

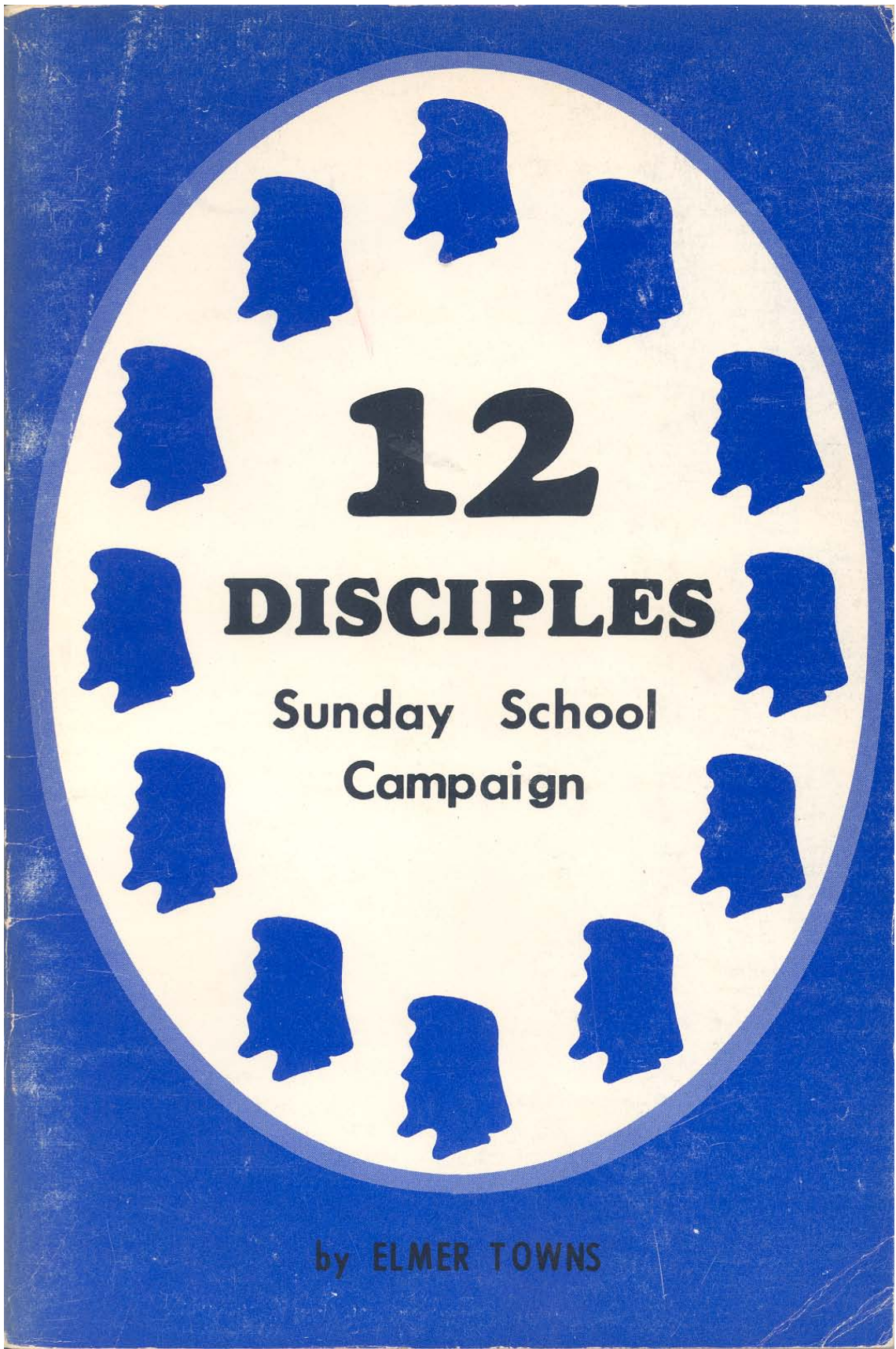
1972

12 Disciples Sunday School Campaign

Elmer L. Towns

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns_course_texts

 Part of the Religion Commons



12

DISCIPLES

**Sunday School
Campaign**

by **ELMER TOWNS**

HOW TO EFFECTIVELY USE “TWELVE DISCIPLES SUNDAY SCHOOL CAMPAIGN”

Introduction: Much of what follows comes from Dr. Jerry Falwell and Dr. Elmer Towns book *The Church Aflame*.

Dr. Towns and *The Church Aflame* have been a real inspiration and help in the development of the CAMPAIGN.

The Twelve Disciples Charm bracelet was developed for use by Thomas Road Baptist Church, in Lynchburg, Virginia. Thomas Road Baptist Church was the first church to order the “Twelve Disciples Charm Bracelets and Key Rings.” The Sunday School lessons on the Twelve Disciples were written by Dr. Towns.

- I. In order for any Sunday School Promotion to be a success, you must “Promote in Advance,” first giving your people enough time to plan their schedules to attend, and second have such a compelling promotion that people must attend.
 - A. The following is suggested for promoting the “CAMPAIGN OF THE TWELVE.”
 1. On Sundays one and two, put up Campaign Posters (Preferably posters in all Sunday School classes, Sanctuary, etc.) that reads “*HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE TWELVE?*” This builds curiosity. Increase their interest by toying with your peoples’ imagination . . . Some will guess that this is a singing group, others may guess a Christian Movie. (The Devil had one called *The Dirty Dozen*.)
 2. Between Sunday two and three, you should have a meeting with “key” people. At this time explain how the CAMPAIGN is going to work, emphasizing the vital role they will play in the success of this CAMPAIGN.
 3. On Sunday number three, your first CAMPAIGN poster will be replaced by poster number two—“*CAMPAIGN OF THE TWELVE*.” Today you will announce to your congregation that starting next Sunday (Sunday number 4) you will begin a very important as well as informative, study of the Twelve Disciples. Ask them how much do we really know about the men that

Jesus chose to help Him in His ministry on earth. Also putting forth the challenge to become real “*Disciples of Christ,*” seeing people saved daily, as did the early church. Tell them that they are going to be given an opportunity to STUDY, SERVE, and be REWARDED for SERVICE AND FAITHFULNESS. Tell them that first of all, the Lord tells us to study, to show ourselves approved unto Him . . . workmen that needeth not to be ashamed . . . and He rewards us for this FAITHFULNESS and SERVICE.

As a momento of this twelve week study:

Ladies will receive a Twelve Disciples bracelet, and charm the first Sunday of the CAMPAIGN, they will receive a charm on the disciple studied, for each additional Sunday they are present during the CAMPAIGN. Men will receive a Twelve Disciples key ring, and charm the first Sunday of the CAMPAIGN. For each additional Sunday they are present during the CAMPAIGN, they will receive a charm on the disciple studied.

Emphasize that this is an original bracelet, and that Gospel Promotions holds a world copyright on the bracelet and key ring, and that it is not available on the commercial market anywhere at any price. Emphasize that the only way they can get one is to earn it through regular attendance. If they are absent on any Sunday during the CAMPAIGN, they can redeem themselves by bringing one visitor for each Sunday they were absent.

4. Involvement of key people:
 - a. Bus driver of the month.
 - b. Teacher of the month.

For the highest increase, percentage wise, each month give appropriate awards to Top 1-5 Bus Drivers and teachers. The number of Bus Drivers—Teachers will be determined by the size of your church.

- c. Member of the month award to 1-5 members who bring the most visitors each month.

Ninety percent of the churches using the CAMPAIGN are using the *Church Aflame* by Dr. Jerry Falwell and Dr. Elmer Towns as the award for the first four weeks. *Christian Hall of Fame* by Dr. Elmer Towns, the second four weeks, and the *Gospel on Records* (12 records) by Dr. Harold Henniger, the third four weeks.

5. Involvement of entire congregation to increase attendance—For bringing six visitors or one visitor six times during the twelve weeks CAMPAIGN, each member will be awarded a beautiful full color book on the “Twelve Disciples.” This gets everyone doing a little something to increase attendance and results in a big increase over all and permanent growth.

The goal of the “*CAMPAIGN OF THE TWELVE*” is to reach many lost souls for Christ, and be a tool for use of Fundamental Churches in building great Sunday Schools.

This is the first of many “*Bible Centered Sunday School Promotions*” to be made available through “*Gospel Promotions*.”

If you have further questions on the “*CAMPAIGN OF THE TWELVE*” and if Gospel Promotions can assist you in any way please do not hesitate to call us.

Yours in Christ,

Jim Nicholson
President

ANDREW

John 1:37-41

(The First-Called Disciple)

1. OBJECTIVE

- A. To show Andrew was a disciple who brought others to Jesus.
- B. To motivate pupils to win their relatives, neighbors, and friends to Jesus Christ.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Who brought you to Sunday School? Was it your Parents? Many Parents have introduced their children to Jesus by bringing them to Sunday School. Did a friend bring you to Sunday School, a Sunday School bus driver? Whoever brought you was following the example of Andrew, who brought people to Jesus.
- B. We have no record of Andrew's preaching, performing miracles, or doing other works of a disciple, although he probably did minister in this way. He was recorded bringing people to Jesus. Andrew was not famous, but he brought Jerry Falwell to Christ, but we all know Jerry Falwell. Garland Carey asked Jerry Falwell to be saved. You may not be famous, but can be like Andrew or Garland Carey. You perhaps can bring an influential person to Christ.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. Andrew brought Peter to Christ. Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. After Jesus was baptized by John, Andrew talked with Christ (4:00 p.m. John 1:39). That evening they discussed the Messiah. The following day, Andrew brought his brother to Jesus (John 1:40-41). You can bring your brother, sister, or cousin to Christ.
- B. Andrew brought the boy with fish and loaves to Christ. (John 6:1-14). The twelve disciples were with Christ and heard the sermon; they also saw the multitude. Jesus asked, "Whence shall we buy bread, that

these may eat?" (verse 5). All heard the question. Philip gave facts: 200 pennyworths (\$2,400) would be needed to feed the multitude. Andrew looked about and brought the closest provision -- a boy with fish and loaves.

1. The boy gave the small thing he had.
2. The boy was willing.
3. God uses small, unlikely sources. (Apply the lesson of the boy to students.)

C. Andrew brought the Greeks to Jesus (John 12:20-22). Certain Greeks came to Jerusalem searching for Jesus. They asked the question, "Sir, we would see Jesus." They found Philip and Andrew, who brought them to Jesus.

1. Andrew had to be available to bring people to Jesus.
2. Andrew had to be willing.
3. Andrew had to know where Jesus was located.

IV. CONCLUSION

You can be an Andrew. You can bring people to Jesus.

- A. You must be available to bring your relatives and friends to Jesus. When the opportunity presents itself, invite your friends to Jesus, or tell them how to be saved.
- B. You must be willing to bring your relatives and friends to Jesus. This means you must seek ways to get your friends saved.
- C. You must know where Jesus is located. Christ is found in the Bible. Can you tell someone how to be saved from the Bible? If not, you can bring them to your pastor or to your Sunday School Teacher.

MATTHEW
Luke 5:28
(The Tax Collector)

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To show that Matthew obeyed instantaneously when called, expressed deep gratitude at the honor of being a disciple, and that a man's past life does not disqualify him from being a disciple.
- B. To challenge students to instantaneous obedience and continual gratitude to Jesus Christ.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. *Tax Collector.* A tax collector was a hated man in Israel. He worked for Rome, which occupied Israel, therefore he was considered a traitor by the Jews. The Romans told him how much money to gather and he added his percentage as a profit. A tax collector could enforce his demands by Roman soldiers. A tax collector was usually very rich, but hated by his neighbors. Because a tax collector had to keep books and deal with businessmen, property owners and traveling merchants, he had to speak several languages hence was educated.
- B. Matthew's collecting office was on the shore of the Lake of Galilee where he calculated the proper tax on each fisherman. Also the road from Damascus to Jerusalem passed Capernaum, where he collected from the merchants.
- C. The name *Matthew* is found in Matthew 9:9-17. The name *Levi* is found in Mark 2:14-20 and Luke 5:27-35. Even though two names are attributed to him, only the name *Matthew* is found in the list of the twelve (Matthew 10:3).
- D. If you knew that everyone rejected you, how would you feel if you were called to be Jesus' disciple?
 - 1. You might reject Christ because of social pressure.

2. You might feel grateful, because an inner need is satisfied and you finally gain self-respect through following Jesus Christ.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. *Matthew— a disciple who obeyed instantaneously and completely.* The call to Matthew was shorter than the call to others, simply “Follow me” (Mathew 9:9). There was no chance to think about it, and consider the alternatives. Matthew acted immediately. Perhaps he knew the story of the scribes who came to Jesus and said, “Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest” (Matthew 8:19). Scribes and tax collectors belonged to the same union or fraternity. Jesus warned the scribe of the insecurity of being a disciple as far as money, homes, and future is concerned (Matthew 8:20-21). Apparently, the scribe rejected Jesus Christ for he said, “No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). The example of Matthew’s immediate obedience is a challenge to the class. Ask your students to obey immediately when the Holy Spirit prompts them to witness, to attend church, or to volunteer for extra service.
- B. *Matthew— a disciple who expressed gratitude.* The only people to whom a tax collector could witness would be publicans and sinners, those of his own calling. He had perhaps given official banquets to dignitaries in the town on other occasions. Since Christ had accepted him when all others rejected him, Matthew wanted them to know of his new Saviour. “I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” ((Matthew 9:13). Jesus attended the banquet and not only answered the Pharisees but taught the truth of regeneration or changed life (verses 16, 17). Show reformation is not sufficient but an entire new creation (II Corinthians 5:17). Christ makes us new men, just as there must be a new wine bottle or a new piece of cloth. Explain to your class that immediately upon salvation, they should witness to their friends. Their motives for witnessing are (1) gratitude for what God has given unto them, (2) obedience to the Great Commission, (3) example of Matthew and Andrew (John 1:39-41).
- C. *A person’s life does not hinder discipleship.* Point out to the class that Matthew had the following characteristics, yet was called to be a disciple: (1) He was educated, (2) he was rich, (3) he had community

status, (4) he was hated by his neighbors, (5) he gained his money by questionable means. Christ took a risk in asking Matthew to be His disciple. Since Christ wanted his teachings to have popular acceptance, He took a *risk* in calling Matthew. Also, another disciple, Simon the zealot (Luke 6:15), would be equivalent to a freedom fighter who hated Rome. To have these two disciples from different backgrounds invited internal fighting and hatred. Yet Jesus called them both and used them.

Point out that Christ does not expect a man to be perfect when called: all men are sinners (I John 1:8, 10). All that men must do is respond and “follow Christ” as did Matthew. Then Christ changes their lives and gives them a reason for following Him.

IV. CONCLUSION

Point out to your class that Jesus said, “A rich man shall hardly (with difficulty) enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:23). Note that Jesus said it is *hard* for a rich man to get saved, not impossible. Thus Matthew came to know Jesus Christ. Also point out to your class “not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (I Corinthians 1:26). Once again point out *not many*, but *some* are called. Thus Matthew was called to be a disciple. We might have said Matthew was wise, mighty and noble; however, his guilt and rejection for aligning with Rome made him despise himself. Point out that God does not call the great things, so the disciples might be humble and give God the glory (I Corinthians 1:27-29).

BARTHOLOMEW

(Or Nathanael)

John 1:45-51

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. Teacher: To show Nathanael was sincere—sincerely wrong, yet he became a disciple of integrity.
- B. Student: To challenge students to be sincere in their Christianity.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Are you a *sincere* Christian? Do you have some Christian friends who are not *sincere*? List on your chalkboard other words for *sincere*. Then list other words to describe Christians who are not *sincere*.
- B. Most prejudiced people are sincere but wrong. Talk to your students about prejudices they might have against another school, another town, or another race. We are wrong in our prejudices. Nathanael had prejudices against Jesus because He came from Nazareth. He asked, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Since Jesus came from the wrong town, Nathanael thought He could not be good.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. Philip was Nathanael’s friend. Philip was a disciple of Jesus Christ and a good disciple brings others to Jesus. Philip told his friend Nathanael, “We have found Jesus” (verse 45). The first step in bringing others to Jesus is a testimony telling others our relationship to Christ (Acts 4:20). Jesus commands us to be witnesses (Acts 1:8). Philip witnessed to Nathanael from the Bible, telling him that Jesus was predicted in the Old Testament.

Nathanael was prejudiced against Jesus because He came from Nazareth. There is only one way to handle prejudice. Philip said, “Come and see” (verse 46). Your friend may be quite prejudiced against this church or against Jesus Christ. You should answer them

“Come and see.” Invite your friends to church or open your Bible and read to them about Jesus Christ. Rational arguments will not win people to Jesus Christ. They must experience Jesus Christ. Your prejudiced friends may be sincere, but they are sincerely wrong.

- B. Jesus said Nathanael was sincere (verse 47). Jesus said of Nathanael, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!” The phrase “no guile” means sincere. Jesus said Nathanael was not a hypocrite. (A hypocrite says one thing and does another.) Are you a hypocrite? Do your friends think you’re sincere? Can they trust your word?
- C. Jesus saw Nathanael under the fig tree (verse 48). Jesus saw Nathanael before he came to meet him. We cannot hide from God because He sees us everywhere and hears everything we say (John 2:24, 25). We should be careful of our jokes, our actions, and the places we go (Psalm 139:1, 2, 7-11).
- D. Sincere disciples recognize Jesus is the Son of God and the King of Israel. Any sincere person will acknowledge Jesus as the Son of God (Verse 49) and the King of Israel.
- E. A sincere person will be saved and be ready for the second coming. Jesus told Nathanael that in the future he would see great things: “Ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.” (verse 51).

This verse could refer to:

1. An event in Jesus’ life.
2. The ascension into heaven.
3. The rapture.
4. The glorious appearing of Jesus Christ.

IV. CONCLUSION

Some disciples are men of action like Peter. Other disciples are quiet and stay in the background; they bring people to Jesus, as did Andrew. Nathanael was a deep thinker. He was sincere, but sincerely wrong. He said what he thought about Jesus— nothing good comes from Nazareth. His experience proved him wrong. He came and saw Jesus

Christ, then changed his mind. Nathanael exclaimed, “Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.” Jesus chose him as a follower. Do you need to change your attitude toward Jesus Christ? Is Christ your Master and Lord? Are you a sincere believer? One of the greatest characteristics of being a disciple is sincerity.

Nathanael was a sincere disciple, but sincerely wrong. When his friend Philip came and told him of Jesus, Nathanael replied, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” This was a prejudiced statement against the people of Nazareth. Even though Philip testified that Jesus fulfilled prophecies in the Old Testament, Nathanael had a bias against Him. Philip answered the biased statement by stating, “Come and see” (verse 46).

When Jesus saw Nathanael coming, He replied, “Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!” By this Jesus meant that Nathanael was not a hypocrite. Nathanael was saying what he believed.

Jesus told Nathanael that he was sitting under a fig tree when Philip called him and that “I saw thee.” Jesus manifested His own presence that He was everywhere seeing, all things. Nathanael’s only answer was to fall at Jesus’ feet and exclaim, “Thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel!”

Nathanael is an example of a sincere man controlled by bias turned to belief and he became a disciple.

THOMAS
John 20:25
(The Doubting Disciple)

I. OBJECTIVE

- A. To show the nature of doubt, especially as seen in Thomas.
- B. To motivate students to overcome doubt in their life by a study of the Word of God, fellowship with believers and a personal walk with Jesus Christ.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Write the following quotation on the chalkboard. “Tis far better to doubt and then believe, than never to believe at all.”
- B. Ask the question, “What does the word *Didymus* mean?” Didymus means “twin.” Thomas had a twin brother or sister but he is never mentioned in the Scripture. Point out that it is possible for a brother in the family to be an outstanding Christian, yet other members of the family to be unsaved or unknown in their Christian walk with God.
- C. There are many Scriptures giving background and call to Thomas (Matthew 10:1, 2; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15).
- D. Why do Christians doubt? This section of the introduction is for older age groups in the Sunday School. Christians doubt for several reasons: (1) They doubt because they do not have all the facts; they have not studied the Bible. (2) They doubt because of sin in their life; they are going contrary to the Bible. (3) They doubt because of sin in their life; they are going contrary to the Bible. (3) They doubt because of circumstances.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. *Thomas doubted if Jesus should go to Jerusalem* (John 11:1-16). Jesus was in the wilderness with His disciples when He received word that

Lazarus was sick. Jesus loved Lazarus (John 11:5), but He stayed in the wilderness for two days. When Jesus decided to go to Bethany, His disciples reminded Him that the Jews wanted to kill Him (verse 8). Jesus answered them that He must walk in the light rather than in the darkness (verses 9 and 10). The disciples argued that if Lazarus was sleeping, anyone could waken Him. They did not understand Lazarus was dead, and that He was going to Bethany to raise him from the dead. Thomas expressed doubt by his statement, "Let us also go, that we may die with him" (verse 16). Thomas could not see the plan of God, therefore he doubted. Jesus waited two days and planned to raise Lazarus from the dead so that His disciples would *Believe*, but Thomas doubted.

Draw the following chart on your chalkboard:

DOUBT

BELIEVE

- B. Thomas doubted at the Last Supper (John 14:5). Many events happened at the Last Supper: Jesus washed the disciples' feet, including Thomas's. Even though Thomas was a doubter, Jesus never left him out. Point out to the students, God never leaves them out. Jesus indicated one of the disciples would betray Him (John 13:21). Point out to the students that the greatest sin is betraying the Lord, not doubting Him. After Judas went out to betray the Lord, Jesus gave a sermon to His disciples, preparing them for the future. His sermon began with (a) a new commandment of love (John 13:35, 36); (b) a new home in heaven. (John 14:1-4).

After Jesus told His disciples that He was going to prepare a mansion for them in heaven, Thomas again expressed his doubt: "We know not whither thou goest, and how can we know the way?" (verse 5). Many people today have doubts about the way to get to heaven. They doubt God's Word just as Thomas. Jesus saith unto him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Point out to your students that there are *not many ways* to heaven. Jesus is the only way. Some of the wrong roads are: Sincerity (the sincere person does not get to heaven); Church attendance; Good works (no matter how hard a man works, this will not get him into heaven). Apply salvation to your class. Jesus is the only way that a man can get to heaven.

- C. Thomas doubts after the resurrection (John 20:24-25). On Easter Sunday afternoon, there were ten disciples assembled in the upper room. The doors were shut and the windows were barred, but Jesus miraculously stood in the midst and said, "Peace be unto you" (verse 19). Thomas was not with them (verse 24). During the next week the disciples talked with Thomas on several occasions, telling him they had seen the Lord. Thomas once again expressed his doubt, "Except shall I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe" (verse 25). This aspect of doubt was actually unbelief. Thomas had said, "I will not believe."

Ask the question why Thomas was absent from the upper room on Easter Sunday afternoon. Perhaps his nature of doubting kept him from assembling with the disciples. Point out to your class that their doubts will keep them from assembling with Christians. Jesus Christ expels doubt.

Jesus Christ is everywhere present and knows all things. Therefore, He knew of Thomas' conversations with the disciples during the week and his statement of doubt. After eight days, the disciples gathered in the upper room and this time Thomas was present. Jesus once again came through the barred doors and windows. Here Jesus deals with Thomas' doubt. "Reach hither thy finger and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless but believing" (verse 27). The answer to doubt is to experience Jesus Christ. The main problem with doubt is usually not the mind, but the will of man. We don't want to believe. Here Thomas was convinced. Point out that he probably did not put his fingers and hands into the wounds of Christ. Thomas fell at the Lord's feet and said, "My Lord and my God" (verse 28). This is the greatest confession of deity of Jesus Christ. This confession is the opposite of doubt.

- D. *Thomas' doubt was dispelled by sight.* Thomas believed because he saw Jesus Christ. We have not seen Him but we believe. Therefore, Jesus said, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed" (verse 29).

- E. *Unity with Christians overcomes doubt.* Thomas was with the disciples fishing on the Sea of Galilee (John 21:2) when Jesus meets them. Thomas is also in the upper room praying with the disciples after the ascension (Acts 1:13). Also Thomas is ministering to the needy crowds on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14). Therefore, doubt can be overcome in a Christian's life and that Christian can be used of God.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ask your pupils if they have ever doubted, as did Thomas. Point out that doubt is bad but can be overcome. "Tis far better to doubt and then believe than never to believe at all."

List some of the doubts of your pupils on the chalkboard. Then show how these can be overcome by reading the Word of God, fellowshiping with Christians and a daily communion with Jesus Christ.

JOHN
Mark 1:19
(The Youngest Disciple)

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To show the characteristics of youth and how they can be used to the glory of God.
- B. To challenge students with the qualities of love, Christian activity and stability.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Young people have different character traits from older people: What are they? Have the students suggest. Today we are going to look at three character traits in the disciple John. (1) Impulsiveness, “Doing what you want to do,” and “Saying what you want to say” (2) Deep feeling or love; (3) Reaction without thought.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. John lost his temper.

One of the greatest weaknesses of youth is anger, outbursts or temper. John and his brother James were nicknamed “Sons of thunder” (Mark 3:17). Today we might say he had a chip on his shoulder. When John saw a man driving out devils, but not one of the disciples, he tried to stop him. (Luke 9:49). When Jesus went through Samaria and certain cities would not receive Him, John was ready to burn them up with fire and brimstone. (Luke 9:54) Many youth are quick tempered and wear their feelings on their shoulder. Relate to your class how John, a great disciple, has problems just as they do, yet he overcame them.

- B. John was a disciple of reaction.

Many young people act before they think. They are excitable, impulsive. They are likened to the sudden storm that rises on the Lake

of Galilee, where John fished. A man who dealt with fishermen and the elements had to be quick-actioned or poor. On Easter Sunday morning the women came and told the disciples the missing body of Jesus Christ. They did not yet know of the resurrection. John, the youngest disciple, outran Peter to the tomb, (John 20:4-6). His immaturity kept him from entering. Peter ran to the tomb and went immediately inside.

The mother of James and John came to Jesus and asked if her sons might be at his right and left side. This was a selfish desire to be elevated above the other ten disciples. (Matthew 20:20) A desire for exaltation is a mark of spiritual immaturity.

C. John was a disciple of love.

Even though John was quick-tempered and a reactionary, the grace of God transformed him into a disciple of love. Each teacher should relate to his pupils, not by their present life but by the potential of the power of the gospel. God can transform every one of your pupils into a disciple. John calls himself “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” (John 13:23, 21:7, 21:20).

The true meaning of love is to give yourself to the one you love. (John 15:13). Here love means laying down your life for the one you love (I John 3:16), and God loved us by giving His Son for us. Therefore, we love others by giving ourselves for Him. When Jesus was arrested, John followed afar off and because He was known by the high priest, was taken into the palace. He went and got permission for Peter to come in (John 18:15-17). A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ. Here John revealed that he was a true disciple. He followed Jesus after He was arrested, even to the place of the trial.

In later life he was known as the apostle of love. “My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not” (John 2:1) “Beloved, let us love one another; for love is of God; and everyone that loveth is born of God and knoweth God” (I John 4:7). See John 4:7-21).

Perhaps the greatest expression of love is trust. When Jesus was in bitter agony, He turned to His mother and to John and said, “Woman,

behold thy Son,” then saith He to the disciple, “Behold thy mother.”
(John 19:26-27) Can Jesus trust you?

IV. The greatest lesson to learn from John’s life is growth and transformation. Every immature youth can grow into a trusted disciple. Every student in your class can grow into a man of God. Dr. Vigeveno writes, “The secret of growing in love is not found through education, but through experience.” Remember that the disciples were called “ignorant and unlearned,” yet these disciples changed the world. More education was not the key. A day-by-day experience with Jesus Christ was the answer. “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light,” (I John 1:7). “He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:6). Walking with Jesus Christ is experiencing Him.

JUDE
(Or Thaddaeus)
Matthew 10:3

I. OBJECTIVE

- A. To study the disciple Judas (not Iscariot) and understand what effect the betrayal by Judas Iscariot had upon him.
- B. To challenge students to perseverance in the faith because they are kept by Jesus Christ.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. *Name.* Jude's original name was Judas, but after Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus Christ, the name fell into a tremendous stigma (the name was hated). Note that when he is quoted the phrase is used, "Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot" (John 14:22). Therefore, he probably began using another name which would be like our middle name--Thaddaeus. Note that Thaddaeus or Jude had a brother named James (not the son of Alpheus). This identifies him as Jude, the writer of the epistle, the next to the last book in the Bible.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. *Jude stuck it out.* When Judas Iscariot betrayed the Lord and turned traitor, Judas Thaddaeus did not quit. He kept on following Jesus Christ. Point out that a disciple is one who follows Jesus Christ. Note that later in his life he writes, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith" (Jude 3). The book Jude is about false teachers or heretics. These people at one time gave lip service to the gospel but had now fallen away. Jude, who remained faithful, exhorted others not to become unfaithful to follow false teachers. Ask the students if God can count on them to be faithful.
- B. *Jude asked a question.* Only once in the four Gospels do we have one phrase spoken by Jude. At the Last Supper Jesus gave a sermon after

He had washed their feet, He had served the bread and wine, and Judas had departed. During this sermon Jude asked the question, “How can you reveal yourself to us and not to the world?” (John 14:22).

We cannot see God today with our physical eyes, yet in our hearts we know Christ, whereas the unsaved do not know Him. Perhaps you have relatives who are not Christians. How can you know God and they not know Him? Jesus gave three answers to this question. (1) I can be known by coming and making My home in your heart (verse 23). If you will love Jesus Christ, attempt to keep His words, found in Scripture, and accept them into your heart, you can know Him. Jesus said if you do this the Father will love you (verse 23). (2) Christians can know Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit who comes into your heart. The Holy Spirit teaches us all things (verse 26). The Holy Spirit lets us know God. Our relatives or unsaved friends who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot know the Father. (3) The third way of knowing the Father is through inner peace (verse 27). Everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ and is a Christian, has inner peace in his life. Outward circumstances may be troublous, but in his heart is peace. Write the question on the chalkboard: “How can the Father show Himself to Christians and not the unsaved?” Ask your pupils if they have answered this question.

- C. *Judas the preserved disciple.* Jude must have been impressed with the fact that the other disciple with his name (Judas Iscariot) had fallen. He says in the introduction to his epistle “preserved in Jesus Christ” (verse 1), then he concludes his letter, “Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory” (verse 24). Ask the students if they have ever considered turning back on Jesus Christ (students turn back by not attending church, swearing, making fun of other Christians). Point out that the student’s dedication is only half the picture of being a disciple. God will keep His disciples (John 10:27-29). Peter who had denied the Lord also talks about being kept (1 Peter 1:5). Have students name people they know who have backslidden. Perhaps you can have prayer for them or assign them the task of bringing them back to Sunday School.

IV. CONCLUSION

Nothing is said in Scripture about how Jesus called Judas Thaddaeus as a disciple. There are preachers today who cannot remember the incidents surrounding their call, but they have an awareness of God's call into the ministry. Also, some children are saved early in life and cannot remember the day in which they are saved, but later in life know they are Christians because Jesus is in their heart. Review the question that Jude asked, and ask your students if they meet the qualifications: (1) Christ is in their hearts; (2) the Holy Spirit teaches them about the Father; (3) they have an inner peace because their sins are forgiven.

PETER
(The Passionate)
Matthew 26:26-35

I. OBJECTIVE

- A. Teacher—to show Peter was a disciple committed to the Lord, of fiery ardor, yet one who sought his own way of serving.
- B. Student—to recognize the characteristics of Peter’s life that Christ used, and to compare these qualities to his/her own life.

II. BACKGROUND

- A. Where was Peter, and what was Peter before meeting Christ? (John 1:40-42). Point out that Peter was apparently an experienced fisherman, but that on the sea of Galilee this took not only strength, but courage, for the sea of Galilee suffers many very violent and swiftly rising storms. (Matthew 8:24-27)
- B. What were Peter’s talents? All commentaries on the scriptures tell us that Peter was a vigorous person, both physically and mentally, a natural leader, one who commanded respect and attention by his very presence. Peter had many talents but the most important facet of his character was his willingness to be used for Christ. The challenge of Peter’s life to us becomes, how much of my life am I allowing Christ to use?

III. NARRATIVE

- A. When was Peter first called to Christ? (John 1:40-42). The introduction of Peter to Christ by Andrew is one of the most frequently used passages on personal evangelism. This passage must not be allowed to become trite in our minds from much use, for men are brought to the Lord one by one today as when the Master called His disciples. The advent of mass communication media has made it so easy for Christians to shrug off their responsibility for personal witnessing by saying that the world is being reached by mass

evangelism. Peter was brought by his brother, whom have you brought to the Lord?

- B. What special call was given to Peter? (Matthew 4:18-20) (Mark 1:16-20) (Luke 5:8-11) The first two references listed above bring out for us the calling of Peter to become a disciple, but one of the twelve who were to become apostles. (It is often overlooked that our Lord had many who followed Him as disciples, i.e., students of his teaching, but only the twelve were selected for the more intense and personal relationship which they had with Jesus.) The third passage allows us a closer and perhaps more detailed account of the calling of Peter, as Christ tells Peter to stop being afraid, for now he is to become a fisher for men. Peter had become a follower of Christ (in the more general meaning of the word) earlier following his introduction to Christ by Andrew, his brother, could Peter have ignored the call of Christ to follow Him? Do we as Christians today ignore the call of the Master to serve Him?
- C. What enabled Peter to walk on the sea? (Matthew 14:28-31). What purpose did this serve? The miracle of Peter walking on the water must be taken in context (as all scripture), keeping in mind that the disciples had been selected to be taught by the Lord and to carry on His work and establish what we know today as the church. The events preceding this miracle must have had the disciples somewhat in an unsettled state. They had just come from the feeding of the five thousand, preceded by the news of the martyrdom of John the Baptist. For men committed to the one they thought was about to return the glory to the kingdom of Israel. These must have been unsettling events, indeed. A part of their learning and growth was of necessity, a strengthening of their faith in the sufficiency of Christ.
- D. Was Peter alone in his denial of Christ? (Matthew 26:30-35; Mark 14:26-31; Luke 22:31-39; John 13:36-38.) It is important to keep in mind that although only Peter denied his Lord, all of the disciples forsook Him. Indeed, Peter and John may have been the only ones of the twelve who were close enough to the proceedings of the mock trial of Christ to have been jeopardized by their relationship to the Lord.
- E. Why was Peter singled out for the special visitation by the risen Christ? (Luke 24:34). Hindsight is of course so much clearer than

contemporary vision, but the events through which Peter was prepared for his role as an early pillar of the church seem to stand out in their clarity and singleness of purpose.

- F. Why was this second “restoration” of Peter necessary? (John 21:15-22) After Peter’s denial, would he have been able to exercise the tremendous witness in Jerusalem that he later did without the publicity displayed confidence that the Lord placed in him at this occasion? Peter’s part of this transaction was to acknowledge Christ. Due to this confession and the ensuing command for Peter to “Feed my sheep” Peter from this time is looked upon as the leader of the apostles. (It is well to note at this point that a disciple is one who learns as opposed to an apostle, who is one sent forth to tell). Which are you? If Peter could not have done the great things for the Lord that he did subsequent to this time without first being in a right relationship, can we do anything worthwhile for our Savior if we are not right with Him spiritually, and continually abide in His will?

Peter of course goes on to play a major role in the leadership of the church at Jerusalem, delivering the sermon on the day of Pentecost, which resulted in three thousand Baptisms. The first twelve chapters of the book of Acts related the works of Peter, then the emphasis changes to the ministry of Paul. In the earlier chapters of Acts, we find Peter truly witnessing to Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria.

- IV. No one can deny Peter’s place in the *Christian Hall of Fame*. Peter is listed as first of the disciples on each list found in the New Testament. Yet, as we have seen Peter was not perfect, but he was persistent. Peter kept on. Peter did not meet with success easily, but Peter persisted until he is now revered as one of the greatest men who has ever lived. Yet, Peter would be the first to say that without Christ he could do nothing. Can we, who were not privileged to walk with Christ, who did not witness the miracles, who have not talked with the risen Lord, can we be presumptuous enough to claim to serve Christ without continually examining ourselves as to the degree of surrender of self will that has been accomplished in our lives.

JAMES

(James the Less)

I. OBJECTIVE

- A. To study the two characteristics of discipleship: (1) to be with Christ, and (2) to assist Christ in His ministry.
- B. To challenge students to the demands of discipleship in their life and service.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. James the Less is an unknown disciple, very little is said about him. His father is named Alphaeus (Matthew 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). His mother was also a follower of Jesus and was one of the women at the cross (Mark 15:40). He is sometimes referred to as James II or James the Less (Mark 15:40), this phrase meant he was little or of small stature. How would you like to be the shortest among twelve men? Small men are sometimes named “Shorty” or “Pee Wee”; he was James the Less.

Discuss Zaccheus who also was short (Luke 19:1-10). Discuss how he overcame his smallness, climbed a tree and got to Jesus.

- B. James the Less is called “the unknown disciple.” Nothing is said about him in Scripture other than the description of his height. Emphasize that in God’s army there must be many privates for every general. James the Less is evidently serving because the Bible mentions that twelve, however, he never did a deed or spoke a word worth recording.

WRITE ON CHALKBOARD

Let the students suggest a person

Rich
Intelligent
Powerful
Bold

Zaccheus, Joseph of Arimetha
Nicodemus
Jairus, Centurian
Peter

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

Since very little is said about James the Less, a study of discipleship will be developed and applied where possible to the life of James the Less.

- A. A disciple is identified with the Lord. When Jesus called His twelve disciples, the first description of them is “that they should be with him” (Mark 3:14). Before a disciple can go out and preach Jesus Christ, he must know Him. Challenge your students to know Jesus Christ through salvation first, before attempting to follow Him.
 - 1. A disciple follows the words of Jesus. One of the conditions of being a disciple is found in John 8:31. “If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.” Therefore, a twentieth century disciple studies the Bible privately and studies the Bible at church (Sunday School).
 - 2. A disciple reflects love. A second qualification for a disciple is “that ye love one another as I have loved you . . . by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples.” (John 13:34-35). When we are with Him we learn love as did Mary who anointed Jesus with the perfume (John 12:1-11).

- B. A disciple assisted the ministry of Jesus Christ. Point out to your class the ways the disciples assisted Jesus Christ: cast out demons (Matthew 17:14-21), fed the multitude (John 6:1-14), baptized (John 4:2), looked after His physical needs (John 4:8), brought people to Jesus (John 12:20-22), performed miracles (Matthew 10:1), preached (Matthew 10:1).
 - 1. Fruitfulness is a characteristic of discipleship. Many people today de-emphasize success in ministry and stress faithfulness, however, both points must be emphasized. “Herein is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8). We must bear fruit if we are to be a disciple. The fruit of a Christian is another Christian. The fruit of the Holy Spirit is Christian character (Galatians 5:22-23). For older classes write the following motto on the chalkboard: There is no success in the Lord’s work without successes.

2. A disciple ministers in the place of Jesus Christ. We are the “extension” of Christ’s ministry. Where He cannot go, we go in His place. Christ sent the twelve disciples with the 70 (Matthew 10:1-16; Mark 6:7-13; Luke 9:1-6). James the Less was one of the twelve sent out even though an insignificant disciple, he had a definite ministry. Perhaps you consider yourself small in God’s sight, but like James the Less, you can have a ministry.

IV. CONCLUSION

Tell the story of the three men and the parable of the talents. One had ten talents, one had five and the last man had one. A talent stood for a man’s ability. If a student thinks he has only one talent, like James the Less, he can still be used as a disciple. He can be with Jesus Christ, he can minister to Jesus Christ and he can go out and serve for Christ.

JAMES
(The Brother of John)
Mark 1:19

I. OBJECTIVE

- A. To show James was a quiet, unassuming disciple who was known for his hard work.
- B. To challenge students to work hard, not strive for self-glory and to be faithful in their call to God.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Do you have a brother or sister who gets all the attention? Do people seem to overlook you and talk about other members of the family? James was the overlooked disciple, the quiet man. People might not know you for yourself. They might say, “Are you Mr. Smith’s boy?” Or a teacher might say in class, “You must be Ronnie’s sister.” The disciple James had that problem, he was called the brother of John (Acts 12:2).
- B. Write this Scripture on the chalkboard or letter it on a large poster board before class. “Study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we command you” (1 Thess. 4:11). James has at least three outstanding qualities that we shall study today: *working, quietness, and faithfulness*.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. James was a working disciple. James was the son of Zebedee, a fisherman. Their father was a fisherman on the Lake of Galilee, often known for its tempestuous storms. James followed his father in the trade and worked with him (Mark 1:19-20). On one occasion he was mending his nets when Jesus came by (Matthew 4:21). On another occasion he was washing his nets (Luke 5:2). Many fishermen only cast a line in the water, but the *true* fisherman will stay home and sort out his lines and prepare his gear. (Object lesson for class, bring a torn

net or tangle lures.) Stress James' faithfulness in small things to prepare for service.

Later we see James fishing all night in the boat with his partners, John and Peter (Luke 5-11). Point out his diligence to stay with the job all night even though he caught nothing—persistence.

- B. *James was a quiet disciple.* Even though James was a member of the “Inner Three,” we do not have a quotation that he spoke. At the Mount of Transfiguration, Jesus took Peter, James, and John (Mark 9:2) into a high mount where He was transfigured. Read the story carefully and relate the details to the class. Peter spoke up, but James remained quiet (Eccl. 9:17). The words of wise men are heard in a quiet manner. God wants us to live a quiet life (I Timothy 2:2).

When Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray, he took Peter, James, and John. Even though Peter is addressed by Jesus (Matthew 26:40), James is silent. Jesus comes to the disciples three times but found them sleeping (verse 43). James might have said something, but the Gospel writers thought his words not significant enough to include in the narrative. Hence, we call him the quiet disciple.

The only occurrence of James' being identified as a “noisy disciple” was when Jesus went through the village of Samaria. When the people refused to receive Christ, James and John asked for “fire to come down from heaven and consume them.”

- C. *James was a faithful disciple.* One of the characteristics of fishing is patience, you have to “keep at it” to catch fish. (Describe sitting on a cold, wet bank, faithfully keeping the line in the water trying to catch fish.) The father of James is always mentioned as a fisherman, and very little is said about his mother. On one occasion she came to Jesus and asked that her children sit on Jesus' right and left hand in the kingdom (Matthew 20:20-28). She was like many mothers who *push* their children forward. Some mothers *push* their children properly (study lessons, attend church). Other mothers *push* and teach their children to be selfish. Jesus rebuked James' mother in the following way. (1) James was not able to suffer with Jesus (verse 22). Notice that James said he was able but during the trial he ran away. (2) The other ten disciples got mad at James and John. (3) Jesus told them that

true greatness was not sitting at His right hand, but ministering to others (verse 26-28). Point out that the third quality of James was faithfulness in ministry. Apply this to your students. (1) Bringing other students to Sunday School. (2) Being a testimony by not swearing, lying, or cheating. Because James' mother came and *pushed* her sons forward, Jesus said, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many" (verse 28). James had to overcome the influence of his family to serve God. Have you witnessed to your family, cousins, or brothers?

IV. CONCLUSION

James was faithful in his service to God. He was in the upper room praying and his name is listed second in the list of the disciples (Acts 1:13). He was present on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:14). He was faithful in his ministry in the city of Jerusalem (Acts 5:42-6:2) and stayed in Jerusalem during the persecution (Acts 8:1). James was the first of the twelve apostles to be martyred when King Herod cut off his head (Acts 12:2).

PHILIP

John 1:44-45

(The Analytical Disciple)

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To show a disciple who analyzed his relationship to Christ.
- B. To get students to live by *faith* rather than by *facts*.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Philip was from the same home town as Andrew and Peter. His friend Nathanael was not impressed with Jesus (he had a bias against Jesus' hometown). Philip told his friend that Jesus fulfilled the predictions in the Old Testament. Nathanael complained, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Philip gave a rational answer (common sense). He reasoned, "Come and see." Philip felt that if his friend came and saw Christ, he would believe.
- B. Jesus took his disciples into a mountain near the Sea of Galilee. The multitude (about 5,000) followed and Jesus taught them. It was a long way to find food, so Jesus asked, "Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat?" (John 6:5). Jesus was asking if his disciple had *faith* to believe He could do a miracle (verse 6). Philip did not answer with *faith* but *facts*: 200 pennyworths (\$2,400) are not enough for everyone (verse 7). He had estimated the crowd and knew it would take about 50 cents per person to feed them.

Write on Chalkboard:

Faith

Repent

Salvation

Receive Christ

Fact

Be Good

Death

Keep Law

- C. In the upper room, Jesus told his disciples how to get to heaven: “I am the way, the truth and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.” (John 14:6) This is a very clear explanation of how to get to heaven. But Philip wanted more explanation; he wanted more facts or a rational explanation. Philip asked, “Shew us the Father and it sufficeth us” (John 14:8). Jesus answered that seeing Him was seeing the Father. (John 14:9, 10). Jesus told him to believe—faith is the answer.

III. CONCLUSION

Philip was a follower of Jesus Christ, yet was weak in faith. Facts were important to him because he walked by sight rather than by faith.

Trust ----- Trying
Believe ----- Works

SIMON

Luke 6:15

(Simon the Zealot)

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To examine the type of disciples Jesus called, showing a man's previous life is not a detriment to Christian service.
- B. To show that a follower of Jesus Christ is obedient in all things, especially to the state or establishment.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Simon is known by the phrase "the Cananaean" which scholars translate to mean a member of the party of the zealots. Luke (Luke 6:15) gives him the nickname "Zealotes." A Zealot was a member of a political party equivalent to underground guerillas during the Second World War, the IRA (Irish Republic Army), or the Hungarian Freedom Fighters. They were bitterly opposed to Roman domination of Palestine. The zealots had a number of armed camps around the wilderness area of the Dead Sea. The Zealots were organized to resist the census of Quirinus in A.D. 6. These fanatic patriots opposed the Roman Army and were militant in their devotion to the Messianic hope. The zealots were responsible for the military uprising in A.D. 66 which led to the destruction of Jerusalem and the desecration of the Temple in A.D. 70.
- B. Apparently, Simon's best friend was Judas Iscariot. Matthew lists the disciples in pairs, joining those together who had natural friendships or were brothers. Judas and Simon were paired together (Matthew 10:4).
- C. Why would Jesus choose a disciple who had a political liability? Since Roman soldiers were searching for members of the zealots, why would Jesus choose a man who would be suspect in the eyes of the Roman soldiers? Also, the presence of Simon with the disciples might confuse the people's understanding of Jesus' mission on earth.

Finally, the choice of Simon introduced potential personality problems among the disciples. Matthew worked as a tax collector for the Roman government and was a hated member of the political regime. The zealots hated Rome, especially Jews who acted as agents for Rome to collect taxes, hence being a traitor to their own people.

III. LESSON DEVELOPMENT

- A. *A true disciple has zeal.* Simon was more than a political zealot. “Zeal” characterized his personal life style. He did everything with “enthusiasm.” Zeal is a commendable quality. It is infectious, and a source of blessing to others. The disciple must have correct zeal (II Corinthians 9:2; Colossians 4:17). Christ does not want halfhearted service. Have the class memorize the following, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men” (Colossians 3:23).

However, zeal alone is not commendable. There are many in life with zeal, but for the wrong purpose. Paul zealously persecuted the church, and was partially responsible for the death of Stephen (Acts 7:54-83; Philippians 3:6). The unsaved Jew is characterized as having “zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” Point out to your class the zeal of Mormons and Seventh Day Adventists who go door-to-door for their religion. Write the following on the chalkboard: *Right zeal—wrong purpose.*

- B. What attracted Simon to Jesus? There were some elements in the preaching of Jesus that might have attracted a freedom fighter. Note the following opposition to the dead religious establishment by Jesus.
1. He cleansed the Temple and overthrew the tables of the money changers (John 2:13-17). At the end of His display of emotion, John writes, “The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up” (John 2:17). The display of zeal might have attracted Simon.
 2. Jesus condemns the use of the sword. “Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace but a sword” (Matthew 10:34). Jesus explains the word “Sword” as the point of contention in a family when one member becomes saved the others reject.

Simon might have admired Jesus for His zeal against dead Judaism or His reference to the sword (Matthew 26:52), but Jesus was not a revolutionary against Rome or the government, but a revolutionary against dead religion.

- C. There are many principles in Jesus' teaching that countered the zealots.
1. Jesus taught that a man should "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which be Caesar's" (Luke 20:25). Here He plainly teaches that a Christian should support the government and pay taxes. The zealots opposed the census, which was the basis for collecting taxes.
 2. Jesus came preaching peace (John 14:27) and that He had overcome the world through peace (John 16:33). The first recorded words of Jesus to the disciples when they gathered as a group after the resurrection was, "Peace be unto you" (John 20:19).

Simon was a fighter, and we might speculate on his deep feelings when Jesus stood as a prisoner before Pilate. At this moment a true guerilla would have wanted to free his leader, but Jesus stated, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).

Write the following on the chalkboard:

Not political revolution
But personal regeneration.

Very little is said about the change in Simon's political outlook, but we do know that he did not retaliate in "Hit-and-run attacks on the Roman establishment," but was praying in the Upper Room with the other disciples and on the Day of Pentecost he was busy ministering personal salvation. He reflects the teaching of Paul: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (Romans 13:1), indicating we should obey the government

(meaning policemen, the laws of the land, and the president). For the older classes explain Romans 13:1-4. Point out the following points:

- (a) Government power comes from God (verse 1)
- (b) Revolution against the government is against God (verse 2)
- (c) Those who do good should not be afraid of the government (verse 3)
- (d) The laws are for our good (verse 4)

IV. CONCLUSION

Why did Jesus choose Simon the revolutionary, who was a risk to His cause? The answer is simple: "Jesus chooses a man for his potential, not because of his past." The Sunday School teacher should look at his students through the eyes of God, knowing what the power of God can do in him. Don't judge students for what they are, but for what God can do for them.

Conclude the lesson with a challenge on zeal. The true disciple will give himself completely to God (Luke 9:23), will deny himself luxuries and selfish principles and enthusiastically follow Christ. (Luke 9:57-62)

Do you have difficulty getting along with people in your church? In your Sunday School class? Remember Jesus chose Simon the tax hater and He also chose Matthew the tax collector. There is no record of their squabbling, even though other disciples squabbled among themselves. Let us keep our eyes on Christ and the purpose of being a disciple -- reaching the lost people. If we look at others, we will have disagreement. If we look at Christ, we can be a part of a team of soul winners.

JUDAS
Luke 6:16
(The Betrayer)

I. OBJECTIVES

- A. To examine the motives why Judas betrayed the Lord and the facts surrounding the betrayer.
- B. To warn the class of the tendencies found in Judas so they may not follow his example.

II. INTRODUCTION

- A. Write on the chalkboard “How does one become a traitor?” Judas was chosen along with the other eleven disciples after the Lord spent all night in prayer (Luke 6:12, 13). Explain how Judas was exposed to the love and compassion of Jesus Christ. Judas saw Christ perform miracles and heard the sermons, yet he betrayed his Lord. Why?
- B. Judas is the Greek name for “Judah,” one of the chosen names of the Jews, one of the twelve tribes of Israel.
- C. Judas was the treasurer among the twelve disciples; he kept the bag (John 12:6). To be nominated and elevated to this position, assumes some trust by the disciples in Judas.

III. DEVELOPING THE LESSON

- A. Love of money was Judas’ stumbling block (John 12:1-8). Explain to the class the feasts at Bethany where Mary and Martha were present. Also Lazarus who had been raised from the dead. Mary anointed the feet of Jesus and wiped them with her hair. Judas protested, saying that the money should have been sold and given to the poor. John analyzes his motives and indicated he was the treasurer and a thief at the same time (verse 6). The Scriptures teach that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Timothy 6:10). Note that the word the _root should be translated a root of all evil. Point out others who have fallen

because of money: (1) Achan (Joshua 7:20-21); (2) Baalam; (3) Gehazi; (4) Ananias and Sapphira. The wrong desire after money is translated “the lust of the eyes” (1 John 2:16).

There is nothing wrong with money, only the wrong desire and use of money causes it to be sin. It was not money that was sin but *the love of money*.

- B. Judas was a tool of Satan. Early in the ministry of Jesus, he realized that one of His disciples was a tool of Satan, an adversary to His mission. Jesus preached a hard sermon, and many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him (John 6:56). Jesus indicated that He knew from the beginning those who believed not (John 6:64). After many of the disciples went back, Jesus asked the *twelve* (including Judas), “Will ye also go away?” (verse 67). Peter answered for the group and indicated there was no one else to whom they could go who had the words of eternal life. They should have been shocked at Jesus’ words, “Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?” (verse 70). He did not mean that Judas was the devil but a tool in the hand of Satan. Notice the progression of betrayal: (1) the devil put in Judas’ heart, (2) Judas obeyed and followed his lust, and (3) Satan actually entered Judas (John 13:27). Even though Satan entered Judas, Judas was still a free moral agent. Judas could never stand before God at the judgment and say, “You made me do it” or “Satan made me do it.” Judas must take full responsibility for his actions.
- C. Christ’s final appeal to Judas. When Christ went to the Last Supper, He knew that Judas was going to betray Him (John 13:1), but at the same time the eternal compassion of Jesus Christ was extended to Judas: “Having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end” (verse 1). Christ took the supreme act of being a servant; He girt a towel about Him and washed the disciples’ feet -- all, including Judas.

Warning One. Jesus warned the disciples. “He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; and ye are clean, but not all” (John 13:10). Judas should have realized that Jesus knew what he was going to do.

Warning Two. Christ boldly told His twelve disciples, “One of you shall betray me” (John 13:21). The message was not told in a parable, but clear indication made that one would betray Him.

Warning Three. John was leaning on Jesus’ breast at the feast and asked, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus gave a very direct answer, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it.” Jesus dipped the sop and gave it to Judas Iscariot. John’s question might have been whispered in Jesus’ ear and the other twelve did not know, but Judas knew and received the warning. Also, it is characteristic for the host at a feast to first dip his bread and give it to the guest of honor. Judas sat on Jesus’ left and was the guest of honor at the Last Supper.

The disciples were sorry at the news of the betrayal and every one of them except Judas said to Christ, “Lord, is it I?” (Matthew 26:22). The word *Lord* is a term of adoration on the part of the eleven disciples. Judas used a lesser term and said, “Master, is it I?” (Matthew 26:25). This lesser term should have been the fourth warning to Judas because the Lord responded, “Thou hast said” (verse 25).

The warnings by Jesus Christ reflect the eternal love of God. The Father will not allow any man to go to hell without at least one opportunity to be saved. Point out that Judas had many opportunities to be saved, yet rejected Christ. Point out to your students that this Sunday School class may be their one opportunity to get saved and they should receive Jesus Christ today.

The Gospel of John adds the commentary that after Judas received the sop he went out and “it was night” (John 13:30). Not only was it physical night but it was spiritual darkness.

- D. Repentance that was too late. After Judas betrayed Jesus Christ, he repented and brought the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders (Matthew 27:3). He confessed that he had sinned and betrayed innocent blood. What he said in his confession was accurate; however, he did not go far enough. Christ was more than innocent -- He was the Son of God and the Saviour of the world. Judas’ silence in his attitude to Jesus Christ condemned him to hell. There are people who repent of their sins because they have (1) gotten caught, (2) are fed up with

sin, or (3) the results are not what they anticipated. A man can be sorry that he drinks whiskey, but unless his repentance turns him in faith to Jesus Christ, there is no salvation.

Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver on the Temple floor. The priests knew that this was blood money and could not return it to their treasury, therefore they bought the Potter's Field for burial. Judas went out and hanged himself (Matthew 27:5); and in the act of hanging, his body somehow fell and his bowels gushed out (Acts 1:18). According to the words of Christ, "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

IV. CONCLUSION

Backsliding is a terrible act. No person can backslide without suffering consequences. The Christian who slips back from his present commitment to Jesus Christ will have to suffer God's punishment in this life. Also he will lose his rewards at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 3:13, 14). Christians should be warned against backsliding. Point out to your students the things that they do which lead to backsliding. However, Judas was not a Christian who backslid. It is impossible for one to lose his salvation (John 12:27-29). Judas was a tool of Satan from the beginning and was never a child of God. Challenge your students that they should receive Jesus Christ. Perhaps there is one who plays the role of being a Christian yet has never received Jesus Christ. End the class with a strong gospel appeal.