord and His twelve disciples. On another "window" write something true and good under each disciple's name, because the disciples symbolize all the good and true things that we know and love. Attach the two windows on one side with the colored picture on top. When you lift it up, you will see examples of good and true things that can help us become disciples of the Lord.

ACTIVITY: Naming the Twelve Disciples (*for ages 8-14*)

Write the names of the Lord's disciples on a chart which emphasizes that there were twelve.



SENDING OUT THE DISCIPLES

**“As you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’
Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons.
Freely you have received, freely give” (Matthew 10:5, 7-8).**

The twelve disciples were followers who were learning from the Lord, but they also were apostles who were sent out to teach and help others. In addition to the twelve disciples, the Lord had many other followers, and He sent seventy of them out into the world as well.

We all have opportunities to help people around us—family members, coworkers, neighbors, *etc.*—to learn precious truths that can bring them hope, comfort, and healing. In this way, we too can serve the Lord as apostles.

READ: **“Sending Out the Seventy”** a family talk by the Rev. Norman Reuter

ACTIVITY: The Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand *(for ages 10-16)*

The Lord sent out His twelve disciples, telling them to preach that “The kingdom of heaven” is at hand. He also commanded them to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, *etc.* We can’t physically heal people the way the disciples did, but there are other ways we can help the Lord make life in this world a little more like life in heaven. Make a list of ways that you can help.

FOR DISCUSSION: Why Two by Two? *(for teens and up)*

When the Lord appointed the seventy, He sent them out two by two (see Luke 10:1). Brainstorm some of the advantages of going out by twos. Are there parallels in our lives? For example, when we have friends who share our religious beliefs, how might this support or strengthen us in following the Lord?

COLORING PAGE: The Lord and His Twelve Disciples

HELPING ESTABLISH A NEW CHURCH

After this work was finished the Lord called together His twelve disciples who followed Him in the world; and the next day He sent them all forth throughout the whole spiritual world to preach the Gospel that THE LORD GOD JESUS CHRIST reigns (True Christian Religion 791).

The Lord gave us the New Testament which tells us about His life on earth and also clarifies many teachings in the Old Testament. Hundreds of years later, people were ready to learn about a deeper meaning for both the Old and New Testaments, and the Lord gave this revelation through Emanuel Swedenborg. As this work was finished, the Lord called together His disciples and sent them throughout the spiritual world to preach the new gospel that the Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.

READ: “I Have Chosen You” by the Rev. Eric H. Carswell

The disciples picture the Lord’s church in our lives as a group and as individuals. Just as the disciples were willing to follow Jesus and learn from Him, so can we follow the Lord and grow from His presence in our lives through reading His Word and making it our guide.

PROJECT: Sending the Disciples Throughout Heaven *(for all ages)*

Make a collage of the Lord sending out His twelve disciples in heaven to preach the gospel that “The Lord God Jesus Christ reigns.” Use beautiful papers and fabric for the disciples’ clothing since this took place in heaven. This is a great project for a family to work on together.

COLORING PAGE: Sending Out the Twelve Disciples by Mary S. Cooper

READ: “Being Spiritual Fishermen” by the Rev. David R. Simons

Did you ever wonder why the Lord chose fishermen to be His disciples? Did you know that Emanuel Swedenborg, the man chosen by the Lord to write about His Second Coming and so bring about the New Christian Church, was also a fisherman? He called himself a “spiritual fisherman.”

PROJECT: Sending Out the Twelve Disciples *(for ages 5-14)*

BECOMING A DISCIPLE OF THE LORD

To acknowledge the Lord's Divine Human and to do His commandments is to follow Him, because only those who do this can be conjoined to the Lord (*Apocalypse Explained* 864:2).

The Lord calls us all to become His disciples, but leaves us in freedom to follow or not.

READ: "The Lord's Disciples" by the Rev. Kenneth O. Stroh (*adapted for little ones*)

Did you know that the Lord calls each one of you to be His disciple? And you can be one, if you listen carefully when the Word is being read, and then try to do what the Lord says is good and true, no matter how hard it may seem. Then you will be following the Lord, and you will be His disciple.

PROJECT: I Will Walk Among You (*for ages 3-8*)

Make a chain of paper dolls and tape it so that the people are standing in a circle. Then assemble the color picture of the Lord to put in the center of the circle.

READ: "Answering the Call to Discipleship" by the Rev. Frederick M Chapin

If we are faithful in performing what the Lord calls us to do, we can help bring the Lord to people.

FOR DISCUSSION: The Truth Shall Make You Free (*teens and up*)

Do you know the words that come just before this famous quote: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)? Look up the sentence that comes before and reflect on how it can help us understand what is meant here.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Discipleship (*for teens and up*)

Read about discipleship and then answer the true-false questions as a springboard for discussion.

BOOKMARKS: Print Out Three Bookmarks with Beautiful Quotations (*for ages 10 and up*)

Here are bookmarks that you can print, cut out, and use to help you remember some of the keys to becoming a disciple of the Lord.

ACTIVITY: Can the Blind Lead the Blind? (*for ages 8-16*)

"Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher" (Luke 6:39-40). Try this experiment: Blindfold two people and ask one to guide the other in drawing a smiley face on a paper plate. Try it again after taking the blindfold off of the leader.

JOURNAL PAGE: Your Right Hand Upholds Me (*for teens and up*)

The Lord gives us His laws and helps us follow them. Read excerpts from Psalm 63 and reflect on times that the Lord has helped you such as after you have prayed for His help, read a passage from the Word, or turned your thoughts to Him.

PROJECT: Walk in All His Ways (*for ages 5-10*)

Cut out the footprints with quotations from the Word and distribute them around your home or along a pathway. Let your child look for the quotations, seeing if they can find all seven of them. Talk about the importance of looking to the Lord in His Word so that we can walk in all His ways.

SING: Lord, I Will Follow You by Karen Childs Elder

Karen has composed several songs to help people memorize words from the Old and New Testaments. The lyrics for this song are taken from Luke 9:57-58.

SING: At Thy Command I Leave My All

THE CHURCH

The primary principle of the church is to acknowledge God, to believe in God, and to love Him.
(*New Jerusalem and the Heavenly Doctrines* 281)

The lives of the Lord's disciples present a picture to us of we can become part of His church as we work to bring its teachings into our lives. As with the disciples, we may have times when we focus on our faith and other times when we focus on doing good works. And like them, we may also stumble from time to time, doubting the Lord's truths or His loving care. Just as the Lord led His twelve disciples to understand His mission and to learn to serve others, so He will lead us to become true disciples if we commit to following Him.

READ: "The Church" by the Rev. Daniel W. Heinrichs

The Church exists with those who not only know the Lord as He is revealed in the Word, but who also live the life of charity which the Word teaches. We see from these teachings that the Church exists within people—in their minds and hearts.

JOURNAL PAGE: Focusing on God (*for teens and up*)

Reflect on ways you can acknowledge God, believe in Him, and show your love for Him, since this is the primary principle of the church.

ACTIVITY: What is the Church?

The teachings of the Heavenly Doctrine have a specific meaning when they talk about a church. Rather than referring to a building or a church organization, the "church" generally refers to the presence of the Lord with a person or a group of people who are conjoined with Him. People achieve this conjunction through their faith, love, and actions. Read these short quotations from the Lord's Word to help you reflect on the spiritual concept of the church.

READ: The Earth Is the Lord's by the Rev. Patrick A. Rose

We need to provide a spiritual dwelling-place for the Lord, a dwelling-place within our own minds. For it is the Lord's presence and conjunction with people that makes the church. It is vital to realize that the church does not belong to us; it is the Lord's.

FOR REFLECTION: Coming into the Lord's Church (*for ages 16 and up*)

The Heavenly Doctrine teaches that people are initiated into the church by knowing [what is] evil and not doing it, because it is against God (see *Charity* 27). It is only when we are looking to the truths of the Word for guidance that we can clearly recognize evil. What does this passage teach about the importance of our motives in refraining from doing what is wrong? How does it relate to the teaching that the Lord's Church is with all in the whole world who live in good according to their religious system? (*NJHD* 246)

SONG: Jesus, with Thy Church Abide