



Jesus Calls the Disciples

Matthew 4:12–25



LESSON GOAL

The student will respond to Jesus' authority as God's Messiah by obeying Him.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus fulfilled prophecy when He moved to Capernaum.
- Jesus told the people, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
- Jesus called Andrew, Peter, James, and John to be disciples.

KEY VERSE

"Then He said to them, 'Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.' They immediately left their nets and followed Him." —*Matthew 4:19–20*

APPLICATION

- Rejoice that God sent Jesus to be the Light of the world.
- Repent of your sin and submit to Jesus as Lord.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

From the beginning of his Gospel, Matthew challenges his readers to become disciples of the Messiah. He proves that Jesus is the Messiah through His genealogy, His birth, His adoration and opposition, His forerunner, His baptism, His anointing by the Spirit, His commendation by the Father, and by His obedience when tempted by Satan. Throughout his testimony to the Messiah’s identity, Matthew continues to show how Jesus fulfills Old Testament prophecy. Not only does God confirm that Jesus is His Son by an audible voice from heaven but also through His written Word. Before launching into His first section of Jesus’ teaching, Matthew paints a broad-brush picture of Jesus’ ministry. His portrait reveals that Jesus’ ministry was preceded by a prophesied move, began with a prophetic message, necessitated a willingness to become His disciple, and was characterized by a popular response to his teaching, preaching, and healing.

Jesus’ Move (Matt. 4:12–16)

After Jesus’ wilderness temptation, the reader must look outside of Matthew to discover what happened next in Jesus’ life. The Gospel of John includes the most information about events in the months following Jesus’ baptism and temptation. After His temptation, Jesus returned to where John was baptizing in the Jordan River. Within a few days, John proclaimed that Jesus was the Lamb of God, Andrew, Peter, Philip and Nathaniel started to follow Jesus, and Jesus turned water into wine in Cana of Galilee (John 1:29–2:10). After the wedding, Jesus went to Capernaum for a few days and then went to Jerusalem for Passover (John 2:11–12). During this Passover, Jesus cleansed the temple of moneychangers for the first time (John 2:13–25). Jesus remained in Judea doing miracles and teaching people, one of whom was Nicodemus (John 2:23–3:21). John explains that Jesus left Judea to go to Galilee because the “Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John” (John 4:1). After a short stay in Samaria (John 4:4–42), Jesus continued on toward Galilee (John 4:43).

Matthew picks up the narrative of Jesus’ life around the time of Jesus’ move from Judea to Galilee. Matthew describes Jesus’ move as occurring “when Jesus’ heard that John had been put in prison” (Matt. 4:12). John the Baptist was arrested because he had rebuked Herod for taking his brother’s wife (Matt. 14:3–4). Between the increase in those who were getting baptized by Jesus’ disciples and John’s being thrown into prison, Jesus’ ministry was becoming more popular among the people and less popular with the Pharisees. Jesus knew that the hour of His suffering had not yet come. Therefore, he avoided confrontation with the Pharisees by moving His ministry to Galilee (Matt. 4:12). (Galilee was a region west of the Jordan River and the Sea of Galilee. The region was approximately 60

miles long and 30 miles wide and was bordered on the south by Samaria.)

When Jesus first went to Galilee, He settled in Nazareth (Matt. 4:13). Although it was His hometown, Jesus' stay in Nazareth was short-lived. Luke 4:16–30 records Jesus' being chased out of the city by a synagogue mob who tried to throw Him off a cliff. After the rejection at Nazareth, Jesus "came and dwelt in Capernaum" (Matt. 4:13). Capernaum was a small village on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee. Matthew describes Capernaum as the village "which is by the sea, in the regions of Zebulun and Naphtali" (Matt. 4:13). Capernaum was located in the land given long ago to the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali, two of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jesus' move into the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali was important to Matthew because it fulfilled prophecy. Although scholars are unsure what version Matthew was quoting from, Matthew's quotation is clearly from Isaiah 9:1–2 (a chapter with other important Messianic promises). Matthew identified the "land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali" as being beyond the Jordan River by the Sea of Galilee. The area is called "Galilee of the Gentiles" because both in Isaiah and Jesus' day the land had a large Gentile population. Compared to Jerusalem, the center of religious worship, Galilee was a spiritually dark place. But the "people who sat in darkness" were about to see a "great light" (Matt. 4:16). The Light of the world was dawning upon those "who sat in the region and shadow of death." Jesus' person and message would rescue those who were enslaved in the darkness of sin.

Jesus' Message (Matt. 4:17)

After His move to Capernaum, Jesus preached the same message that John had preached before being thrown into prison: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17). Both forerunner to the King and the King Himself proclaimed God's command that the people repent. To repent is to turn away from sin and obey God's commands. It involves the dethroning of self, the recognition that God alone reigns, and the submission of oneself in obedience to God's will as revealed in God's Word. The motivation for repentance was that "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The kingdom of heaven is the sphere of God's dominion over those who have submitted to Christ. It has both a present reality in which believers are rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought under the Lordship of Christ and a future reality in which Jesus Himself will reign upon the earth. Anyone who wants to enter the kingdom of heaven must come through repentance, but anyone who refuses to repent will suffer judgment when the kingdom of heaven arrives.

Jesus' Mandate (Matt. 4:18–22)

After revealing the content of Jesus' preaching, Matthew next shows those men whom Jesus called to participate in His ministry. Of the four disciples Matthew mentions (Simon, Andrew, James and John), the Gospel of John records that Simon and Andrew had already begun following Jesus (John 1:35–42). Perhaps, they were among the disciples who had seen Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana, who had believed in Jesus, and who had accompanied Jesus when He went to Capernaum the first time (2:1–12). They also may have been among the disciples who returned with Him from Judea to Galilee (John 4:27). Since Jesus was in Capernaum near where they were fishing, it is possible that James and John had also heard Jesus' preaching.

Both sets of brothers were busy fishing when Jesus called them to follow Him. Simon (Peter) and Andrew were casting their nets into the sea when Jesus said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matt. 4:18–19). As Jesus disciples, Simon and Andrew would be involved in the same ministry that Jesus

was: calling men to repent and rescuing them from coming judgment. Instead of pursuing fish, they would be pursuing the souls of men. Simon and Andrew promptly obeyed, leaving their nets behind and following Jesus. Having embraced Jesus' message, they were going to serve Him in its proclamation.

With Simon and Andrew now behind Him, Jesus went on until he came to another set of brothers, James and John. Jesus called the brothers when they were in their boats mending nets with their father Zebedee (Matt. 4:21). Like Andrew and Simon, James and John immediately left everything when Jesus called them to follow Him. Both boat and father receded along the coast line as James and John committed themselves to Jesus and His ministry.

Jesus' Ministry (Matt. 4:23–25)

Before proceeding to give specific examples of Jesus' teaching and miracles, Matthew characterizes the location, nature, and popularity of Jesus' ministry. Jesus ministered with His disciples throughout Galilee (Matt. 4:23). According to the ancient historian Josephus, the region of Galilee included 204 villages, each with at least 15,000 inhabitants. Even without Jesus going to each village, there were millions of Galileans who could go and see Jesus.

As Jesus traveled throughout Galilee, He went about teaching, preaching, and healing. Jesus taught in the synagogues, the center of Jewish life and worship. As a visiting rabbi, Jesus would teach in the synagogues from God's Law (Luke 4:16–21). Jesus would also preach the "gospel of the kingdom" (Matt. 4:23). The good news was that the King had arrived and that salvation was open to all who would repent. Jesus also healed "all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people" (4:23). Matthew 4:24 describes the various people who were healed: "Those who were demon–possessed, epileptics, and paralytics." Jesus' teaching, preaching, and healing all demonstrated the authority He had as God's Messiah.

As Jesus taught, preached, and healed, His popularity grew. His fame went as far as Syria, which refers either to the whole area of Palestine or the area northeast of Galilee. Because of His popularity, the healthy brought as many sick as they could to be healed by Jesus. More and more people came to follow Jesus, including those from Galilee, from the Decapolis (a group of 10 cities south of Galilee and east of the Jordan), from Jerusalem and its surrounding area Judea, and from the area "beyond the Jordan" (south of the Decapolis and east of Jerusalem). Jesus' ministry had begun in full force and people throughout the area were called to repent in preparation for the coming kingdom.

Conclusion

Matthew's description of Jesus' ministry reveals the authority of Jesus as the Messiah. Jesus preached an authoritative message of repentance. He authoritatively commanded men to follow Him and promised that He would involve them in bringing others to repentance. He went about Galilee proclaiming God's authoritative Word and exhibiting authority over both the physical and spiritual world. The only response to such an authoritative Messiah can only be obedience.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Who led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted?

The Holy Spirit led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted.

Who came to tempt Jesus?

The devil, or the tempter, came and tempted Jesus.

What had Jesus done for 40 days before He tempted?

Jesus had just been fasting for 40 days and 40 nights, and was very hungry (4:2).

What was Jesus' first temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus to disobey the Father by satisfying His hunger (4:3).

How did Jesus resist the temptation?

Jesus answered Satan's temptation with Scripture. Jesus' only need was to obey God's command—not to eat!

What was Jesus' second temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus to see if God would protect His Son.

How did Jesus resist this temptation?

Jesus again used Scripture to resist Satan's temptation. Jesus' trust in God did not require Him to test the Father.

What was Jesus' third temptation?

Satan tempted Jesus by offering Him all the kingdoms of the world.

How did Jesus respond to this temptation?

Jesus commanded Satan to leave (4:10). Then Jesus responded by saying that only God is to be worshiped.



The Steps of Jesus

Draw and cut out several drawings of footprints before class. Before the children arrive, place the footprints on the floor throughout the room. The footprints should be placed so that a traveled path is revealed throughout the room. This path should be labeled "the Steps of Jesus." Gather the students, either in small groups or one single file line, and have them follow you as you walk the steps of Jesus. Along the way, there should be various locations set up around the room for you to stop at. Each of these locations should be labeled with the names of the towns Jesus moved to during the beginning part of His ministry (i.e., Galilee, Capernaum, etc.). Take a few moments at each spot to describe to the students what that town would have been like during Jesus' stay there. Explain the reason why He moved there

and what He did once He was there. For example He moved to Capernaum to avoid pressure from the Pharisees, and once He was there He taught and preached in the synagogues, and healed all sorts of diseases of the people. The end of the path should lead back to the middle of the class where the students sit down for the lesson. The purpose of this activity is to explain what Jesus did during His earthly ministry and why Matthew recorded His travels to Capernaum.



Left in the Dark!

Surprise the students by turning off the lights to the classroom. As they are startled by the immediate darkness, ask them what is needed. Many of the students should notice that light is needed in the room. Take this time to interact with the students. Discuss what things we need light to do. Without light we cannot read or see where we are going. We cannot even live without light. As you turn on the lights explain to the students how the prophet Isaiah saw the Gentiles in Galilee as living in darkness. They did not know God and were therefore described as living in darkness. Isaiah prophesied that a great light would come to Galilee and would allow the Gentiles to see. In today's lesson we read how Matthew understood Jesus to be the fulfillment of this prophecy. Jesus and His message "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17) served as a light to a people living in darkness. His visit to them allowed them to see God for the first time.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Jesus began His ministry just after He overcame His temptations of Satan in the wilderness. He went back to see John the Baptist, and John told everyone that Jesus was the Messiah, the Lamb of God, who has come to take away the sins of the world. Jesus began to performing miracles, like turning water into wine. Not everyone liked what Jesus was doing, though. The Pharisees were angry because Jesus was drawing larger crowds than John the Baptist had, and Jesus was preaching against them. He had to leave the land of Judea were He had been living because the Pharisees were so angry. Jesus also had heard that John the Baptist had been put in prison. He knew that someday He would have to face the judgment of the Pharisees, but this was not that time. He needed to preach to the people, that they might know the good news of salvation that He was offering to them.

Jesus moved to His hometown of Nazareth in Galilee, but the people in Nazareth did not want Jesus there. The people at the synagogue even tried to throw Him off a cliff to get rid of Him. Jesus was being rejected by the Jews everywhere He went. He was their Messiah, their Savior, but they rejected Him because He was not

saying them what they wanted to hear. Jesus had to move once again. He finally settled in a city called Capernaum. This was in an area that had completely rejected God and did not worship Him. The people of Capernaum were mostly Gentiles. A Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. They did not have as many Pharisees, and the Pharisees that were there they didn't care much for. They were not trapped by the lies of the Pharisees, but they were still lost in the darkness of their sin. This is the place where Jesus chose to remain to bring light to the sinners. This Light was Jesus and He came to show them their sin.

Jesus preached the same message to them that John the Baptist had been preaching, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!" (4:17) He called the people to turn away from their sin, to see the God is their King, and to obey Him. Their reward would be great; they would be given the kingdom of heaven. Those who chose to repent would get the kingdom of heaven, but those who did not would be judged.

Jesus went to four men in particular and called them to follow Him. Their names were Andrew, Peter, James, and John. They were all fishermen, and Jesus called them to stop fishing for fish, and start fishing for the souls of men. The men left their boats and followed Jesus.

Jesus and His followers went throughout all Galilee preaching the good news to the people. He performed many miracles so that they might know that He was from God. He healed people of sickness and disease, He cast out demons, and He made people who were paralyzed be able to walk. Large groups of people gathered to see Jesus. They followed Him and brought all of the sick and hurt people to Him.

Jesus preached with power and authority. He was God, and had the authority to instruct people follow Him. He demonstrated His authority by showing His power through miracles. People then and now must choose whether to obey and be saved or disobey and be judged.

Lesson Questions

What was important about Jesus moving from Galilee to Capernaum?
Matthew states that the move fulfilled a prophecy found in Isaiah 9:1–2.

What message did Jesus preach?
Jesus preached the same message that John gave to the people saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near" (4:17).

What four men did Jesus call to be His disciples?
The four men were two sets of brothers: Andrew and Peter, and James and John.

What did the four men do when Jesus called them?
All four men immediately dropped their fishing nets, left their families, and followed Him.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Guess Who?

Bring to class several pictures of people with authority, perhaps a picture of a policeman, fireman, teacher, or even your parents. Have the students tell you what type person is represented in each of the pictures. You should take this time to go over why each of the individuals in the pictures has authority. Authority is needed for them to do their job. A policeman needs authority to keep us safe, and a parent has authority because it is their responsibility to care for us. In today's lesson we read of someone else who had authority, Jesus. Jesus being the Son of God and Messiah of the world allowed Him to have all authority on earth. This authority is seen in His earthly ministry. His teaching and healing the sick revealed that Jesus had great authority.

Praise and Worship

Change My Heart, Oh God

Make Me A Servant

Create In Me A Pure Heart

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Fishers of Men

Materials: small aquarium or large plastic tub; fishing net; plastic people (i.e. small bag of soldiers); timer; handkerchief (to use as a blindfold for older ages)

Directions: Read Matthew 4:18-19 to the class, and explain that the students will be playing a game that will prepare them to be "fishers of men." Call students up one by one to try their turn at fishing men out of the water. Set the timer for 1 minute. Count how many plastic people the student can fish out of the water with the net, and place on the table in 1 minute. Larger classes may need to reduce the amount of time allowed per student. After all students have had a turn, award a prize to the best fisherman. For older students, use a handkerchief as a blindfold to provide a greater challenge. If time allows, your class could play one round without the blindfold and one round with the blindfold to compare results.



"Jesus Ministers in Galilee"

Materials: "Jesus Ministers in Galilee" craft pages, scissors, glue, crayons

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft pages. Tell the students to cut out the footprints and glue them around the Matthew 4:23 verse page using the numbers as a guide.

Coloring Pages

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He/she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

“Then He said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.’ They immediately left their nets and followed Him.” —*Matthew 4:19–20*

Jesus Ministers in Galilee

“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.”

—*Matthew 4:23*

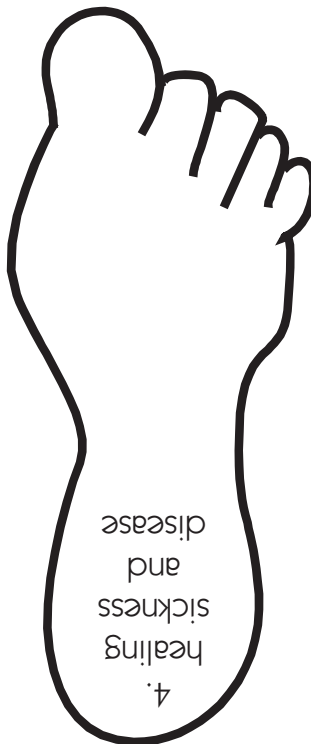
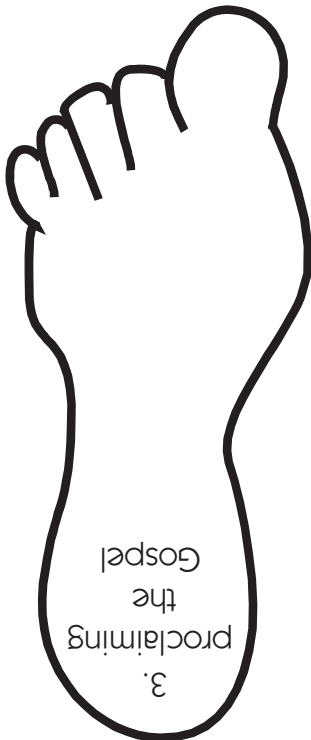
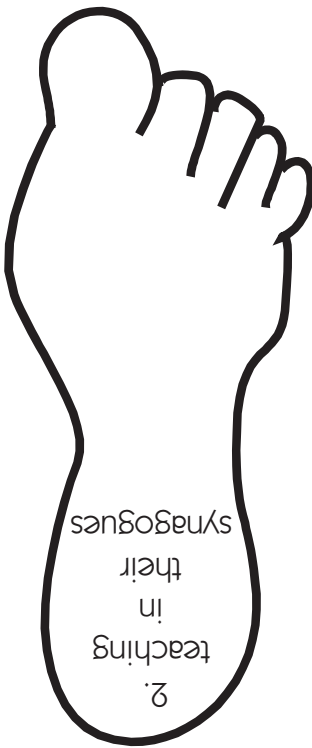
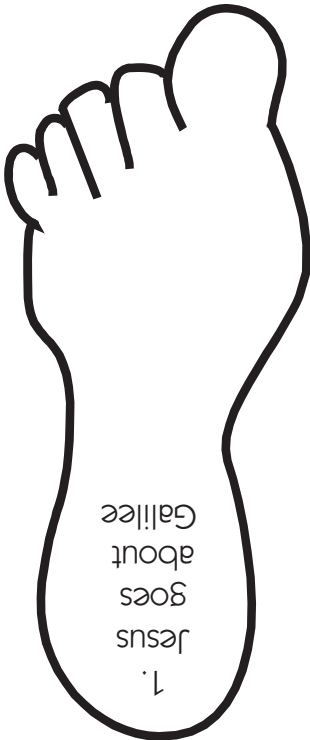
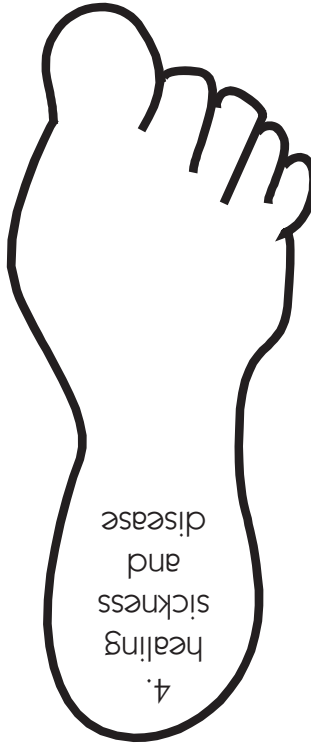
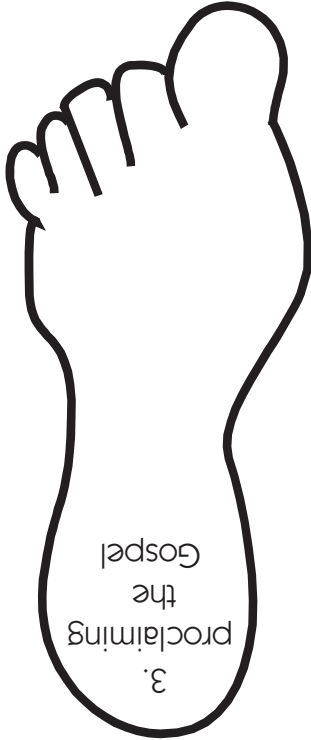
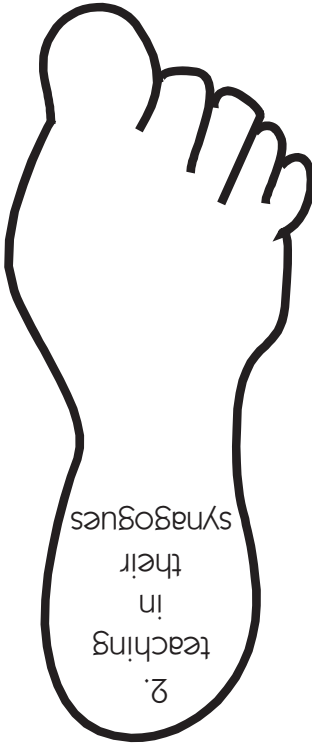
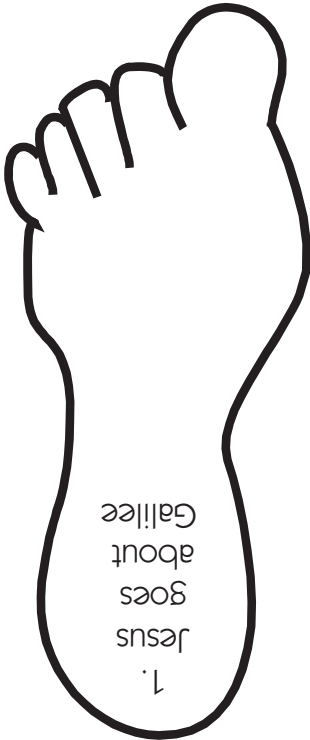
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Jesus Ministers in Galilee





Jesus called to brothers Peter and Andrew, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him (Matt. 4:18–20).



“And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease among the people.” —Matthew 4:23

