

# Third Sunday after Epiphany

*And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."*

—Matthew 4:19 NRSV

## Explore

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### The Invitation

Bible,  
Matthew 4:12–23  
Invitations

“Follow me” is the invitation Jesus offers to a new way of living. Early in the week, before class, prepare and mail these invitations to your teens. Take them to your postal service to guarantee correct postage.

Cut a piece of card stock to fit inside a sealable sandwich bag. Decorate the card with blue and green color—representing water—on both sides leaving white space for the teen’s address on one side and a message on the other. Include in the message the scripture above, Matthew 4:19, and the time and place your class will meet. (If you have a body of water nearby and the weather is accommodating in your area, this would be an excellent opportunity to change your class environment to support the lesson.) Add to the bag a vinyl, 3-D goldfish available from novelty supply catalogs such as Oriental Trading or check sporting goods departments for fishing equipment. (Avoid any items with hooks!)

### Followers or Leaders

Welcome teens to class. Ask them to describe themselves as followers or leaders. Divide into two groups based on their description. If there are new faces in class today, have the teens introduce themselves and tell why they are self-described as “followers” or “leaders.” (If the regular class is present, substitute a greeting for introductions.)

## Extract

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### Hooked on Jesus

As one volunteer reads Matthew 4:12–23 (Matthew 4:11–22 IV) ask another to trace Jesus’ travels on a Bible map. Ask another volunteer to read Isaiah 9:1–12. Discuss the following questions.

Bible,  
Map (available  
online or through  
bookstore)

1. Why did Jesus leave Nazareth?
2. What is the significance of the scripture from Isaiah? List different interpretations.
3. What did Jesus preach?
4. In verse 19 Jesus said, “Come follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” What does this mean?
5. Who followed Jesus? Did they hesitate? Do you sometimes hesitate when you are called to follow?
6. Where did Jesus and his followers go?
7. What was their purpose?

## Experience

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### The Voice

*The Voice* by R.W.  
Metlen, paper, pens

Read *The Voice: A Story about Faith and Trust* by R.W. Metlen. The story, illustrated in cartoon style, follows a young boy as he tries to discover the voice that is calling him to “follow me.” Continue the experience by having the teens draw their own cartoon strip showing a personal example of how they might respond to the same invitation. (This would also be an excellent opening activity for the class experience.)

Follow  
Christ’s  
Lead

## Identifiable Disciple

Jesus said,

“If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”—John 8:31–32 NRSV

*Seekers and Disciples.*

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.”—Matthew 16:24 NRSV

paper, pens

Becoming a disciple of Jesus means being a person of great love and courage, one who gives one’s life for others. Because one’s life is expended for God as Jesus did, it also is sustained and strengthened by God. Read “Time for a New Start” and the “Testimony of Otis Hardy” pages 21–24 and “By Following Jesus,” pages 28–30 from *Seekers and Disciples* (Herald House, 2001). Discuss the changes in Hardy’s life and the impact of disciples in North Carolina, USA.

## Life Changes with Jesus

Discuss the immediate changes in the lives of Andrew, Peter, John, and James when they chose to change their careers from fishing for fish to fishing for people. Identify the possibilities. Ask the teens to recall the first time they heard about Jesus. Where were they? How old were they? What was happening in their lives at that time? If they can remember, what were their initial thoughts/reactions to the stories of Jesus at that point in their lives? Instruct the teens to draw a cross on the paper provided. Ask: “What changes if I choose to follow Jesus?” Have the teens write their responses around the cross.

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## Expand

### Becoming Fishers of people

invitation supplies

Make invitations for members of the congregation to become fishers of people using the same instructions found at the beginning of this lesson. Include the scripture and adapt the invitation to meet the needs of your area. Maybe there is a special witnessing project coming up or maybe the scripture becomes a daily reminder to be a disciple in your community. Distribute them in person and extend personal invitations as Jesus did to become disciples.