

# Third Sunday after Epiphany

*Jesus said, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."*

—Mark 1:15 NRSV

## Explore

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### Good News

flip chart or chalkboard, markers or chalk

Ask the students what is the best news they have ever had. (Good grades, a raise in allowance, permission to attend a party, not having to mow the lawn) Keep track of each item of good news on a flip chart or chalkboard. Ask the students the following questions about the good news and record responses on the flip chart or chalkboard.

1. Did it make them feel good?
2. Was it something that changed their life?
3. Did the news come at an unexpected time?
4. Did it come when they were worried, sad, or already in a good mood?
5. Was the good news something they couldn't wait to share?
6. Were they so excited they simply had to tell someone?
7. What was their reaction?
8. Were others happy for them ?

## Extract

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### Believe

Read Mark 1:14–15. Jesus has experienced temptations in the wilderness. He had meditated and communed with his God, and he understood the message that God wanted him to tell others. The scriptures reference John the Baptist, Jesus' cousin and baptizer. John was now in prison for telling the truth about Herod and his wife, Herodias. Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, ruled as a king or tetrarch (ruler of the fourth part of a province) over Galilee and Perea. Herodias had been with Herod's brother's wife. When John declared Herod's marriage unlawful, he acted on what he believed. Herod may have respected John for his bravery and for the influence he had on the Jewish people, but Herodias didn't like the accusations at all. Eventually, Herodias and her daughter Salome tricked Herod into killing John the Baptist. (See Mark 6:16–29.)

Bible, flip chart or chalkboard, markers or chalk

Mark 1:14–15  
Mark 6:16–29  
Mark 1:16–20

John's message was to prepare the way for Jesus, announcing that the time seen by the prophets of Hebrew scripture were being fulfilled and the kingdom of God was near. Both John and Jesus preached a message of repentance, of turning away from sin, and turning to God for forgiveness. The good news was that people could change and lives could be transformed.

Jesus asked people to help: people who would experience the love of God firsthand and then be willing and able to share the experience with others. He found four such men at the fishing boats. Have a student read Mark 1:16–20 to discover who became the first four disciples. List them on a flip chart or chalkboard.

Proclaim  
the  
Good News.

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These men were hardworking fisherman who had probably heard Jesus preaching around Galilee. What compelled them to leave everything they knew to follow Jesus? It wasn't money or a chance to gain power. It wasn't even the call of an easier way to make a living. It was because something in Jesus' message stirred them and compelled them to learn and want to follow. Ask the students the following questions.

1. What was it about Jesus' message that inspires people to follow him, both long ago and today? Describe what you think it was/is.
2. Of the answers, what in the list would sound like good news to Simon, Andrew, James, and John?
3. What do you think the disciples left behind when they followed Jesus?
4. What would you need to leave behind?
5. Which part of the gospel story is the most meaningful to you?
6. What does it mean to follow Jesus today? How is it different from when the disciples first believed and followed?

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### Experience

#### Reaching Others

Have students sit in a circle and think of simple acts of kindness. Ask a volunteer to call out an action of kindness that is a representation of living out the good news. For example they might say, "Give a hug to the person on your left," or "Everyone turn to the person on your right and give them a compliment." Make sure every person gets a turn calling out an act. At the conclusion, process the activity. Ask: Was it sometimes difficult to think of an action of kindness?

Doctrine and Covenants 147:5a and 154

#### Honoring God's Call

Read Doctrine and Covenants 147:5a and 154. Both scriptures talk about a response to God's love and grace, a response showing appreciation and thankfulness. In their understanding of God's call, early members of the church in Kirtland, Ohio, responded by building a house of worship. Visit the Kirtland temple Web site at [www.kirtlandtemple.org](http://www.kirtlandtemple.org) to learn more.

Today, there are many opportunities to share the good news. As a class, brainstorm about one or two projects that the class could do outside of Sunday morning. Involve other classes in the brainstorming and the project activity.

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### Expand

#### I Will Follow and Share the Good News

Remember the camp song "Where He Leads Me I Will Follow"? Sing the song using these words as the final verse.

Where he leads me I will follow.  
Where he leads me I will follow.  
Where he leads me I will follow;  
I believe him, always.  
God loves me.

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**Lectionary scriptures**—Jonah 3:1–5, 10; Psalm 62:5–12; I Corinthians 7:29–31; Mark 1:12–18 IV/1:14–20