

JESUS' FIRST FOLLOWERS

John 1:19-51

STRUCTURE

Key-persons: John the Baptist, Jesus, Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael

Key-location: Jordan River

Key-repetitions:

- People testified about Jesus: John the Baptist testified to Jewish leaders (Jn 1:19-34), to listeners (Jn 1:29-34), to two disciples (Jn 1:35-29); Andrew testified to brother Simon Peter (Jn 1:40-42); Philip testified to Nathanael (Jn 1:43-46).
- John the Baptist declared himself to be inferior to Jesus: John called Jesus the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29, 36); John wasn't worthy to untie Jesus' sandals (Jn 1:27); Jesus came after John, but is greater than John, because he lived before John (Jn 1:30).
- People came to Jesus: Andrew and Philip, disciples of John the Baptist (Jn 1:37-39); Andrew took his brother Simon to Jesus (Jn 1:42); Philip took Nathanael to Jesus (Jn 1:46).
- Reference to Scripture: John the Baptist repeated the words of Prophet Isaiah (Jn 1:23); John calling Jesus "The Lamb of God" is a reference to Scripture (Jn 1:29, 36); Philip told Nathanael that Jesus was the one Moses and the prophets wrote about (Jn 1:45); Jesus told Nathanael that he would see heaven open and angels ascending and descending, a reference to Jacob's dream in Genesis (Jn 1:51).

Key-attitudes:

- Curiosity of Jewish leaders who questioned John the Baptist.
- John the Baptist's confidence when he testified about Jesus.
- Curiosity of John the Baptist's two disciples when they first followed Jesus.
- Andrew and Philip's excitement when they testified about Jesus.
- Nathanael's doubtfulness when he first heard about Jesus.
- Nathanael's confidence in Jesus after meeting him.

Initial-situation:

John the Baptist was preaching and baptizing those who repented of their sins. John baptized Jesus. Jesus spent forty days in the desert wilderness where Satan tempted him. Jewish leaders of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask John the Baptist who he was.

Initial-problem:

John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and shouted, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!"

Final-situation:

Four men began to follow Jesus: Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, Nathanael. Jesus promised Nathanael, "You'll see heaven open and God's angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man."

BIBLE STORY

Jewish leaders of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask John the Baptist who he was. John told the truth, "I'm not the Christ." Then he answered them in the words of Prophet Isaiah, "I'm the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare for the Lord's arrival! Make the road smooth and straight.'"

They asked John, "Why do you baptize people, if you aren't the Christ?"

John replied, "I only baptize people with water. But a person you don't recognize will come after me. I'm not even worthy to untie the strings of his sandals" (Jn 1:19-28).

The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and shouted, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is the one I was talking about, 'A man will come after me, but he is greater than me because he was living before me.' I testify that this is the Son of God" (Jn 1:29-34).

The next day, John the Baptist was with two of his disciples when he saw Jesus walking nearby. John said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

The two disciples, Andrew and Philip, heard John the Baptist, so they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They answered, "Teacher, where are you staying?"

Jesus replied, "Come with me, and you'll see."

The two went and saw where Jesus was staying. They spent the rest of the day with him. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon (Jn 1:35-39).

Andrew was one of the two who heard John's words and followed Jesus. Andrew found his brother Simon and told him, "We've found the Messiah." (*"Messiah" means "Christ".*) Andrew took his brother to Jesus.

Jesus looked at Simon and said, "You're Simon, son of John. (*The word "Simon" means "Sinking Sand."*) You'll be called Cephas" (Jn 1:40-42). (*The word "Cephas," when translated, means "Peter" or "Rock."*)

The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. Jesus found Philip and invited him, "Follow me."

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We found the one Moses and the prophets wrote about. He is Jesus from Nazareth, the son of Joseph."

Nathanael asked, "Nazareth! Can anything good come from Nazareth?"

Philip replied, "Come, see for yourself."

Jesus saw Nathanael approaching and said, "Here is a true Israelite; nothing is false about him."

Nathanael asked, "How do you know me?"

Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you."

Nathanael declared, "Teacher, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel."

Jesus said, "You believe because I say I saw you under the fig tree. You'll see greater things than that. I tell you the truth; you'll see heaven open and God's angels going up and coming down on the Son of Man" (Jn 1:43-51).

Andrew, Simon Peter, Philip, and Nathanael made some trips with Jesus during his first year of public ministry (Jn 2 - 4).

GENERIC DIALOGUE QUESTIONS

1. What catches your attention in the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main characters in the story?
4. What problems did the characters face?
5. How did the characters face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

SPECIFIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What was John the Baptist's goal and mission in life?
2. What did John the Baptist mean by calling Jesus, "The Lamb of God"?
3. Who were some of the people who told others about Jesus?
4. What can we learn from them that will help us tell others about Jesus?
5. If you were asked, "Who is Jesus?", how would you answer?
6. Who are some people who told you about Jesus?
7. Who are some people that you could tell about Jesus?

LIFE-LESSONS

1. **God's people should be aware of their mission in life.** John the Baptist was aware that his mission in life was to prepare the people for the Lord's arrival (Jn 1:19-28).
2. **The blood of animals cannot pay the price for mankind's sin; therefore, God sent Jesus to the world to pay the price for people's sin and to free from eternal punishment all who trust him.** John the Baptist introduced Jesus as the Lamb of God (Jn 1:29, 35-36). Old Testament narratives reveal what the words "Lamb of God" meant for John.
 - Just as God provided a lamb for Abraham (Gen 22:8) to be sacrificed in Isaac's place, he sent Jesus to take the place of all who trust him.
 - Passover Lamb. Before the angel of death passed through Egypt, God ordered each Israelite family to kill an unblemished lamb and put its blood on the door threshold of their house. The lamb died in the place of the firstborn child (Ex 12).

- The Lamb of the Atonement was designated as the sacrifice to take away the people's sin (Lev 14).
 - Prophet Isaiah said the Suffering Servant would be taken to the slaughterhouse (Is 53:7, 8, 12).
3. **Those who discover Jesus should tell others about him.** Examples: John, the author of the Gospel of John (Jn 1:14), John the Baptist (Jn 1:35-36), Andrew (Jn 1:40-41), and Philip (Jn 1:43-45).
 4. **Believers in Jesus need to testify about him.** John the Baptist, Andrew and Philip are examples of how to testify (Jn 1:35-51).
 - Give importance to the person Jesus Christ (1:36, 41, 45).
 - Start by telling family members and close friends (Jn 1:41, 45).
 - After personally discovering Jesus, invite others also to experience him (Jn 1:41, 45).
 - Challenge the one who criticizes Jesus to investigate him (Jn 1:46).

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Dialogue:

This Bible story describes four people's first encounter with Jesus. Invite listeners to describe their first encounter with Jesus.