



Jesus Teaches About Commitment

Mark 8:31-38

Young children generally find it easy to openly express their love for Jesus, and they'll respond readily to the idea of following him. When children hear and see that you want to follow Jesus, they'll follow suit enthusiastically. Help children discover the reasons we follow Jesus, such as his great love for us and his willingness to go to the cross on our behalf.



► Bible Point


Follow Jesus.

Key Verse


"I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile" (Romans 1:16).

Weaving Faith Into Life

Children will learn to follow Jesus.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>1</p> <p>Getting Started</p> <p><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Welcoming Song</p> <p>Sing or listen to praises for God.</p>	<p>CD player</p> <p>Teacher Pack: CD</p>	
<p>2</p> <p>Key Verse Activity</p> <p><i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Stand Proud</p> <p>Learn a song about the Key Verse.</p>	<p>Bible, CD player</p> <p>Teacher Pack: CD</p>	<p>Be prepared to share an embarrassing story with your kids.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Bible Exploration</p> <p><i>about 15 min.</i></p>	<p>Theo's News</p> <p>Find out what a cross has to do with following Jesus.</p>	<p>Surprise Box (any box will do), Theo puppet, CD player</p> <p>Teacher Pack: CD, "Jesus Loves Me" cross</p>	<p>Put the "Jesus Loves Me" cross inside your Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.</p>
	<p>Bible Time: Next to Jesus</p> <p>Draw a picture of themselves next to Jesus.</p>	<p>Bible, tape, markers</p> <p>Teacher Pack: "Jesus" poster, "People Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)</p> 	<p>Tape the "Jesus" poster to the wall.</p>

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weaving Faith Into Life <i>about 20 min.</i> <i>(Choose 2 centers.)</i></p>	<p>Center 1: Following Jesus Choose a way to be like Jesus this week.</p>	My Bible Playground, tape, pencils, 1 chenille wire per child	Remove the Lesson 1 pages from each My Bible Playground student book.
	<p>Center 2: Happy Pops Make a snack, and say good things about Jesus.</p>	large bowl, popcorn, small cups, antibacterial gel (optional)	
	<p>Center 3: Follow Jesus Game Play a game, and talk about ways they can be like Jesus.</p>	scissors Teacher Pack: “Follow Jesus Game” cards, cut apart 	
	<p>Center 4: Picture Clips Make a cross-shaped picture clip.</p>	poster board, scissors, 1 clothespin and 1 magnet per child, markers, glitter, craft glue	Cut a 4-inch cross shape from the poster board for each child. Write “Follow Jesus” across the center of each cross.
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lasting Impressions <i>about 10 min.</i></p>	<p>Daily Challenges Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God’s Word.</p>	My Bible Playground	
	<p>Happy-to-Follow Prayer Pray about their favorite things about Jesus.</p>		
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>	My Bible Playground	Tear out the letter to parents from the back of each My Bible Playground book to give to parents when they pick up their children.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



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BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Jesus Rebuked Peter

The disciples were likely counting on a great earthly kingdom in which Jesus would lead the Jews in overthrowing the Romans and would place his disciples in important positions. Jesus' statements didn't go along with those expectations! Peter wanted Jesus to change his mind and forget all this talk about dying.

Peter's thinking was based on wrong assumptions because he saw things from a purely human point of view. Here we see a clear statement about what it means to follow Jesus. Too often we think of God as a powerful being who can help us advance our own agendas. Instead, truly following Jesus means listening to what he says, discovering his will for our lives, and then obediently following, no matter how attractive or repulsive that may seem to us at the time.

Jesus Challenged the Crowd

A crowd had apparently gathered to hear Jesus, and he wanted to clarify his meaning. This is not a description of what some call "easy believism." Instead, Jesus points out how denying oneself means turning away from selfish, self-protective attitudes and seeking the true humility and faith God wants to see in us.

What does it mean to take up your cross? For Jesus' disciples to each take up his own cross didn't mean just to endure suffering. It meant to accept fully the suffering they would face because of their faith in Christ. Jesus wanted his disciples to know that their faith came with a cost.

Stand Firm in Faith

As he spoke of what it means to follow him, Jesus knew that many in the crowd around him wouldn't

be followers he would recognize as his own when he returns. Our generation is much like that of Jesus' day. People who claim to be religious—or even Christian—often shy away from bold witnessing for Jesus. It's easy to say you believe in God, but it's much more difficult to confess you're a Jesus-following Christian.

The Jesus Connection

Humans are willing to sacrifice a lot for the sake of those they love. Your relationship with Jesus *will* require sacrifice, risk, and loyal commitment—but it's all worth it!

How can you take up your cross? Try living out the "Joy" acronym: Pray about one specific way you'll put *Jesus* first (such as spending time with him first thing each day), put *others* second (such as washing a friend's car), and put *yourself* last (such as giving up time watching TV in order to help someone else). You can write your prayer here.



Welcoming Song Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "Hi, My Friend!"
(track 2), "Jesus Loves
Me Rock" (track 6)

1 GETTING STARTED


Welcoming Song



Tip Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

When it's time to begin, use your signal to bring the children together in a circle on the floor. Lead kids in singing "Hi, My Friend!" (track 2 on the CD) to the tune of "Deep and Wide."

 **Hi, my friend! Hi, my friend!** (*shake a different friend's hand each time you sing "friend"*)

I'm so glad you came to class today. (*hug a friend*)

Hi, my friend! Hi, my friend! (*shake a different friend's hand each time you sing "friend"*)

God is here with you and me today! (*hold hands in a circle, and raise them high*)
(Repeat.)

Say: **I'm so glad you came today! Let's sing this next song loudly and clearly so anyone who hears us will know how much we love to ► FOLLOW JESUS!**

Lead kids in singing "Jesus Loves Me Rock" (track 6 on the CD). Encourage kids to join you in singing. The first time through, have girls sing the phrase and boys sing the echo. On the repeat, reverse the parts. Have kids move "freestyle" to the beat.

 **Jesus loves me;** (*echo*)

This I know, (*echo*)

For the Bible (*echo*)

Tells me so. (*echo*)

Little children (*echo*)

To him belong. (*echo*)

They are weak, but (*echo*)

He's so strong! (*echo*)

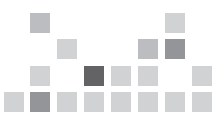
Jaaayyy! (*J*)

Eeeee! (*E*)

Sssss! (*S*)

Uuuuu! (*U*)

Sssss! (*S*)



And what's that spell? *(Jesus!)*
And who do you love? *(Jesus!)*
And who loves you? *(Jesus!)*
Who died for you? *(Jesus!)*
And who's your guy? *(Jesus!)*
The apple of your eye! *(Jesus!)*
And who's your friend? *(Jesus!)*
He'll love ya to the end!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

"Jesus Loves Me Rock" by Dean-o. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Say: **Jesus really does love you. He loves you more than you can possibly imagine!**
And when we ► FOLLOW JESUS, we show that we love him, too. Let's show
Jesus how much we love him right now.

2 KEY VERSE ACTIVITY

Stand Proud

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Have children form a circle and sit down. Open your Bible to Romans 1:16, and show children the words.

Say: **Our Key Verse from the Bible, Romans 1:16, says, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile." The gospel is the truth that Jesus died for our sins and rose from the dead so we can live forever with him. Our Key Verse means that we're not embarrassed to tell others this good news! Let's say that together.** Lead children in repeating the shortened Key Verse after you: **"I am not ashamed of the gospel" (Romans 1:16).**

Say: **Once I was embarrassed when I [insert your story here]. But I'm not embarrassed or ashamed to tell people that Jesus died for me and came back to life! The gospel is great news! Let's sing a song that shows we're proud to follow Jesus.**

Play "Proud to Follow" (track 7 on the CD), and lead kids in singing to the tune of "Camptown Races." Say: **Let's march in place, standing proudly, and sing a song to tell the world we love Jesus!**



Stand Proud Supplies


- Bible
- CD player
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Proud to Follow" (track 7)

Stand Proud Easy Prep

Be prepared to share an embarrassing story with your kids.





 I am proud to follow you, Jesus, Jesus!
 I am proud to follow you
 Everywhere you lead.
 I am not ashamed,
 I am not ashamed,
 Of the gospel, no I'm not!
 I love Jesus Christ!
 I am proud to follow you
 Everywhere you lead.
 (Repeat.)

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What are ways to tell others about Jesus?
- Tell about a time you told others about Jesus.

Say: I want to ► FOLLOW JESUS. Jesus wants everyone to know how much he loves us, because he wants everyone to live with him forever!

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3

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Theo's News

What You'll Do

Say: **Friends, it's time for Theo's News!**

Have the children sit in a circle, and begin "Here, Theo" (track 4 on the CD). When the CD segment ends, bring out the Surprise Box and put Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about the Bible today.

Theo: I hid it in the Surprise Box.

Teacher: Let's look inside to see what Theo dug up for us today.

(Invite a child to open the Surprise Box, and have the kids pass the cross around the circle so the rest of the group can see it up close. Give the children time to guess what they might learn from the Bible today.)

Teacher: Friends, what do you think the cross stands for?

(Pause for kids to answer your question.)

Teacher: Theo, why did you hide this cross in the Surprise Box?

Theo's News Supplies

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Surprise Box (any box will do)

CD player

Theo puppet

Teacher Pack

CD: "Here, Theo" (track 4)

"Jesus Loves Me" cross

Theo's News Easy Prep

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Place the "Jesus Loves Me" cross inside your Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.

Theo: When we see a cross, it reminds us that Jesus died for our sins and came to life again.

Teacher: We'll learn from the Bible today that the disciples heard Jesus talking about dying and they didn't like it.

Theo: I wouldn't like it either. That would make me sad.

Teacher: Me too! But Jesus died on the cross because he loves us. Jesus wants us to follow him. Friends, let's find out how we can ► **FOLLOW JESUS!**

Theo: Have fun, boys and girls!

Teacher: Say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week's use.

Bible Time: Next to Jesus

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Mark 8, and show children the words. Tell them that the Bible is God's special book. Then point out Jesus on the poster.

Say: **Jesus loves you and me so much that he died for us so we could live in heaven with him forever. Today in the Bible we're going to learn about the disciples—who were a group of men who chose to ► FOLLOW JESUS, too. They loved listening to Jesus teach them. Let's pretend we're with the disciples as we gather around Jesus.** Have children sit on the floor and crowd around "Jesus" on the poster.

Say: **One of the things Jesus told the disciples was that he was going to suffer and die, and then come back to life. Show me how the disciples may have looked when they heard that news.** Pause while kids show you. **One of the disciples, named Peter, didn't like what he heard! Peter took Jesus aside and scolded him. What does it look like when someone scolds you?** Pause while kids show you. **Peter didn't want Jesus to talk about dying. But Jesus said to him, "You aren't thinking about what God wants; you're thinking only about what you want."**

It was important for Jesus to die on the cross so we could be in heaven with him someday. So he told all the people that he wanted them to follow him. Jesus said it wouldn't be easy to follow him. He said not to be ashamed or embarrassed of him and his words.

Jesus' true friends stood up for Jesus. Let's stand up for Jesus right now. Have kids stand up. Show children the "People Follow Jesus" poster. **Let's tell Jesus we're happy to follow him by drawing ourselves next to his picture.**

Have kids draw smiley faces on the "People Follow Jesus" poster to represent themselves.



Bible Time: Next to Jesus Supplies

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Bible
tape
markers

Teacher Pack

"Jesus" poster
"People Follow Jesus" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack)

Bible Time: Next to Jesus Easy Prep

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Tape the "Jesus" poster to the wall.



Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why are you happy to follow Jesus?
- What can we do to show other people how to follow Jesus?

Say: **The most important thing we can ever do is ► FOLLOW JESUS. We can do what he tells us. We can read the Bible. We can tell our friends about him. And we can help people who need help. All of these things show that we follow Jesus.**

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4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today's Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you're ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they'd like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center's description.

■ CENTER 1:

Following Jesus

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Distribute the Lesson 1 pages from My Bible Playground, and have kids write their names on their papers.

Give each child a chenille wire, and show him or her how to form a circle with it, twisting the ends together to make a large ring. Form pairs, and have kids lay their student pages on the floor. Have them take three steps back, and then take turns tossing their chenille rings onto their student pages. Have children answer the following for the picture they circle. If a child's ring misses a picture, have the child toss the ring again.

Ask:

- What are the kids in the picture doing to follow Jesus?

After kids have played the game, give them tape so they can each tape their circle around an action they'd like to do next week.

Center 1: Following Jesus Supplies

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My Bible Playground
tape
pencils
1 chenille wire per child

Center 1: Following Jesus Easy Prep

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Remove the Lesson
1 pages from each
My Bible Playground
student book.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was easy or hard about the action you chose?
- What are some other ways to show you follow Jesus?

Say: It's so great to ► FOLLOW JESUS, isn't it? We can tell people about Jesus; bring people to church; and be kind, loving, and caring. God gives us strength to follow Jesus. Other Christians give us encouragement to follow Jesus, too.

CENTER 2:

Happy Pops

What You'll Do

Have children clean their hands, and then sit in a circle. Give each child a small cup. Have them each say something good about Jesus, and then take some popcorn from the large bowl and put it into their cups.

Say: These cups are like our hearts, and popcorn is like Jesus' love. It fills our hearts. Jesus wants to fill your heart with his love! He can do that when we ► FOLLOW JESUS.

Invite a child to pray. Then let kids enjoy the snacks.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What was fun about our snack time today?
- Tell about a time you told someone else about Jesus.

Say: Jesus wants us to ► FOLLOW JESUS, but he also wants other people to follow him, too! Jesus told others about God's love, and he wants us to tell others. You can make this snack with your family and friends and tell them good things about Jesus, too!

CENTER 3:

Follow Jesus Game

What You'll Do

Lay the "Follow Jesus Game" cards faceup on the ground.



Center 2: Happy Pops Supplies

-
- large bowl
 - popcorn
 - small cups
 - antibacterial gel (optional)

 **ALLERGY ALERT**

Center 3: Follow Jesus Game Supplies

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- scissors
 - Teacher Pack "Follow Jesus Game" cards, cut apart



Center 4: Picture Clips Supplies

poster board
scissors
1 clothespin and 1
magnet per child
markers
glitter
craft glue



Center 4: Picture Clips Easy Prep

Cut a 4-inch cross
shape from the poster
board for each child.
Write "Follow Jesus"
across the center of
each cross.

The cards show the same "following Jesus" scenes that are on the student pages. Each scene is divided in two, so kids can play a matching game.

Show kids which cards go together. Then mix the cards and lay them facedown on the floor. Let kids take turns choosing two cards from the game. If the cards match, the child may keep them. If the cards don't match, the child will turn them over and the next person goes. After kids get all the matches, have them mix the cards and play again.

As kids play, have them show that they ► **FOLLOW JESUS** by being kind and patient. Remind them that Jesus wants us to treat one another with love and respect.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What did this game show you about following Jesus?

Say: We show we ► **FOLLOW JESUS** when we are kind, patient, loving, and respectful. Jesus wants us to show love to others, because he loves everyone so much.

■ CENTER 4:

Picture Clips

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Give each child a cross that you prepared beforehand. Read the words on the cross to the children. Follow these steps.

1. Encourage children to use the markers and glitter to decorate the crosses.
2. Help kids each glue a clothespin to the back of their cross. Be sure that the bottom of the clothespin lines up with the bottom of the cross.
3. Glue a magnet to the back of each clothespin.
4. Encourage kids to put a picture of themselves in the clip when they get home and then hang the cross on their refrigerator as a reminder to be happy to follow Jesus every day.

Say: It isn't always easy to follow Jesus, especially around people who don't follow him. But Jesus wants us to stand up for him and say, "I ► **FOLLOW JESUS.**" These crosses can help us remember to ► **FOLLOW JESUS.** When we follow Jesus we get to live in heaven with Jesus forever!

5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

After the children have cleaned up the centers, bring everyone back to the circle area on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they remember about what they learned from the Bible today.

Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge for encouraging your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Talk With Kids

Say: **Today we learned to ► FOLLOW JESUS. Choose one of these Daily Challenges to help you remember to ► FOLLOW JESUS this week.**

Give kids these three challenges to choose from:

1. **Lead your family in a prayer, asking God to help you follow Jesus.**
2. **Tell a friend that you follow Jesus.**
3. **When you wake up in the morning, tell Jesus that you're going to follow him that day.**

Say: **If you want to lead your family in a prayer, circle choice number 1. If you want to tell a friend you follow Jesus, circle choice number 2. If you want to tell Jesus you'll follow him, circle choice number 3.** Check that each child circled a choice. Make sure you tell kids the challenge you choose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

Happy-to-Follow Prayer

What You'll Do

Have kids sit in a circle.

Say: **The best thing we can ever do is to ► FOLLOW JESUS. He wants us to be happy to follow him. As I go around the circle, say your favorite thing about Jesus.**

After each child has said a favorite thing about Jesus, close in prayer: **Jesus, we love so many different things about you. Thank you for everything you've done for us. We love you. In your name, amen.**



Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Playground



Weaving Faith at Home Supplies

My Bible Playground

Weaving Faith at Home Easy Prep

Tear out the letter to parents in the back of each My Bible Playground book to give to parents when they pick up their children.

Weaving Faith at Home

Send the letter to parents home with your kids or give it to parents when they pick up their children. This is a great way to show families they're important to your church and to support their role as spiritual leaders to their children.

Have children take home their My Bible Playground pages whether they worked on them or not. Have children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the "Daily Challenges" activity. Encourage parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

