



GOALS

Through this session students will...

- begin to shift their focus from God's call for your group to God's call for each of them individually.
- look at the calling of Jesus' disciples to see how these men dropped everything to follow Jesus.
- learn about what Jesus requires of those who follow Him.
- consider God's call for their lives and will be given the opportunity to respond accordingly.

MATERIALS: Group

- whiteboard and markers
- supplies for worship and creativity, see Taking It Inward—Costs and Rewards near the end of this guide

MATERIALS: Each Student

- student journal pages for Session 4
- Session 4 Scripture sheets
- a Bible and pen (Students should bring their own Bibles. You can decide if you would like them to use a physical Bible or a Bible app like, "YouVersion.")
- colored pencils/highlighters

Leading Up to the Session:

This session deals with God's call for us to follow Him. Why not consider hosting a "Call" event in the week leading up to the session. An idea: Make a cheesy (or non-cheesy) video challenging students to do something positive this week (bring non-perishable food items to your Bible study for the local food bank, meet at the park to pick up trash, wash the pastor's mini-van). Or you could have some surprise, spontaneous "call out" event like a pizza call out, a coffee house call out, a video game night call out. Whatever you choose just make certain to incorporate the idea of your group's call out into this session.

Also, have you noticed students embracing the material and living differently? This could indicate God's movement in their lives. You may want to contact them and allow them to talk through what they're experiencing. You may even find potential student leaders through this process.

Prayer

Open your session by praying that God would continue to find faithful servants in your group in the same way he found faithfulness in Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Moses. Pray that God would speak to your group through His Word and that His Spirit would find open hearts and minds willing to follow Him.

As always, start with a review regarding the previous sessions.

- Was Israel a good example for your group to follow in realizing total ministry potential?
- What led to Israel's downfall?
- What are some distractions that could knock our group off course?

GETTING STARTED

Share in your own words:

Have you ever been "called out?" Has anyone ever approached you and said something like "you and me, after school, at the flag pole?" What is this person calling you out to? Have you ever experienced something like this? What are some other "call outs" you can think of? (For instance wrestling, boxing, game shows, etc.) Does a "call out" always have to be a bad thing?

Share that in this session you'll be looking at a different kind of "call out," specifically, God's call for each of our lives. Then say:

Share in your own words:

Name some things that come in 12s.

-months in a year, numbers on a watch, eggs/donuts (a dozen), tribes of Israel, Jesus' apostles

If it's not suggested, steer your discussion to Jesus' apostles. Then ask:

I want to give you a "call out" to start this session. Off the top of your head, without your Bible or Google, how many of Jesus' 12 apostles can you name?

Record all responses on your whiteboard (both correct and incorrect at this point). Once responses have tapered off, allow one last look at the board and an opportunity to add or remove any names. If students are content with the list they've assembled, share with them that they will be able to check their responses against the actual list of disciples in the next exercise.

DIGGING IN

Draw your students' attention to "The Choosing of the Twelve" using their Scripture sheets. Invite them to read the passages with the following instructions:

1. **As you read the passages, mark anything that Jesus said or did in one color.**
2. **With another color mark anything that the apostles (or those called out to follow Christ) did in another color.**

TAKING IT INWARD-QUICK RESPONSE TEAM

When you have finished reading and marking the passage, discuss the following questions.

How did these men respond when Jesus called them out?

*-they followed immediately, at once, without delay
-they dropped what they were doing (left their nets)*

What do you think it was that inspired this type of reaction? What would cause men to respond by dropping everything to immediately follow Jesus?

*-Jesus must have spoken as one with authority
-They must have recognized Jesus as a rabbi, or teacher, and being called to follow a rabbi was considered a great honor
-Perhaps they noted something different or special about Jesus either by the way He spoke, what He did, or what He said*

Were these men Jesus' only followers?

-No, he picked them from among a group of other followers (disciples)

What steps did Jesus take in selecting the apostles?

*-He spent time with them prior to appointing them as apostles
-He went to His father the night before in prayer
-He chose from within a group of people that had demonstrated their commitment to follow him*

In the passage from Luke 6, the names of the apostles are given. Have some fun with this as you review the answers your students gave with the list of the actual 12.

TAKING IT INWARD-WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Share in your own words:

There was nothing particularly special about the people whom Jesus called besides their willingness to follow. The apostle Paul wrote about this calling in 1 Corinthians 1:26 saying "Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth." In Acts 4:13 Jesus' apostles are described as "unschooled, ordinary men." Jesus called ordinary people, not kings, military leaders, or people with sway over a crowd. Similarly He does the same today. He isn't concerned with your accomplishments or position in life. He simply wants your willingness to follow Him.

Let's take a moment to put ourselves in the shoes of Jesus' first disciples. Consider for a moment how likely would you be to respond and follow Jesus if he called you today. Use the questions on your journal page to gauge your response to Jesus. Put a dot on the chart below each question that most closely corresponds to your response.

[CA/CH guides CHANGE TO THIS]

If Jesus walked into this room right now and called you by name asking you to follow Him, what would you say?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*I'm not sure about that
Jesus...*

I will but first let me...

*Drop student journal and
leave with Jesus*

What would you say if Jesus looked at you and said "I need you to leave behind your comfort, your home, your community, your possessions to follow me"?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*Totally not ready to part
with that...*

Can't I just keep...

*Everything belongs to
you anyhow Lord*

What would you say if Jesus walked in and said "I know the plans that you have made for your future, but I have different plans for you"?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

*That doesn't work with my
5 year plan Jesus...*

*I might be willing to make a few
changes...*

*Speak Lord, for your
servant is listening...*

Take a moment to debrief this activity. Ask for volunteers to be transparent and share where they find themselves in being submissive to Jesus' call.

DIGGING DEEPER PART 1

Share that, while those scenarios are hypothetical, Jesus IS real and He DOES call us to follow Him. This isn't a concept or theology, it's a very real choice that we make every single day of our lives.

Share with your students that following Jesus is more than just knowing some facts and stories about Him. It's allowing Him to make radical change in our lives. In the same way that Jesus changed the lives of His followers in the few short years they spent with Him, He does the same with us today over the course of our lives.

Share in your own words:

If you didn't find yourself jumping at the thought of dropping everything you have and ditching your current plans to follow Jesus, don't feel too discouraged. Not everyone who Jesus called immediately jumped at the thought of following Him either. That being said, there is something compelling about Jesus, that when we start learning more about Him and His love for us, the call to follow Him becomes increasingly more compelling.

Have students read Luke 9:57-62 from their Bibles. As they read have them note three different situations where Jesus called someone who wasn't quite ready to follow Him.

TAKING IT INWARD-YES, BUT

As students are reading and completing the instructions you gave them above, draw three columns on your whiteboard. After students have finished, have them look at the primary warning that Jesus gave in each story about following Him. Feel free to refer to the chart below for some help with the answers. Once the group has observed the three primary warnings that Jesus gave, discuss the question listed below as they relate to each story.

Each warning touches on common hesitations that still exist today when it comes to following Jesus. Help your students see each situation in today's terms with these questions. Write students' responses on the board and invite them to record the responses on their journal pages. Feel free to refer to the chart below for some help with responses. Once the group has identified the three primary warnings that Jesus gave, discuss the questions listed below as they relate to each story.

1. **What truth is Jesus trying to communicate to this person?**
2. **How would Jesus communicate this same truth to us today?**
3. **What excuses do we come up with in response to each situation?**

Situation	Truth Jesus is communicating in this situation	How Jesus communicates the same truth to us today	Our excuses today in response to each situation
The Son of Man has no place to Lay His Head	<i>Following me will not be easy, you may not even have a home or bed!</i>	<i>Following me will cost you something. It might be time, money, or your plans for the future.</i>	<i>Jesus, I couldn't possibly do without my _____. Jesus can't I have you and _____?</i>
Let the dead bury the dead	<i>My mission is urgent, I don't have time for you to wait until you decide that the time is right.</i>	<i>The time is now. Are you in or out?</i>	<i>I am waiting for the right time. Now isn't convenient. I'm not ready to follow Jesus in the way that He requires; maybe later.</i>
No one who looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God	<i>No looking back, don't mourn for your old way of life, how you lived before you knew me.</i>	<i>I need your total trust, no plan 'B' or safety nets here.</i>	<i>Jesus, I trust You, but just not in this way. Jesus I need a back-up plan in case things don't work out.</i>

DIGGING DEEPER- PART 2

Share in your own words:

It would seem that Jesus isn't overly concerned with His followers having all the things that our society deems as valuable. Why? Because He knows that they are temporary, while what He is about to usher in is an eternal kingdom that will be treasured for all time. His primary concern isn't on things, but on hearts. This is huge so we're going to take some time to process this.

Have students refer to the Digging Deeper-Part 2 exercise on their journal pages. Invite them to do this exercise in solitude—a corner of the room, a hallway, outdoors. Instruct students to read each Scripture passage listed and in the space provided on their journal pages, note the following:

- 1. The costs/requirements of following Jesus.**
- 2. The rewards for paying the costs.**

Scripture	Costs/Requirements of Following	Rewards for Following
John 10:25-30	-we must listen to His voice	-we will have eternal life -we will NEVER perish -we can't be snatched away
Luke 14:25-35	-we need to hate our own life -we need to carry our cross -we must give up everything -we are to be salt	-we will be His disciples
John 12:20-26	-a seed must die to multiply, we must be willing to die -we must follow to serve	-we will produce many seeds -we are honored by God if we follow Jesus -we will keep our life for eternity
John 14:15-24	-We will obey Jesus' teachings if we love Him	-the father will love the one who follows -Jesus will love us and reveal Himself to us -Jesus and the Father will come to us and LIVE WITH US

TAKING IT INWARD-COSTS AND REWARDS

After a few minutes call your group back together. Ask students to share their "costs" and "rewards" and gently point students back to specific Scriptures if they have missed something important.

After your group has reviewed the exercise ask for volunteers to share at least two of the "costs" that Jesus described that are particularly challenging or convicting.

Next have students read over the list of rewards that Jesus mentions. Ask students to identify any rewards that are particularly appealing or motivating to them.

Please note that it's easy for students to read through the list and think that the rewards Jesus mentions are only heavenly rewards. But challenge them to note that some of these rewards begin now. Perhaps share with your group how you see some of these rewards fulfilled in your life.

Internalize the costs and rewards passages by discussing these questions:

What things does Jesus seem to be emphasizing in describing the "costs of following" Him?

- Shifting our focus from an earthly focus to an eternal focus
- Accordingly, a lack of concern for earthly "stuff"
- Doesn't want us to be distracted (sound familiar?)
- Wants people who are willing to give up everything

What do His "rewards" communicate to us about following Him?

- The reward of following Him is well worth the cost
- The reward is eternal, it begins now, but will not end

Invite your students to spend some time in solitude reflecting on their personal “followship” factor with Jesus; perhaps suggest they move to a quiet spot in the room. Consider providing the following to enhance the experience:

- Worship music
- Meditative atmosphere (candles, music)
- Supplies for writing, drawing, painting, creating (see the “journal” prompt and explanation below)

The journaling prompt below suggests that students write, draw, or create something that expresses their thoughts about following Jesus. You may want to collect supplies you know your students will respond to. The following prompts are printed on the student journal pages. You may need to provide an extra sheet for writing. Before they disperse take a minute to explain the “journal” supplies that you’ve provided.

Recap:

Look over your notes and the Scriptures you have explored in this session. As you reread Jesus’ words, remember that He wasn’t speaking those words only to His followers but also to you. How does knowing that Jesus’ words apply just as much to us today as they did to His first followers change your perspective on what you’ve learned?

Pray:

Spend some time talking to God about what you need regarding a relationship with Him. Where do you need God to strengthen you in order to follow Jesus like the way He described?

Listen:

Now just listen. What do you sense that God might be communicating to you during this time?

Journal:

Now write down your thoughts. Or draw your thoughts. Or create something that expresses your thoughts. What has this time of focusing on Jesus meant to you? What ways has this session challenged you? How do you plan to follow Christ, now knowing better about the “call out” he has made on your life? Write your thoughts or draw a picture that captures your response to these questions.

Share:

Is there anything that you need to discuss with your leaders? Is God calling you to make this commitment to follow Him serious by surrendering your life to Him for the first time? Maybe you’ve already made the step of surrendering to Christ, but you’ve found yourself distracted lately. Do you need to take this opportunity to recommit yourself to following Christ?

PUTTING INTO PRACTICE

After an appropriate amount of time, call your group back together. Take some time to allow students to share with the group about their experiences from their solitude exercise. If you have students who have made decisions for Christ, take the opportunity to share those commitments with the group and to celebrate with them.

Share in your own words:

Our group’s commitment to the mission that God has called us to is dependent upon the commitment of the individual commitments to the call that Jesus has placed upon each of our lives. While Jesus still works through groups, He calls each of us individually to participate in this mission in the same way that He individually called each apostle.

Before closing your time discuss the following questions:

What if our group’s commitment to following Jesus was as strong as your personal commitment to Jesus? Would that be a good or bad thing?

Are we as a group prepared to follow Jesus? If not, what’s holding us back? If so, what do we need to do?

What are some practical things we can do to strengthen each other’s personal “followship factor”?