

8. Jesus Calls Levi (Luke 5:27-32)

So they went out and proclaimed that people should change their hearts and lives. (Mark 6:12)



PLAN

Session Outline

1. Gather

Greeting
Play Dough Banquet
A Banquet of Favorites
Transition to Explore

2. Explore

Sacred Conversations
Hear and See the Bible Story
Interact with the Bible Story
Say the Bible Verse
Transition to Respond

3. Respond

Loving God,
Loving Neighbor
Storytelling Figures
Tax Math
Transition to Bless

4. Bless

Inviting
Praising
Blessing
At Home with God

Supplies

Basic Supplies: Tape | Stickers | Markers | Crayons | Pencils | Glue | Paper | Scissors | Yarn

Gather: Play dough | Air dry clay (optional)

Explore: No additional supplies needed

Respond: Large piece of paper or posterboard

Bless: Scented lip balm sticks

Before You Teach

In Jesus' time, tax collectors were very unpopular. Many people resented paying taxes to the Roman government. Paying taxes and interacting with tax collectors reminded the people they were under Roman rule and not free to rule themselves. The very idea that a Jewish tax collector collaborated with the Romans in this effort was abhorrent. Often, tax collectors made their living by charging more money for taxes than the Romans expected and keeping the difference. The system was seemingly designed to encourage greed and dishonesty. Also, while collecting taxes, tax collectors handled things Jewish law considered unclean, such as coins stamped with images of pagan gods. All of these reasons combined made tax collectors some of the most disliked people in the Jewish community.

In this week's lesson we hear the story of Levi. The story of Jesus calling Levi to follow him is found in similar accounts in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Levi was a tax collector and was sitting at a tax booth. When Jesus saw Levi, he issued the invitation, "Follow me." With these words, Jesus extended an invitation to one who was despised by society.

It is likely that Jesus' association with tax collectors surprised many, but Luke tells specifically of the response of the Pharisees. Pharisees were Jewish religious leaders. They interpreted the Jewish laws found in the Torah and applied them to everyday life. Pharisees opposed Jesus because they thought he was teaching Jews to stop following these laws. The Pharisees also opposed Jesus' association with those they identified as sinners, such as tax collectors. In the Pharisees' eyes, if a person associated with someone identified as a sinner, then that person became unclean.

The story of Jesus calling Levi is good news for us! Jesus issues the invitation to follow, not to those who are perfect and righteous, but to imperfect, ordinary people. Jesus calls people like us to follow him too.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display the Attendance Chart (Class Kit—pp. 15–18) at eye level. Put together the model of the school and the figures of Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen (Class Kit—p. 9).

- Play, “Only You” (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD) as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings.
- Help each child mark the Attendance Chart with a sticker or permanent marker.
- Place the Deep Blue Shores Map (Class Kit—p. 11) and the school and the Mr. Maxwell, Rachel, and Armen figures (Class Kit—p. 9) on a table or on the floor for the children to play with and explore. If available, add the Deep Blue Shores Maps, buildings, and figures from previous quarters.

TIP: *Have a quiet space with books and soft toys for children who are not quite ready to join in.*

A—Play Dough Banquet (Art)

Before class: Make sure your play dough is still pliable and not dried out.

- Give each child some play dough. Invite the children to create a banquet with their play dough. They may want to create the serving pieces or some of the food. Tell them that a banquet is a fancy party meal.

OPTION: *Use air dry clay to create a piece of art that can be displayed for others to see.*

OR

B—A Banquet of Favorites (Game)

- Let the class help set up chairs in a circle. There should be one less chair than there are children.
 - Explain that a banquet host is the host of a big, fancy dinner. Choose one child to be the first banquet host, and have the other children go and sit in one of the chairs facing the center of the circle. The banquet host remains standing.
 - When the game begins, the host will call out his or her favorite food or drink like this, “My favorite food is _____. If you like _____, you are invited to my banquet. Go!” As soon as the host says, “Go!” all of the children who also enjoy that food or drink will stand up and move quickly to find a new chair to sit in. The host will also try to sit in a chair. The child left without a chair becomes the next host.
 - Play until each child who wants a turn has a chance to be the host, or as long as time and interest allows.
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Transition to Explore

- Have the children clean up.

SAY: Our story today has some counting. Let’s count by twos as we move to the story circle.

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EXPLORE

Sacred Conversations

SAY: This month we are hearing stories about Jesus as an adult. Jesus became a great leader for the community. We have heard about Jesus' baptism and about when he shared good news in the synagogue. I wonder what we will learn about Jesus today.

ASK: I wonder:

- How many friends are here with us today? Who is missing?
 - How do you feel today?
 - What's one thing that happened in your community this week that you really liked?
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Hear and See the Bible Story

SAY: Today our Bible story is about Jesus and a man named Levi who was a tax collector.

- Tell the children the story, "Jesus Calls Levi" (*Deep Blue Bible Storybook*—p. 329).
- Watch the Deep Blue Adventure for Session 8 (Adventure DVD) with the children.

ASK: How are you called to follow Jesus?

Interact with the Bible Story

- Give each child a copy of "Jesus Calls Levi" (Bible Story Sheets—Session 8).
 - Read the story with the children, encouraging them to read the words in blue.
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Say the Bible Verse

Before class: Post the Bible Verse Poster—Unit 2 (Class Kit—p. 5) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Point to the Bible Verse Poster. Say the Bible verse for the children, and then repeat it together.
 - Teach the children signs from American Sign Language for some of the words in the Bible verse (Leader Guide—p. 92 and www.deepbluekids.com/This-Sunday).
 - Watch the Unit 2 Bible Verse video (Adventure DVD) with the children.
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Transition to Respond

- Have the children clean up.

SAY: Our story today has some counting. Let's count by twos as we move to the story circle.

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RESPOND

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: Post "All Are Welcome" (Class Kit—p. 2) and the Mission Poster (Class Kit— p. 29) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Play, "All Are Welcome" (Annual Music CD or Adventure DVD). Sing along and dance to the music.

SAY: This month we are learning about and supporting a mission organization in Tennessee called the Jubilee Project. They help people have access to clean, running water. Water is very important to humans and to all of God's creation. The word *jubilee* means "a time of celebration." When have you had a time of celebration? Why do imagine the Jubilee Project is named after a time of celebration?

- Place a large piece of paper or posterboard in the center of the table. Write the word "jubilee" in the center in large letters.
- Encourage the children to draw, write, and color about "celebration" around the word.

PRAY: God, we thank you for the Jubilee Project. Please help them to serve others with a spirit of celebration. Help us to follow their examples. Amen.

OPTION: Take a photo of your finished poster and email it to jubileeprojectsneedville@gmail.com. Let them know your Sunday school group is praying for them.

A—Storytelling Figures (Activity Sheets)

- Give each child a copy of Activity Sheets—Session 8.
- Invite the children to create "Jesus Calls Levi" storytelling figures according to the instructions.
- Encourage the children to use the figures to retell the story.

OR

B—Tax Math (Math)

Before class: Make a copy of "Tax Math" (p. 54) for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "Tax Math" (p. 54).
- Read the instructions to the children.
- Encourage the children to follow the instructions on the page. Help them as needed.

Transition to Bless

- Have each child help you clean up. Lead them in counting by fives as they move to the Bible story circle.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: Cut out the mural pieces from the bottom of the Unit 2—Bible Story Mural (Class Kit—p. 21) and place them in an envelope or zip-top bag. Post the Unit 2—Bible Story Mural on a wall or bulletin board.

- Gather the children around the mural. Invite a child to tape the image of Jesus and Levi, the tax collector, to the mural.

ASK: What do you remember about the Bible story we heard today? What do you think we can learn about community from this story?

Praising

Before class: Display “Singing Together” (Class Kit—p. 31) on a wall or bulletin board.

- Sing together, “Follow Me” (Class Kit—p. 31).

TIP: *If time permits, invite the children to choose more songs to sing.*

Blessing

- One at a time invite each child to choose and bring to you a scented lip balm stick, and then place his or her hand on yours.
 - Using the lip balm stick, draw a cross on the top of the child’s hand.
 - Bless the child by saying, “Jesus told Levi, ‘Follow me.’ You can follow Jesus too.”
 - Continue until each child has received a blessing.
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At Home with God

ASK: What’s one thing about our time today that you can tell your family?

- Give each child a copy of Bible Story Sheets—Session 8. Look at “Family Faith Activities” together.

ASK: Which of these activities are you most excited to try this week?

- Send home the Bible Story Sheets—Session 8 with each child.

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Tax Math

Paying taxes means giving some of the money you have to the government. Levi was a tax collector. He had to collect money from all of the people. Pretend you are a “shape” tax collector who needs to collect three shapes from each set of shapes.

- How many shapes does each set have? _____
- Color 3 of the shapes in each set.
- How many shapes are left in each set? _____

