Preschool–Grade 6

The Twelve Disciples

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Jesus chose twelve men to be with Him and follow Him. Jesus wants us to follow Him too.
Bible passage: Mark 3:13–19 and Luke 6:12–16. 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, 5 sheets of paper, a marker, tape, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 5 sheets of paper (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Luke 6:12 and another at Mark 3:14.

1. Opening game: Come and Follow (5 minutes)

Walk slowly around the room doing simple motions (march, tiptoe, flap your arms, hop). Kids line up behind you and copy everything you do. Then stop, stand at the front, and call each child by name: "Come, Ava!" Each child comes and stands with you. Ask: *How did it feel to hear your name called?* Say: "Today Jesus calls twelve men to come and be with Him."

2. Bible story: Jesus Chooses Twelve (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Luke 6, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

One day Jesus **went out into a mountain to pray** (Luke 6:12). He did not pray for just a minute. He **continued all night in prayer to God** (6:12). That means He kept praying all night long, until morning! Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). As a man, Jesus prayed, and He shows us how to pray too.

When it was day, Jesus called His **disciples** to come to Him (6:13). A disciple is someone who follows a teacher and learns from him. Jesus called the ones He wanted, and they came to Him (Mark 3:13). Out of them He chose **twelve** (Luke 6:13). Let's count to twelve on our fingers! Jesus named them **apostles** (6:13). He **ordained** them, which means He chose them for a special job (Mark 3:14).

Read Mark 3:14 from your Bible: "And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach," Say: "Jesus chose them to be with Him. Then He would send them out to tell people God's message." Jesus also gave them power to heal sick people and to cast out devils, which means to make evil spirits leave people (3:15).

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The story continues: Here are their names (Matthew 10:2–4). Hold up one finger for each one: **Simon**, and Jesus gave him another name, **Peter** (Mark 3:16). **Andrew**, Peter's brother. **James** and **John**, two more brothers. Jesus called them "The sons of thunder" (3:17)! **Philip**, **Bartholomew**, **Thomas** and **Matthew**. **James the son of Alphaeus**. **Lebbaeus**, who was also called **Thaddaeus**. **Simon the Canaanite**. And **Judas Iscariot**, who later **betrayed** Jesus, which means he turned against Jesus (Matthew 10:4). That's twelve!

These were ordinary men. Peter, Andrew, James and John were **fishers**: they caught fish for their work (Matthew 4:18–21). Matthew was a **publican**, a man who collected tax money (Matthew 10:3). Jesus did not choose them because they were famous or important. He chose them to be with Him. Then Jesus and the twelve went into a house together (Mark 3:19).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did Jesus do all night on the mountain? *(He prayed to God, Luke 6:12)*
2. How many men did Jesus choose? *(Twelve, Luke 6:13)*
3. Why did Jesus choose them? *(To be with Him, and so He could send them out to preach, Mark 3:14)*
4. What other name did Jesus give Simon? *(Peter, Mark 3:16)*
5. What was Matthew's job? *(He was a publican, a man who collected taxes, Matthew 10:3)*

4. Memory verse: Verse in Order (5 minutes)

Tape the 5 sheets up in order: *And he ordained twelve, / that they should be / with him, / and that he might / send them forth to preach. Mark 3:14.* 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 together. Then give the 5 sheets to 5 kids, mix them up, and let the class put them back in order. Read it again. Do it until everyone can say it.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus called twelve men to be with Him, and He wants us to follow Him too. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.
This week: be with Jesus every day: talk to Him in prayer, like Jesus prayed. Tell one friend something you learned about Jesus.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **12 disciples word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/twelve-disciples-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/twelve-disciples-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/twelve-disciples-maze), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/twelve-disciples), or **Twelve Steps:** kids stand in a line at one side of the room. You stand at the other side, "on the mountain." Say the twelve names slowly, one at a time. On each name, everyone takes one giant step toward you and counts out loud. After the twelfth name, everyone has arrived. Say: "Jesus called twelve, and Jesus wants every one of us to come to Him!"

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Jesus, who prayed all night and chose twelve men to be with Him. Help us pray, follow Jesus and be with Him every day. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why Jesus prayed: answer simply. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). As a man, He prayed to God (Luke 6:12), and He showed us how to pray and stay close to God.

If a child asks about Judas: answer simply and gently. The Bible tells us Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve, and that he later betrayed Jesus (Matthew 10:4). Being near Jesus is not the same as following Him with your whole heart. Keep it at that.

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