Preschool–Grade 6

The Twelve Disciples

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus prayed all night, then chose twelve ordinary men to be with Him and to be sent out to preach. Following Jesus starts with being with Him.
Bible passage: Luke 6:12–16 and Mark 3:13–19, with Matthew 10:1–4. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach," *Mark 3:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Pick a Team (5–10 minutes)

Ask: "If you were choosing a team to help you with the most important job in the world, what would you look for?" Write the kids' answers on the board (strong, smart, famous, rich, popular...). Then say: "Today Jesus chooses twelve men for the most important job in the world. Listen for who He picks, and for what He does before He picks them."

2. Bible story: Jesus Chooses Twelve (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Luke 6. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A night of prayer. Look up Luke 6:12. Jesus went out into a mountain to pray, and **continued** (kept on) all night in prayer to God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). As a man, He prayed. Before He chose the twelve, Jesus spent the whole night praying.

Jesus chooses twelve. Look up Luke 6:13. When it was day, Jesus called His disciples, the people who followed Him and learned from Him. Out of them He chose twelve, and He named them **apostles**. Mark says Jesus called "whom he would," the ones He wanted, "and they came unto him" (Mark 3:13).

Why He chose them. Look up Mark 3:14. Ordained means He chose them and set them apart for a special job. First, "that they should be with him." Then, "that he might send them forth to preach," to send them out to tell God's message. He also gave them power to heal sicknesses and to cast out devils, evil spirits (3:15).

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The twelve names. Matthew 10:2–4 lists them: Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the publican; James the son of Alphaeus and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus (his **surname**, another name he was called); Simon the Canaanite and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him. **Look up Mark 3:17.** Jesus gave James and John the name **Boanerges**, which means "The sons of thunder."

Ordinary men. Peter, Andrew, James and John were **fishers** (Matthew 4:18–21). **Look up Matthew 10:3.** Matthew was a **publican**, a man who collected taxes. Later, people noticed that Peter and John were "unlearned and ignorant men," ordinary men without special schooling, "and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). Being with Jesus made the difference.

One who betrayed. Look up Mark 3:19. The last name in every list is Judas Iscariot, "which also betrayed him." **Betrayed** means he turned against Jesus and handed Him over to His enemies. Then Jesus and the twelve went into a house (3:19).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus prayed all night before He chose the twelve (Luke 6:12–13). What choices can you pray about before you make them?
2. Mark 3:14 says Jesus chose them first "that they should be with him." Why do you think being with Jesus came before being sent out?
3. Look at the list on the board from the opening game. How is it different from the men Jesus chose?
4. People could tell Peter and John "had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13). How can people tell when someone spends time with Jesus?
5. Judas was close to Jesus but betrayed Him. What is the difference between being near Jesus and following Him with your heart?

Recall questions

1. How long did Jesus pray? *(All night, Luke 6:12)*
2. What did Jesus name the twelve? *(Apostles, Luke 6:13)*
3. What does Boanerges mean? *(The sons of thunder, Mark 3:17)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **ordained** means chose and set apart for a special job, **send them forth** means send them out, and **preach** means tell people God's message. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus chose the twelve to be with Him, and He calls us to follow Him too. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
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.
This week: spend time with Jesus every day: pray and read a few verses of your Bible. Pray before a big choice, like Jesus did.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Luke 6:12: Where did Jesus go to pray? *(Into a mountain)*
2. Matthew 10:2: Whose name is first in the list? *(Simon, who is called Peter)*
3. Matthew 4:18: What were Peter and Andrew doing when Jesus saw them? *(Casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers)*
4. Matthew 9:9: Where was Matthew sitting when Jesus said, "Follow me"? *(At the receipt of custom, the place where taxes were paid)*
5. Matthew 10:3: What was Lebbaeus' surname? *(Thaddaeus)*
6. Luke 6:15: What does Luke call Simon the Canaanite? *(Simon called Zelotes)*
7. Mark 3:15: What power did Jesus give the twelve? *(Power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils)*
8. Mark 6:7: How did Jesus send the twelve out? *(By two and two)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus prayed and chose ordinary people to be with Him. Help us pray before our choices, spend time with Jesus every day, and follow Him with our whole hearts. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Jesus chose Judas: answer simply. The Bible says Jesus "knew from the beginning" who would betray Him (John 6:64). Judas was with Jesus, but he did not follow Him with his heart. Each of us chooses whether we will follow Jesus.

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