



### 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
- one dozen donuts (that you can decorate with gel)
- 3-4 tubes of decorating gel
- 15 small paper plates (dessert size)

### 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). This can empower your middle school students and also set a fun vibe. This will reinforce what they've learned about following Christ. Then, be sure to incorporate the idea of your group's call into this session.

### 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.

### Review

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, MMA, celebrity twitter feuds, 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:

**Name some things that come in 12s (or in a dozen).**

*-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:

**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" on 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.**

The Luke 6 passage supplies the names of the apostles. To help your students internalize the calling of the 12 apostles (in classic middle school fashion—with food), present your dozen donuts on a plate and your tubes of decorating gel. Distribute donuts on dessert plates and decorating tubes to your group so that each student has at least one donut. If you have more than 12 students, invite some to pair up. Assign an apostle's name to each student and invite them to decorate a donut with that apostle's name.

Allow no more than five minutes for decorating. Then display the 12 donuts in the middle of your group. Also check your students' list of apostles from the opening exercise.

## TAKING IT INWARD-PART 1

With the dozen donuts decorated and displayed in front of the group, discuss these questions and invite students to record the responses on their journal pages.

**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*

## TAKING IT INWARD-PART 2

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.

Invite your students to take a moment to put themselves in the shoes of Jesus’ first disciples. Using three dessert plates and your decorating gel, draw a question mark on one plate, a comma on another plate, and an exclamation point on a third plate. Place these three plates in the middle of your group.

**Consider for a moment how likely would you be to respond and follow Jesus if He called you today. I’m going to read a couple scenarios. Use the decorated plates to indicate your answer:**

**Question Mark:** *I’m not sure*

**Comma:** *Yes, but...*

**Exclamation Point:** *Let’s go!*

**How would you respond if Jesus walked into this room right now and said your name, “come follow me right now.”**

**How would you respond if Jesus looked at you and said “I need you to leave behind (your comfort, your home, your community, your possessions to follow me).**

**How would you respond if Jesus walked in and said “I want to make some changes in your life if you want to follow me.”**

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**

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:

**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. There is, though, something about Jesus. When we start learning more about Him and His love for us, the call to follow Him becomes increasingly more compelling.**

Have students read the passage on their Scripture sheets from Luke 9 entitled “Prospective Followers.” As they read have them mark three different situations where Jesus called someone who wasn’t quite ready to follow Him.

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.

- 1. What common hesitation, that we still see today, was Jesus addressing?**
- 2. What excuses do we come up with in relation to each hesitation?**

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.

Situation	Common hesitation today	Our excuses today in response to each situation
<b>The Son of Man has no place to Lay His Head</b>	<i>-we resist leaving our comfort zones -following will require sacrifice</i>	<i>-I don't want to leave the familiar -I enjoy my creature comforts</i>
<b>Let the dead bury the dead</b>	<i>-we tend to wait until everything falls into place</i>	<i>-I'll get serious about following when I'm older -I'll commit to follow after I get a few things out of my system</i>
<b>No one who looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God</b>	<i>-It's easy to look back when the path with Jesus is unknown.</i>	<i>-I'm afraid of the unknown -I'm not sure I have the faith to follow when I can't see a clear forward path</i>

## TAKING IT INWARD

Invite your students to spend some time in solitude reflecting on their personal “followship” factor with Jesus. You might suggest that they move to a quiet spot in the room or even outside. The following prompts are printed on the student journal pages. Be sure they take their journal pages and Scripture sheets for this session.

### 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. What has this time focusing on Jesus meant to you? What ways has this lesson challenged you? How do you plan to follow Christ, now knowing better about the “call out” he has made on your life?

### 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 to help usher in His kingdom, 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?**

Close your time by drawing your group's attention back to the donuts. Decide as a group how the donuts can serve as encouragement to follow Jesus in the same manner as the apostles—fully committed. Below are some ideas built around taking pictures of the donuts.

- 1. Arrange the 12 donuts in the order of appearance of the apostles in Luke 6 and take a picture of them. Then eat them.**
- 2. Take a group photo with students holding one or two donuts—so that all the donuts are displayed. Then eat them.**
- 3. Create an arrangement for a photo that is reminiscent of your session, then eat them:**
  - a megaphone (to represent being "called out")**
  - a cross**
  - a giant exclamation point**

Then decide as a group what to do with the photo:

- 1. Use as smart phone wallpaper.**
- 2. Use as a profile picture for your ministry's social media pages.**
- 3. Print a poster-sized image and mount it on foam board to display in your ministry area.**
- 4. Share it with InWord: @inword1 or facebook.com/inwordresources.**

You may want to create a two-to-three word caption for the photo that captures what the 12 donuts represent: a radical commitment to follow Jesus wherever He leads. Give students a couple minutes to write ideas down in the space provided under Putting Into Practice and then agree on a caption as a group.