

FOLLOWERS

WEEK 1 — WHO WERE THE DISCIPLES?

AUGUST 2, 2026

Main Point:

Jesus invited a band of imperfect, flawed, and difficult people to follow Him and to change the world.

This Week's Message:

Jesus had a ragtag bunch of disciples, who had all kinds of flaws. But they were able to change the world because they followed him. If Jesus can change the world with people like them, He can also lead us to great things!

Scripture:

Mark 3:16-19

This Month's Memory Verse:

"You were chosen to do good even if you suffer. That's because Christ suffered for you. He left you an example that he expects you to follow." 1 Peter 2:21

Provided Videos: See www.glendalechristian.org/summitvolunteerresources

- Countdown Video
- Game Video: Match It – Back to School
- Bible Story Video: Who Were the Twelve Disciples?
- Review Quiz Video
- Worship Video: Kids
- Worship Video: Runnin
- Worship Video: Praise You Anywhere

Suggested Order of Service:

1. Game Video – 3 Min
2. Icebreaker Activity – 5 Min
3. Message – 25 Min Total
 - a. Lesson – 15 Min
 - b. Bible Story Video – 2 Min
 - c. Discussion Time – 5 Min
 - d. Review Quiz Video – 3 Min
4. Memory Verse Activity – 10 min
5. As time allows:
 - a. Work on Take-Home Page
 - b. Worship Videos

ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY

Students will link arms with one person and either stay linked or find a new partner based on whether or not they agree with the statements as they're read. If the two linked together agree, they stay linked. If they disagree, they have to find someone with whom they agree to link arms.

"I need everyone to find a partner to link arms with like this (show them with another adult or student). As I read off each statement, you'll see if you and your partner agree. If you do agree, stay linked together. If you disagree, you'll need to find a new partner who agrees with you and then link arms with them. If you can't find a single partner, you can link up with others. But just remember that the more people linked together means that agreeing on the answers might be more difficult. Everyone ready?"

Suggested Statements:

Chick-fil-a is better than Cane's.

Ping pong is better than pickleball.

Pancakes are the best breakfast food.

Novels are better than comic books.

Pepsi is better than Coke.

My dad is a better cook than my mom.

I prefer Thanksgiving over Christmas.

I'd rather visit the mountains than the beach.

Dogs are better than cats.

My favorite dessert is a cupcake.

I'd rather learn science than history.

Cookie dough is better than cookies.

GAME VIDEO:

Match It – Back to School

LESSON:

WHO WERE THE DISCIPLES?

Main Point:

Jesus invited a band of imperfect, flawed, and difficult people to follow Him and to change the world.

Scripture:

Mark 3:16-19

Introduction

How many friends do you think you have? *(Let some students answer.)*

What if you had 500 friends? And what if they followed you around and listened to everything you said? Wouldn't that be crazy?

Transition

That's what it was like for Jesus. Paul mentioned in the book of 1 Corinthians that Jesus appeared once to over 500 of His followers. Most of them we don't know much about. However, he had twelve very close friends called disciples. And we know more about most of them. Let's take a look at what we can know about these guys.

(Play Lesson Video Here - Who Were the Twelve Disciples?)

Mark 3:16-19

These are the twelve he appointed: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter), James son of Zebedee and his brother John (to them he gave the name Boanerges, which means "sons of thunder"), Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Thaddaeus, Simon the Zealot and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

This is the list of the names of Jesus' closest friends, His disciples. These men were probably pretty young, most of whom were teenagers! Crazy, huh? This ragtag bunch were His go-to entourage as He traveled around to carry out His ministry. The normal rabbi in Jesus' day would have looked for the most talented, educated, well-bred young men to be his disciples. But Jesus had a different standard, one that couldn't be measured by external means. Each one was quite unique and had a different story that contributed to giving Jesus a well-rounded and interesting group to carry on His message. Let's find out about each one.

The Fishermen (Peter, Andrew, James & John)

These guys all worked together in the same small town of Capernaum. Back then fishermen didn't get a lot of respect. They weren't educated since they left school at an early age to pursue their father's trade. If a rabbi wasn't happy with your performance and thought you couldn't keep up with the academic rigor of rabbinical teaching, you got the boot. And that's exactly what happened to these four. Peter and Andrew were brothers and so were James and John. Two sets of brothers who couldn't cut it as rabbis-in-training.

Peter

It's easy to know a lot about Peter. He was always front and center. There aren't many stories about Jesus in the New Testament without Peter in the mix. He lacked self-control, which was on full display especially when he opened his mouth. This guy had guts and talked a big game, but he would show just how little that helped him in times of trouble.

Andrew

Peter's brother Andrew was actually the guy who first told Peter about Jesus.

John

John wrote the Gospel of John, and he called himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” But John wasn’t perfect. In fact, it seems like he was kind of insecure about Peter. Whenever Peter messed up, John was sure to tell us about it. John was lowkey competitive with Peter. He even pointed out that he could run faster than Peter.

John & James

John had a brother named James. Together these two were given the nickname “sons of thunder” by Jesus. They were fiercely loyal to Jesus, but also kind of aggressive, which might be why Jesus gave them that nickname. They once asked Jesus to call down fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan town that rejected His message.

Philip

This dude was hardheaded. He questioned Jesus’ ability to provide enough food for the five thousand people that He ended up feeding with five loaves of bread and two fish. He also didn’t get it when Jesus once said to his disciples, “Since you know me, you’ve seen God the Father.” His immediate response was to ask Jesus to show them God the Father.

Nathaniel

Nathaniel, also known as Bartholomew, learned about Jesus from Philip. When Philip told him that Jesus was from Nazareth, Nathaniel insulted Jesus’ hometown saying, “Nazareth? Can anything good come from that place?”

Thomas

Thomas was extremely loyal to Jesus, and suggested that the disciples follow Jesus all the way to the cross. But after the resurrection, Thomas refused to believe the news that Jesus had risen from the grave, until he saw for himself.

Matthew

Matthew also wrote one of the Gospels. Can you guess which one? Tax collectors like Matthew aligned themselves with Rome’s directives and took advantage of their own people by overcharging them to gain personal wealth. Israelites saw them as traitors against their own people.

Simon the Zealot

When someone is diehard about something, meaning they would die for a certain cause, they're called a zealot. And that's exactly what Simon was. Zealots believed in using violence against Rome and other Jews who were part of the political system that cooperated with Rome – people just like Matthew.

Judas

Judas is famous for betraying Jesus to his death. He was greedy, and stole money from the funds that were supposed to be used to support Jesus' ministry.

Thaddaeus and James #2

There are two more disciples named Thaddaeus and James the son of Alphaeus, but the Bible doesn't really tell us much about these two.

Do these guys seem like the well-qualified types that were reliable and capable of carrying Jesus' message of the good news to all people? I don't think so. But Jesus knew who they would become and what they would do for His sake. They walked with Jesus for three years of their young lives and were forever changed. They were with Him when they were up against their own religious traditions, Rome, and even each other.

They watched Jesus teach, heal, lead, love, and live a perfect life. Then, they watched Him suffer a gruesome death, and then come back to life, renewing their courage and hope. This is the kind of example and influence that led them all to be willing to suffer to spread the good news about Jesus. Jesus completely changed their lives. They lived differently, spoke differently, and thought differently. Jesus made them new. And it all started when they decided to follow Him.

Notice that these guys were pretty rough when Jesus got a hold of them, but were truly refined in the Spirit once He left to ascend to the Father. It's the same for all of us. We don't change so that we can follow Jesus. We follow Him so that we can change. Jesus takes imperfect people like these disciples, and like you and me, and changes us into people who can follow Him and do great things.

1 Peter 2:21

You were chosen to do good even if you suffer. That's because Christ suffered for you. He left you an example that he expects you to follow.

Jesus is our example, and we are called to follow in His steps just like the disciples did. They stuck with Jesus and His message and obeyed His commands to take the good news to the whole world no matter the cost. We should do the same no matter who we were or what we did before following Jesus.

Conclusion

The disciples had a lot of issues, and Jesus loved them just the way they were. But he also loved them too much to let them stay the way they were. The same goes with you. Jesus loves you just the way you are, but too much to let you stay that way.

And today, Jesus isn't looking for perfect people. He's just looking for people who are willing to follow him, to grow closer to him, and to become everything that he wants us to be.

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus using imperfect people like us to change the world.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. If you were someone's pet, what would your name be?
2. How many disciples did Jesus appoint to be His closest followers?
3. About how many disciples did Jesus appear to after He resurrected?
4. What job did Matthew have that the Jews hated?
5. What do you think it would have been like to be one of His twelve disciples?
6. Why do you think Jesus was okay with having disciples who weren't the top of the class?
7. If Jesus could use these guys to be His disciples, how can Jesus use us?

MEMORY VERSE CARD GAME ACTIVITY:

"You were chosen to do good even if you suffer. That's because Christ suffered for you. He left you an example that he expects you to follow." 1 Peter 2:21

Printed cards are provided for the memory verse games. There are 3 stacks of cards - one is easier, one is harder, and one is words that are not in the verse to make it harder for kids as needed. See the Memory Verse Card Games Guide for a variety of games you can choose from to help your students memorize the verse in fun and interactive ways.