Preschool–Grade 6

# The Twelve Disciples

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

**Main point:** Jesus chose ordinary people to be with Him before He sent them out. Following Jesus means time with Him first, then going for Him.
**Bible passage:** Luke 6:12–16, Mark 3:13–19 and Matthew 10:1–4. Students read them out loud themselves.
**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)* and "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." *John 15:16 (KJV)*
**You need:** a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
**Before class:** read the three passages and Acts 4:13. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

## 1. Opening game: Résumé (5–10 minutes)

Write on the board: "Wanted: twelve people to change the world." Students call out what should be on the perfect applicant's résumé (education, experience, money, followers, connections). Then read them this list: four fishermen, a tax collector, two men later called "unlearned and ignorant" (Acts 4:13), two brothers nicknamed "sons of thunder." Ask: *Would you hire this team?* Say: "Jesus did. Let's see how He chose them."

## 2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

**Read out loud: Luke 6:12–16.** Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **continued all night in prayer to God** (6:12): kept on praying the whole night
- **disciples** (6:13): followers who learn from a teacher; **apostles**: the name Jesus gave the twelve He chose
- **Simon called Zelotes** (6:15): Luke's name for the man Matthew and Mark call Simon the Canaanite
- **Judas the brother of James** (6:16): Luke's list has him where Matthew and Mark have Thaddaeus; **traitor**: one who betrays

**Read out loud: Mark 3:13–19.** Old words in this passage:

- **calleth unto him whom he would** (3:13): called the ones He wanted
- **ordained** (3:14): chose and set apart for a work; **send them forth to preach**: send them out to tell God's message
- **cast out devils** (3:15): drive out evil spirits
- **surnamed** (3:16–17): gave another name; **Boanerges**: "The sons of thunder"


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**Read out loud: Matthew 10:1–4.** Matthew adds that Matthew was "the publican" (10:3), a tax collector, and that one man was "Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus." The three lists name the same twelve, some by more than one name, the way Simon is also Peter. The Bible doesn't explain every extra name, so we don't add to it.

**Tell the big picture in your own words:** Jesus is God manifest in the flesh (1 Timothy 3:16). As a man, He prayed all night before this choice (Luke 6:12). He chose men the world would overlook: fishers (Matthew 4:18–21) and a publican (Matthew 9:9). He chose them first to be with Him, then to be sent (Mark 3:14), and He later sent them out by two and two (Mark 6:7). After Jesus rose and went back to heaven, "they went forth, and preached every where" (Mark 16:20). Leaders were amazed at Peter and John, "unlearned and ignorant men," and "took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus" (Acts 4:13).

## 3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jesus prayed all night before He chose the twelve (Luke 6:12–13). What decision in your life right now needs real prayer, not just a quick one?
2. In Mark 3:14, "be with him" comes before "send them forth." Why does the order matter? What happens when people try to serve God without spending time with Him?
3. Jesus picked fishers and a tax collector, and people later called Peter and John "unlearned and ignorant men." What does that tell you about who God can use? Does it include you?
4. Acts 4:13 says people could tell Peter and John "had been with Jesus." What would people notice about you if you spent more time with Jesus?
5. Judas Iscariot heard the same teaching and saw the same miracles, yet he betrayed Jesus (Mark 3:19). What is the difference between being around Jesus and belonging to Him?
6. John 15:16 says, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." How does it change things to know Jesus calls you, not the other way around?

## 4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Mark 3:14: **ordained** means chose and set apart for a work; **send them forth to preach** means send them out to tell God's message. In John 15:16, **ordained you** means chose you for a work; **bring forth fruit** means live a life that shows God working in you; **remain** means last.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Mark 3:14 this week; keep working on John 15:16 next week too.


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## 5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jesus calls ordinary people to follow Him, and that includes you. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter, one of the twelve, preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
*Pray with the students, 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: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. When do I spend time with Jesus right now? When could I add more?
2. What choice am I facing that I need to pray about, like Jesus prayed all night?
3. Write a short prayer that answers Jesus' call: "Lord, I want to be with You and follow You..."
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

**This week:** read Mark 3:13–19 again, and try to say all twelve names from memory. Spend ten minutes a day with Jesus in prayer and His Word.

## 7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus prayed and chose ordinary people to be with Him. Thank You that He calls us too. Help us spend time with You first, and then go and tell others about You. In Jesus' name, amen."

**If a student asks why Jesus chose Judas:** answer honestly and simply. Jesus "knew from the beginning" who would betray Him (John 6:64), and He chose Judas anyway. Judas had every chance to follow Jesus with his heart and did not. Keep the answer at that level; the Bible doesn't explain more.


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