

Jesus is Our Savior

Objective: The students will be able to identify the way Jesus calls His followers and tells them to "make disciples of all the nations" so that everyone can be saved.

For the Catechist

Children in third grade like to be called to join a group or activity. They like to be chosen by someone else. In this lesson they learn how Jesus is calling them to follow Him. They learn to hear His call by listening to the words in the Gospel readings.

Also, the children learn how the first disciples were willing to leave their family and jobs to follow Jesus. The Gospel readings tell us the disciples, the followers of Jesus, played a special part in Jesus' life. After Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection, these disciples joined together and organized the Church, "Now you are Christ's body" (I Cor 12:27). The disciples told other people about the love and forgiveness that Jesus offered. They called all people to become members of the Church.

Following Jesus is a choice. Even though the disciples were called, they had the final decision as to whether they would follow. We also have a choice. For many of us the choice was made for us by our parents, who chose to have us baptized. Through our baptism we became followers of Jesus and members of the Church. In earlier grades the children learned that they said "Yes" to Jesus at their baptism. This year they are learning that all members of the Church say "Yes" to Jesus. As members of the Church we are called to share this Good News with other people and "make disciples of all nations."

This lesson, "Jesus Calls All People to Be Saved," helps to explain the key concept of theosis: God created us to live united to Him now and forever. The concept of theosis is foundational to an understanding of Eastern Christian thought and is repeated in every text of the series.

Lesson Plan Overview

Opening: "O Only-begotten Son"
[Collect the "My Baptism" worksheets sent home last week. Remind anyone who forgot to bring it next week.]

Introduction: Discussion of crowds of people **Need:** Bring in a picture of a place where many people gather.

Read Text Aloud: Have students volunteer to read the text. Use questions in the teacher manual to discuss the lesson with the students.

Activity Tracks:
Choose a basic, group, or craft activity to reinforce the lesson (detailed on the pages that follow).

- *Basic:* We Follow Jesus
- *Group:* Guess the Word
- *Craft:* "Jesus Calls All People" Collage

Closing: "O Only-begotten Son"

Icon Packets:

Come Bless the Lord:

The Descent into Hades

Packet II:

Parable of the Last Judgment

Background Reading

(Direct quotations from the sources noted)

"Disciples

"Kerygma—Kerygma originally meant the proclamation of a herald or messenger. In the early Church, it came to mean the first preaching of the mystery of Jesus. The early Christians, living in a world ignorant of Christ, were acutely conscious of their mandate to proclaim Christ and to preach the good news of salvation. Just before He ascended to the Father, Jesus commanded His followers to 'make disciples of all the nations Teach them to carry out everything I have commanded you' (Mt 28:19-20). He told them, 'you are to be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, yes, even to the ends of the earth' (Acts 1:8).

"Christians have the duty of being witnesses (*martyrs*) to the Gospel of Christ. We may proclaim it directly by words, but we also affirm it by our way of life. Bearing witness means more than teaching. It includes a personal involvement in the message that is proclaimed. The Gospel is not a mere recitation of facts; it is the proclamation of an event which actively involves the listener. Jesus heals, forgives, raises and teaches us as surely He did the original hearers. The teaching of the Church is not a collection of stories from the past, but a living tradition that challenges us to an active faith of mercy and justice. Hence, the writings of the apostles and evangelists are read at every Liturgy and the Gospel Book is treated with great honor" (*LLI 71*).

Baptism

"Baptism admits the Christian into the life of the Trinity. It also makes a person a member of the Church. These two passages—the first from the limitations of our natural life into the divine life, and the second from selfish individuality into the Body of Christ, which is the Church (Col 1:18)—are inseparable. Authentic Christian faith and participation in the divine life presume membership in the Church and participation in a believing community. Life in the Trinity is real. We have truly become children of the Father; Christ is our brother; the Spirit fills our lives. This makes a real difference in how we live and act and in how we relate to others" (*LLI 73*).

The Church

"This fellowship with the Holy Trinity comes to us in the Church, the assembly of those whom God has called to be His people. While the Holy Spirit is the continuation of Christ's divine presence among us, the Church is His Body, the extension of His physical presence in the world. The Church is thus the Temple of God in which the Spirit dwells, as the human body is the dwelling place of the human spirit. The Fathers called the Church **the communion in the Holy Spirit**, the fellowship He builds which joins us to God in a divine community. Our mission as Church, our purpose for being, is *'to proclaim the wonderful acts of God'* (1 Pt 2:9): to be a witness of God's revealing love to all mankind. As members of the Church, we are part of Christ's Body, inseparably joined in Him to the Trinity, the living stones which make up God's temple. In this is our life" (*DC 10*).

Choice of the Twelve

"[He appointed the twelve:] Simon, whom he named Peter; James, son of Zebedee; and John the brother of James, whom he named Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder; Andrew, Philip, Bartholomew, Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus, Simon the Cananean, and Judas Iscariot who betrayed him" (Mk 3:16-19).

The Lesson Plan

Opening

[Welcome the children with the Christian greeting according to your jurisdiction. Collect the "My Baptism" worksheets.] *This morning we are going to continue learning the prayer we started last week. Did anyone hear that prayer at the beginning of Divine Liturgy this week? Let's begin our prayer with the sign of the cross: "In the name of the Father" [The sign of the cross should be made at the beginning of all prayers. It will not be listed after this lesson.] Now let's pray: "O Only-begotten Son" [Use the prayer worksheet that you used last week.]*

Introduction

Before we start today, I'd like to tell you about an exciting place I visited last summer. [Tell the students about a place that was very crowded—the shore, a concert, a baseball game. Bring in pictures of a crowd if possible.] Did any of you ever visit a crowded place? Where? Were you glad you were there? Why? Today I am going to tell you about a crowd of people that gathered around Jesus.

Jesus liked to tell people about God. When Jesus talked about God, people stopped what they were doing and listened to what He said. Do you think you would have stopped to listen to Jesus? One day many people gathered on a mountainside to listen to Jesus. He told them how they should live so they can go to heaven. They were willing to change so that they could be with God forever. There is a special name given to the sermon Jesus spoke that day; it is the Beatitudes (Mt 5:3-12). [If there is time, read the Beatitudes. The children will recognize the words from church songs.] The people were happy because Jesus told them they will be blessed in heaven if they listen to God and show love in everything they do. Would you want to be part of the crowd that listened to Jesus? Would you leave something that you are doing to listen to Jesus?

Today we are going to read about some people who left their jobs and homes to follow Jesus. We call these followers of Jesus disciples.

Let's turn to our book to read about the disciples

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Jesus Calls All People to Be Saved



We listen to a Gospel reading every time we attend the Divine Liturgy. We listen to stories about Jesus and His followers.

In one of the Gospel stories we hear about the day Jesus saw many people following Him. He went up on the mountainside and sat down. There He taught the people about the kind of life God wants us to live. He said that those who follow God's ways should "Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven" (Matthew 5:12). The lesson Jesus gave that day is called the Beatitudes.

Also in the Gospels we read many stories about the way Jesus called people to follow Him. Some of the people were fishermen. They were casting out their nets when Jesus called them. Let's read one of these Bible stories.

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Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

The lesson Jesus gave that day is called the Beatitudes. What is the name of today's lesson? (*Jesus Calls All People to Be Saved*) We read that Jesus is teaching many people gathered on a mountainside. Why were the people listening to Jesus? (*He was talking about God.*) He was telling them how God wanted them to live. What did He tell them? (*If they follow God's ways, they will go to heaven.*) Jesus is calling them to be saved.



As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen. Jesus said to them, "Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men." Then they left their nets and followed him.

He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

(Mark 1:16-20)



Jesus continued calling people until He had chosen twelve to be His first disciples. Disciples are people who follow Jesus and live according to His teachings.

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Disciples are people who follow Jesus and live according to His teachings.

Who called out to the fishermen? (*Jesus*)
 What did they do? (*They left their jobs and followed Jesus.*) What is a disciple? (*Follower of Jesus*) How many disciples were called by Jesus to be his first followers? (*12*)

What do you think they thought when Jesus called them?
 How would you feel if Jesus called to you?

Jesus calls out to all of us, "Come after me" (Mark 1:17).

Does Jesus want all people to follow Him? (Yes) What words tell us this? ("Make disciples of all nations") Jesus wants everyone on earth from all the nations to be His follower. He wants all people to have eternal life.

Let's review: *What is a disciple? (A follower of Jesus who lives according to His teachings) What did Jesus tell His followers? ("Make disciples of all the nations") The disciples told the people the Good News. What is the Good News? (Jesus death and resurrection united us to God and gave us eternal life.) Should we also tell other people about this Good News? (Yes) Why? (Jesus wants all people to be saved.) Can you think of any ways to tell people the Good News? (By inviting friends to church, by having friends pray with you before you eat)*

Activity Tracks

Basic: We Follow Jesus

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Jesus asks us to follow Him and to encourage other people to follow Him too. Find the words that tell us what Jesus said to the disciples. Write those words at the bottom of the page. Remember that Jesus wants us to tell other people about Him. Jesus wants everyone to have eternal life.

In the Gospels we read that Jesus told His followers, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19-20). He tells His followers to go to all nations. Jesus wants everyone throughout the world to be saved.

The followers of Jesus did as He commanded. They shared the Good News of Jesus. They told people that Jesus is risen from the dead. They told people that Jesus united us to God and granted us eternal life.

Jesus wants everyone to hear that He saved us. Jesus wants everyone to be with God. Jesus calls out to all of us, "Come after me" (Mark 1:17).



Jesus wants us to be His disciples.
Jesus wants us to tell other people the Good News.

Words to Remember:
Disciples: People who follow Jesus and live according to His teachings.
The Good News: Jesus' death and resurrection saved us from eternal death and granted us eternal life.

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We Follow Jesus

I. Circle the words you find in the following puzzle.

P R M A K E I Y P M I B
D I S C I P L E S M B P
E O E O F X Z I X P A E
A L L O B T H E N C F I
P W R S V N A T I O N S

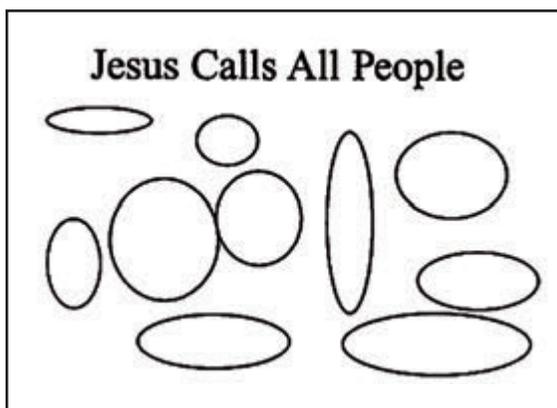
II. Using the words from above, write what Jesus told His followers:

Make Disciples
of all nations

Group: Guess the Word

Materials: "Good News" worksheet, "Cross Segment" worksheet

[Have the children guess the letters for the words. When a letter is guessed correctly, add another segment to the cross.] *Today we are going to talk about the words we learned today. But before we talk about them, we will have to guess what they are. I have the words written on these papers. I need someone to volunteer. Pick one word, and on the board write a space for each letter of the word. The rest of us will try to guess the letters in the word. A part of the cross is drawn each time the guess is right. When we have all the letters, the student who is at the board will tell what he or she learned about that word in today's lesson. [Follow this procedure until all the words are chosen.]*



Craft: "Jesus Calls All People" Collage

Materials: Construction paper, magazines, glue, "Jesus Calls All People" worksheet, and scissors

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Today we learned that Jesus calls all people to be saved. Let's look at some of the people in these pictures. [Hold up various pictures from magazines. The people should represent all ages and nationalities.] Does Jesus want all of these people to follow Him? (Yes) If we cut out these pictures and paste them on construction paper, we can make a collage of the people Jesus calls. Today we are going to make our own collage showing the people Jesus is calling. What if some of these people aren't following Jesus? Who should tell them about Jesus? (We should.) Let's make our collage. [To each student give a title strip from the worksheet, construction paper, magazines, and scissors.]*

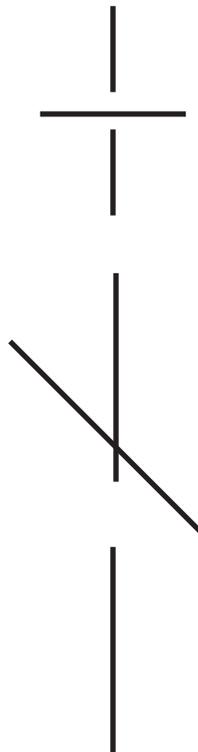
Closing

Let's say the prayer we have been learning, "O Only-begotten Son" [Modify text according to your jurisdiction.]

[Remind students who forgot to bring in their "My Baptism" worksheet to remember to bring it next week.]

Good News	Baptized
Jesus	Disciple
Nations	Church

"Cross Segment" Worksheet



Jesus Calls All People

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