

# LESSON 1: JESUS CALLS MATTHEW TO BE HIS FRIEND

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 Matthew 9:9-13

03/08/2020

## Teachers Dig In

### Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Matthew 9:9-13
- In This Passage: Jesus sees a tax collector named Matthew and calls him to be a disciple. When the religious leaders see Jesus eating with Matthew and his friends, they don't approve. They think tax collectors are scum. But Jesus is our friend, and he was a good friend to Matthew.
- Bible Point: Jesus is our friend...
- Application: ...so we're good friends to others.
- Summary Verse: "A friend is always loyal, and a brother is born to help in time of need" (Proverbs 17:17).

### Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus is our friend*. Friendships among kids can be fickle. Help kids see that Jesus was a good friend even when it wasn't good for his reputation. Jesus befriended the unpopular guy! Help kids realize that Jesus wants to be their friend, too.
- Think About: Who in your life has been a friend like Jesus?

### Dig In to Prayer

- Pray that kids would feel accepted in their friendship with Jesus and extend his friendship to others.

### Quick Tip

- Use this lesson as a chance to evaluate friendships among your kids. Be sensitive to those who may be new or who may not have many friends at church. If you have several "loners" in your group, pair them together and encourage them to use this lesson as an opportunity to forge new friendships.

## This Lesson at a Glance



### OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

#### Supplies

- Bible



### CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids connect paper people with the friendship of Jesus.

#### Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- scissors
- transparent tape
- pencils
- markers
- masking tape



### LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids write prayers for friends.

#### Supplies

- paper
- pens



### HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids race to be included when the music stops during a collecting game.

#### Supplies

- hula hoops (1 for every 5 kids)
- about 200 pompoms or cotton balls
- large bucket or container (large enough to hold all the pompoms)
- 10 disposable paper or plastic bowls
- 3-ounce cups (1 per child)
- upbeat music
- music player

#### Easy Prep

- Divide the pompoms as evenly as possible among the bowls, and place the bowls on the floor around the room.
- Place the large bucket at one end of the room.
- Lay a hula hoop anywhere on the floor. Set the others aside for later in the game.



### CRAFT

Kids make felt friendship baskets.

#### Supplies

##### Supplies

- "Basket Pattern" handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- craft felt (various colors)
- scissors
- paper
- pens

#### Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



## LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids try to fit everyone into a hula hoop.

### Supplies

- hula hoops (1 for every 5 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



## OBJECT LESSON

Kids keep solutions separate.

### Supplies

- clear cups of water (1 per child)
- spoons (1 for every 2 kids)
- salt (2 tablespoons for every 2 kids)
- tablespoon
- food coloring (several colors)
- large index cards (1 for every 2 kids)
- cake pans or trays (1 for every 2 kids)



## DEEPER BIBLE

Kids dig deeper into the Bible story to examine what kind of friend Jesus was to Matthew.

### Supplies

- Bibles

*\*Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



### Supplies

- Bible

### Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids shake hands with four friends using the *back* of their hands.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids sing the words “happy birthday” like opera singers.
- Collect the offering.

### Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that Jesus is our friend, so we’re good friends to others. Let’s imagine we could be good friends with famous people.**

### Share

- Tell kids about a famous person *you* wish you could be friends with.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share about a famous person *they’d* like to be friends with.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group what they talked about with their partners.

### Summarize

Open a Bible to Matthew 9, and say: **We may not be friends with those famous people, but we *do* have the opportunity to be good friends to a lot of people! Let’s see what we can learn about friendship from Jesus in the Bible. The Bible isn’t an ordinary book; it’s God’s special book. The Bible is one way God shows us his heart and how we can reflect him. God is here right now, ready to talk to you. Let’s hear what he has to say as we pray.**

Pray, praising Jesus for being our friend.



## Supplies

- Bible
- paper
- scissors
- transparent tape
- pencils
- markers
- masking tape

## Experience Being an Outcast

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. In our Bible story, the person Jesus befriended was an outcast. That means he didn't fit in and had a hard time making friends. Let's see how it feels to be an outcast.**

For every eight kids, have one volunteer to be the first Outcast. The other seven kids in each group will stand in a tight, shoulder-to-shoulder circle, facing in. The Outcast will try to get into the circle, while everyone else will stand their ground and try to keep the circle tight enough to not let the Outcast in.

Switch roles so everyone can experience being the Outcast.

Ask: • **Say one word that describes what it was like to be the Outcast.**

• **You were left out because it was part of the game. What are some reasons you've been left out in real life?**

Say: **Sometimes people are outcasts because of how they look, how they dress, or how they act. In our Bible story, a man named Matthew was an outcast because of his job. Matthew was a tax collector, and people in Bible times knew that tax collectors took extra money—more than the government needed—to keep for themselves. They stole people's money!**

Ask: • **Would you want to be friends with someone like that? Tell me about your answer.**

Say: **Usually it's the people who leave someone out who are acting mean. But in Matthew's case, he was kind of the bully. He took people's money! Even so, Jesus invited him to be his friend. Let's see what happened!**

## Explore the Story

Read Matthew 9:9. Explain that a *disciple* is a follower or friend.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you made a new friend.** Share your own story first.

• **What are some things you like to do with your friends?**

Say: **It's fun to hang out with friends. Matthew and Jesus thought so, too! Listen to this.**

Read Matthew 9:10.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, and he was a good friend to Matthew. He even made friends with Matthew's other friends. The Bible calls them "disreputable sinners." That means they probably did things that people didn't like. Let's see what they might've been like.**

Ask: • **What are some examples of sins—wrong things people do?**

Distribute paper, scissors, and pencils. Have kids each cut out the shape of a person and write on it some of the examples of sin they think Matthew's friends might have done. They can also write one of their own sins on the person. Then hang all the paper people on the wall, making sure they're not touching.

Have kids look at the collection of paper people on the wall. Say: **This reminds me a bit of the group of people Jesus ate with. They weren't perfect...far from it. They had a lot of flaws. On the opposite side, we find the Pharisees. These religious leaders thought they were perfect. They liked to judge people like Matthew and his friends...and they didn't like Jesus. Here's what they said.**

Read Matthew 9:11.

Say: **Wow! Those are some harsh words about Jesus' new friends!**

Ask: • **If someone criticized your friends like that, what would you say?**

Say: **Let's see how Jesus responded.**

Read Matthew 9:12-13.

Say: **Jesus is our friend. We can see what kind of friend he is by looking at his friendship with Matthew! Jesus hung out with Matthew even though he wasn't popular. He defended Matthew when other people called him "scum." Jesus is a good friend!**

### **Connect Friends of Jesus**

Set out markers to share. Have kids remove their paper people from the wall.

Say: **On your paper person, write "Friend of Jesus" in big letters. You can write it over your words from before.** Allow time.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, even when other people don't want to be our friend. No matter what else people say about us, no matter what flaws we have, we can be friends with Jesus!**

**And since Jesus shows us what good friends do, he can help us be good friends to others. He can help us make friends with his other friends!**

Give each child a piece of masking tape, and have kids write on the tape something a good friend does. If kids need help, offer these examples: Good friends sit with someone who's left out, good friends defend each other, good friends can be themselves around each other, good friends spend time together, good friends support each other.

Then have kids make a chain of all the paper people by taping the arms together with their masking tape. As each child adds tape, he or she can read what it says.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. You've shared some great ideas of how to be the kind of friend to others that Jesus is to you! When we see everyone as a potential friend of our friend Jesus, we'll want to show each person the kind of friendship Jesus offers.**



### **Supplies**

- paper
- pens

### **Write Prayers**

- Distribute paper and pens.
- Have each child think of a good friend and write a prayer for that person.
- Have kids take turns reading their prayers aloud.
- Kids can take their prayers home and continue to add to them or repeat the prayers throughout the week.

### **Wrap Up**

Pray: **Jesus, you're such a good friend. Help us be good friends to others. And please bless our friends! In your name, amen.**

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



## Supplies

- hula hoops (1 for every 5 kids)
- about 200 pompoms or cotton balls
- large bucket or container (large enough to hold all the pompoms)
- 10 disposable paper or plastic bowls
- 3-ounce cups (1 per child)
- upbeat music
- music player

## Easy Prep

- Divide the pompoms as evenly as possible among the bowls, and place the bowls on the floor around the room.
- Place the large bucket at one end of the room.
- Lay a hula hoop anywhere on the floor. Set the others aside for later in the game.

## Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Recommended for 8 or more kids.

## Beat the Clock

Say: **Today we heard about when Jesus asked Matthew to follow him and be his friend. It was a big deal because Matthew had an unpopular job and a lot of people didn't like him. Jesus' friendship changed Matthew's life.**

**Let's play a game where we'll get "dinner" ready for Jesus, Matthew, and their friends at Matthew's house.**

- Give each child a 3-ounce cup.
- The goal is for everyone to get all the pompoms from the bowls into the large bucket.
- Kids can use only their cups to scoop and move the pompoms, one scoop at a time.
- Play music in the background; while the music is playing, everyone can run and move the pompoms.
- When you pause the music, everyone has three seconds to get inside a hula hoop (full body in the hula hoop, not just a foot).
- Anyone who can't get into a hula hoop isn't invited to dinner at Matthew's house.
- Point out how many people have been left out, and say: **Jesus wouldn't want anyone left behind. Let's try this again.**
- Have everyone reset the pompoms to play again, and place another hula hoop on the floor in the play area.
- Turn on the music, and play the game again.
- Continue rounds until there are enough hula hoops so everyone can be included and invited to dinner at Matthew's.

## Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like to be left out and not invited to dinner when others were?**

• **Tell about a time you felt left out.** Share your own story first.

Say: **Jesus is our friend, and Jesus welcomes everyone. Jesus showed he's a special kind of friend when he included Matthew while others rejected him. Jesus invites everyone to be his friend; he doesn't leave anyone out. When we follow Jesus, we can be great friends to others, too.**



## Supplies

### Supplies

- “Basket Pattern” handout (1 per child) (download [here](#))
- craft felt (various colors)
- scissors
- paper
- pens

## Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



### Tip

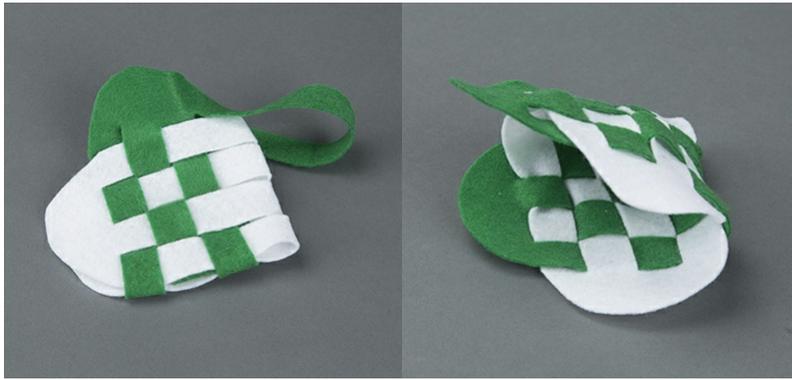
- Check out the tutorial video [here](#) to see how to make the basket.

## Weave Friendship Baskets

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a “Basket Pattern” handout, and set out the remaining supplies to share. Have kids follow these directions to make felt baskets.

- Cut out the pattern on the “Basket Pattern” handout.
- Choose two pieces of felt—one that’s your favorite color and another that’s your best friend’s favorite color.
- Hold the pattern up to each piece of felt and trace and cut out the shape, including the lines in the middle.
- Fold the shapes in half and weave them together as shown below.





- You should end up with a heart shape that can open up into a basket.

### Add a Note

- Write a funny note to your best friend, and put it in the basket.
- When you get home, you can also add small gifts such as candy, erasers, or toy cars.
- Then give the basket to your friend!

### Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about the friend you're going to give your basket to.**

• **What have you done to show friendship to that person?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. When you give that basket to your friend with a fun note and gift, you'll show good friendship! When you're a good friend, you reflect Jesus' heart of friendship.**

Have kids take their baskets home and give them to their friends as a demonstration of good friendship. Friends can even pass the baskets back and forth to exchange notes and gifts.



### Supplies

- hula hoops (1 for every 5 kids)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

### Tips

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).
- If you have fewer than 5 kids, use string, a belt, or some rope to make a circle on the floor that's just a little too small for all the kids to stand inside.

### Try to Fit Everyone in a Hoop

**Say: Today we heard about one of Jesus' friends, Matthew. Matthew had a job that made others dislike him, but Jesus was a good friend to him. Jesus welcomed and included people who were unwelcome with others. Let's play a game where you'll work to include everyone.**

- Lay out the hula hoops or other circles you've created.
- Form teams that are slightly too large to fit inside the circles. The number of kids per team will vary.
- Challenge teams to include all their teammates in their circle—everyone has to be able to plant his or her feet inside the circle.
- Allow teams to struggle and strategize.
- The key to the game is that teams don't have to stand to plant their feet in the circles. If all the kids lie on their backs and put their feet in the circle, they should all be able to plant their feet. There will be more room without kids trying to cram their bodies into the circle.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

### Talk About It

**Ask: • How did you figure out how to include everyone or get everyone inside the hoop?**

**Say: It isn't always easy to figure out how to be a friend to everyone or include everyone.**

**Sometimes hurt feelings make it hard for us to want to include others, or maybe we just feel shy.**

**Ask: • What are some things that have made it hard for you to include others?** Share an example of your own, such as having different interests than others and not knowing how to find things in common.

**Say: It won't always be easy to include others, especially people who are different from us or people we've had trouble getting along with. Jesus is our friend, and he's a friend to the people it's hard for us to include. We can ask Jesus to help us see those people differently and be good friends to them, too.**



## OBJECT LESSON

### Unique Friends

[10 min]

### Supplies

- clear cups of water (1 per child)
- spoons (1 for every 2 kids)
- salt (2 tablespoons for every 2 kids)
- tablespoon
- food coloring (several colors)
- large index cards (1 for every 2 kids)
- cake pans or trays (1 for every 2 kids)

### Mix Salt Solution

Hold up two cups of water.

Say: **Let's imagine these two cups of water are friends. Right now they're exactly the same, but let's change them up so they're different.**

- Form pairs, and give each pair two cups of water and a spoon.
- Put salt and a tablespoon in a central location for all pairs to access.
- Have one partner in each pair add two tablespoons of salt to one cup of water.
- Have each partner take turns stirring so the salt is mixed in well.

### Mix Food Coloring and Water

- Have each pair choose a color of food coloring.
- Have one partner stir one or two drops of food coloring into the unsalted water.

### Cover and Flip the Colored Water

Say: **Now that our cups of water are different, let's see what happens when we flip the colored-water cup onto the salt-water cup.**

Ask: • **What do you think will happen?**

Say: **Let's carefully find out!**

- Demonstrate first. Place the salt-water cup in the cake pan to catch any spills.
- Show kids how to cover the colored-water cup with the index card, then turn it upside down and put it on top of the salt-water cup.



- Gently pull the index card out from between the cups. The two solutions may mix a bit in the middle, but they'll mostly stay separated.



- Invite kids to try.

### **Talk About It**

Ask: • **How are these two different solutions like two different friends?**

Say: **Friends don't have to like all the same things, go to the same school, or have families that look the same in order to be close. You can be close to people who are different from you. When we're good friends, we bring out the best in each other and celebrate our differences.**

Ask: • **How are you different from your best friend?** Share an example from your own life to begin the conversation.

Say: **Jesus is our friend. We can be ourselves, and he'll love us no matter what. We can follow his example and be good friends to others—even people who are different from us. And one thing that's different about being friends with Jesus is he *does* change us! Matthew changed a lot when he became friends with Jesus.**

Ask: • **How has a friendship with Jesus changed you?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend. Our friendship with him changes us and helps us be good friends to others!**



## Supplies

- Bibles

## Set It Up

Say: **We're learning that Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. But does Jesus *really* understand what it's like for kids to be good friends today? After all, he was a 30-year-old man who lived a *long* time ago!**

**Let's dig in to that.**

## Dig Deeper

Say: **Let's look more closely at how Jesus was a good friend to Matthew in our Bible passage. We'll look at this almost like we're detectives looking for clues. So think and listen as we read.**

Have a child read Matthew 9:9.

Ask: • **Keeping in mind that no one liked tax collectors, what can you learn about friendship from Jesus in this verse?**

Say: **Jesus extended friendship to someone no one liked. That's hard to do! But we're good friends when we show friendship to people even if they're not popular. Let's see what else Jesus did.**

**Ready, detectives? Listen closely.**

Have a child read Matthew 9:10.

Ask: • **What do you like to eat with your friends?**

Say: **Jesus spent time with Matthew and his friends. Being a good friend means spending quality time with our friends! And that's not all Jesus did.**

Have a child read Matthew 9:11-13.

Say: **Jesus did a few awesome friend things in these verses.**

Ask: • **What do you notice about the kind of friend Jesus was?**

Say: **Jesus stood up for his friends when other people insulted them.**

Ask: • **Tell about a time something like that happened to you. Share your own example first.**

Say: **Jesus didn't leave his friends behind, either, even though it wasn't cool to be their friend.**

**That can be hard to do!**

Ask: • **Tell about a time a friend ditched you because you "weren't cool." Share your own example first.**

Say: **It hurts when our friends ditch us! But Jesus shows us that good friends stick with their friends no matter what other people think.**

**Lastly, Jesus cared about helping his friends. Listen again to what he said.**

Have a child read Matthew 9:12.

Say: **When Jesus said this, he was saying that people like Matthew knew they weren't perfect, and they knew they needed a friend like Jesus to help them and forgive them. The religious leaders thought they *were* perfect, so they didn't think they needed Jesus! Jesus is like the doctor who heals us from the punishment for sin. And *everyone* needs his help!**

Ask: • **What do your friends do that shows they care about helping you?**

Say: **Jesus is our friend, so we're good friends to others. Jesus showed us how to be good friends. We can be friends with people others don't like, spend time with our friends, stand up for them, stick with them, and help them. Let's use what we discovered from Jesus and see what that might look like in our friendships today.**

## Role Play

Have kids form five groups. Give each group one of the following scenarios and the principle to apply. In their groups, kids can come up with an idea to show that principle of friendship in the situation you provide.

- A new kid at school dresses funny and sits in the corner on the floor at lunch. No one wants to be his friend. (Principle: Extend friendship to people others don't like.)

- Your best friend really loves *The Lego Movie*, but you're sick of it. You'd rather watch a new movie. (Principle: Spend time with your friends.)
- You and your friend are sitting together at lunch when someone comes up and starts saying your friend is a crybaby and a loser. (Principle: Stand up for your friends when people insult them.)
- You have the chance to sit with the popular group...but only if you ditch your best friend. (Principle: Don't leave your friends behind even if it's not cool to be their friend.)
- Your friend forgot her lunch. (Principle: Care about helping your friends.)

Allow a few minutes for groups to prepare short skits, and then have them take turns acting out their presentations.

Say: **Thanks for sharing your ideas of how to be good friends! Here at church, we can be good friends. We can do all the things we've talked about for each other. Then we'll know how to do it at home and school, too!**

Pray: **Jesus, you're our friend. Help us be good friends to others, even when it's hard. Help us reflect your heart of friendship! In your name, amen.**