Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Calls Matthew

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: Jesus calls me to follow Him.
Bible passage: Matthew 9. Read Matthew 9:9–13 yourself before class.
Memory verse: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." *Matthew 9:13 (KJV).* Preschoolers learn it with a motion and the simple words "Jesus calls me!"
You need: a Bible, a small table and a chair, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at Matthew 9. Set the table and chair at one side of the room.

1. Opening game: Follow Me (5 minutes)

Say, "Follow me!" and walk around the room in a line. The kids copy you: tiptoe, hop, stomp, wave. Then stop and say, "Sit down!" Say: "Today we will hear a true story. Jesus said to a man, 'Follow me.'"

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Matthew 9. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

A man named Matthew sat at the receipt of custom, where taxes were paid (Matthew 9:9). *(Sit down.)*
People paid their taxes there. *(Hold out your hand.)*
Jesus walked by (9:9). *(Walk in place.)*
Jesus said, "Follow me" (9:9). *(Wave "come on.")*
Say it with me: "Follow me!"
Matthew got up and followed Jesus (9:9). *(Stand up and walk in place.)*
Lots of people came to eat with Jesus (9:10). *(Pretend to eat.)*
Some leaders did not like it (9:11). *(Fold your arms and frown.)*
Jesus said, "Sick people need a doctor" (9:12). *(Hold your tummy.)*
Jesus came to call sinners (9:13). *(Cup your hands around your mouth.)*
Say it with me: "Jesus calls me!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did Jesus say to Matthew? *("Follow me," Matthew 9:9)*
2. What did Matthew do? *(He got up and followed Jesus, 9:9)*
3. Who does Jesus call? *(Sinners, everyone, 9:13)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say the verse slowly: "I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." Then teach the short way to remember it: cup your hands around your mouth like calling someone and say, "Jesus calls me!" Then turn all the way around on "repentance," because repentance means turning around, away from wrong and back to God. Do it three times: normal voice, whisper, happy loud voice. Then say "Matthew 9:13" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Get Up and Follow (5–10 minutes)

One child sits on the chair at the table. Walk by and say, "[Name], follow me!" The child gets up and follows you. Walk by the chair again with the next child sitting there, until every child is following you. Then give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw Matthew's table. While they color, ask: "What did Jesus say? Who does Jesus call?"

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, Jesus, for calling me.
Thank You for loving everyone.
Help me follow You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tips for little ones: say every child's name when you call them. Let the wiggliest child be the first to follow. If they get wiggly, play Follow Me again. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

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