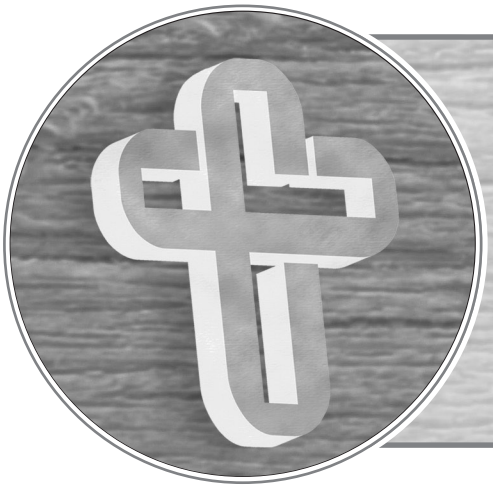


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
JUNE 14 2025

Jesus calling

Scripture Story: Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-31; Matthew 5-7.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 30; 31.
Key Text: Luke 6:12; 13.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson focuses on the calling of the 12 disciples and the Sermon on the Mount, which follows this call. Five disciples were with Jesus from the very onset of His ministry, but it is instructive that Jesus ministered for more than a year before He chose the rest of the group. Jesus lived a life of discipleship to His Father before He asked anyone to follow Him. Is that a lesson for us?

Although Jesus was God in human flesh, He did not depend on His deity to determine whom He should select to be His disciples. Instead, He spent a night in prayer, after which He chose the 12. Jesus was about to launch a movement that would change the world, so He wanted to be sure that He had the right people. This is one of the important parts of the story to be emphasized. God is waiting, listening, and ready to give us guidance—no matter how big or small our decisions are.

Following His call of the 12, Jesus moved to lay out the principles of the kingdom of heaven by which they must live. The multitude that overheard His message was made up largely of downtrodden and forgotten people—people at the margins of society. Jesus' message was for them. Make the point this week that our call to discipleship is always followed by a call to live that discipleship in service to humanity. How do we do that? By following the principles outlined in the Sermon on the Mount. We are all integral parts of God's family, but continued membership in God's family is determined by the love we show to one another.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Discover that God calls *all* to follow Him, and *some* to special ministry. *(Know)*
- Look for opportunities to serve lost members of God's family. *(Feel)*
- Accept and live passionate lives of discipleship. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

Spiritual Gifts and Ministries, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 17: "According to the Scriptures, these gifts include such ministries as faith, healing, prophecy, proclamation, teaching, administration, reconciliation, compassion, and self-sacrificing service and charity for the help and encouragement of people. Some members are called of God and endowed by the Spirit for functions recognized by the church in pastoral, evangelistic, and teaching ministries particularly needed to equip the members for service, to build up the church to spiritual maturity, and to foster unity of the faith and knowledge of God. When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love. (Acts 6:1-7; Rom. 12:4-8; 1 Cor. 12:7-11, 27, 28; Eph. 4:8, 11-16; 1 Tim. 3:1-13; 1 Peter 4:10, 11.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

The objective of this activity is to compare the rollout of a new product with the way in which Jesus rolled out His new product: the kingdom of God and its righteousness.

Give the students an opportunity to share highlights from their marketing campaigns. Then ask them to consider how Jesus rolled out His campaign. First, He "lived" the product—so well, in fact, that multitudes followed Him because of what He had. Second, He chose people, whom He personally trained, to help Him "promote and market" the product. Finally, He laid out the principles by which He wanted His people to live. If they were representing His product, He wanted their lives to match their profession.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

Pastor Jimmy Chapman of Washington, Georgia, once related the interesting story behind the call of one of history's Christian giants.

"In Yorkshire, England, during the early 1800s, two sons were born to a family named Taylor. The older one set out to make a name for himself by entering Parliament and gaining public prestige. But the younger son chose to give his life to Christ. He later recalled, 'Well do I remember, as in unreserved consecration, I put myself, my life, my friends, my all, upon the altar. I felt I was in the presence of God, entering into covenant with the Almighty.'

"With that commitment, Hudson Taylor turned his face toward China and obscurity. As a result, he is known and honored on every continent as a faithful missionary and the founder of the China Inland Mission (now known as Overseas Missionary Fellowship). For the other son, however, there is no lasting monument. When you look in the encyclopedia to see what the other son has done, you find these words, 'the brother of Hudson Taylor.' "

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

From the moment that God walked through the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day in search of Adam and Eve to this very day, God has been calling fallen human beings. Why He bothers with us should make us wonder.

If the truth be told, God doesn't need us to do His work. Did Jesus really need Thomas's doubting and Peter's verbosity? Probably not, but they needed Him. The call of the 12 disciples was another way of demonstrating that fallen human beings can be reclaimed and repurposed for the cause of God. It is a privilege to hear and accept God's call to discipleship.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them:*

- Most students and probably adults have never read the entire Sermon on the Mount. Take a moment to read the sermon in full (Matthew 5-7). Ask the students to share parts of the sermon that they'd never heard before, or were not familiar with.
- Among the topics addressed by Jesus are: peace, kindness, slander, God's people as salt in the earth, where murder begins, where adultery begins, marriage and divorce, making oaths, going the extra mile, loving enemies, doing good, fasting, worrying, judging, seeking God, the way to heaven, and how to build a life—among others. Choose some of these topics and ask the students to share what Jesus said about each.
- In this sermon on the mountainside Jesus was addressing His disciples within earshot of a multitude who had followed Him. The Jews should have already known the principles enunciated by Jesus here. Why didn't they? Did the religious teachers of the day have anything to do with the situation?
- Much of what Jesus outlined in the principles that undergirded the kingdom of heaven is considered radical today. For instance, most people do not believe that it is possible to

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Team Building 101

Teachers often work hard to get students to work together. Given the subject matter of this week's lesson, it might be interesting to examine what Jesus did to get His disciples to work together.

The disciples were a diverse bunch. Did the sacredness of the mission make them work together? What about Jesus Himself? Did they all come together because they were in the presence of greatness? The answer to both of these questions is no.

The disciples learned how to be a team by watching how Jesus treated each of them, and they were forced to stick together when He was crucified. Example and sacrifice—these are still the two best ways to teach followers to work together.

love an enemy. If someone smacks you on the cheek, would you offer them the other? Was Jesus asking the Jews—who were chafing under Roman occupation—to become doormats?

- Ask the students how they can live out the principles of the Sermon on the Mount in their day-to-day lives. Ask: "Can someone who is not called by God live for God?"

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: 1 Samuel 3; Exodus 20; Matthew 4:1.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

1. **The Best?** The 12 disciples chosen by Jesus were not the best that humanity had to offer, most people would conclude. Most of them were poor laborers. This is demonstrated to some degree by the disdain with which the Jewish leaders viewed them. Jesus basically took the worst of the human lot and showed what a little exposure to the Sun of Righteousness could do for them.

   Consider the results: "Three of them became able writers. John was a profound scholar" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 594). Peter became a great preacher. Through these simple men, Jesus had built the foundation for a new church that would span the rest of time until He returns. The question we must ask ourselves is this: If Jesus could do so much with so little, what could He do with us?
2. **Something Better.** Jesus aimed a Spirit-filled barrage at the excesses of His time. This was the message of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus, and in

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Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quotes in Further Insight *convey the point of the story in this lesson.*

the Sermon on the Mount the thrust of Jesus' message is the same. Here's what Ellen White wrote about the way in which Jesus delivered His message:

"Christ disappointed the hope of worldly greatness. In the Sermon on the Mount He sought to undo the work that had been wrought by false education, and to give His hearers a right conception of His kingdom and of His own character. Yet He did not make a direct attack on the errors of the people. He saw the misery of the world on account of sin, yet He did not present before them a vivid delineation of their wretchedness. He taught them of something infinitely better than they had known" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 299).

3. **A Kingdom of Grace—Not Force.** In the Sermon on the Mount Christ is speaking not only about the future kingdom of glory but about the kingdom of grace that dwells in the hearts of His followers. The Jews had a popular conception of the kingdom as one built on force, able to subdue the hated Romans.

In parables, such as the tares, mustard seed, leaven, and dragnet, Jesus sought to give them examples of how to live out the kingdom of grace. "The kingdom Christ came to establish was one that begins within men's hearts, permeates their lives, and overflows into other men's hearts and lives with the dynamic and compelling power of love" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 325).

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Ask the students to say a silent sentence prayer to God in answer to His call. Ask the students to finish the following statement with their silent prayer to God.

"Father I hear You calling me. By Your grace I plan to . . ."

The objective of this prayer is to let the students know that God is still looking for disciples to help Him build up His kingdom. Close with a prayer of consecration and dedication to God and His service.

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

On a hillside more than 2,000 years ago Jesus chose 12 human beings to help Him build a kingdom. The kingdom of grace, as it later came to be known, was inaugurated on that day, and we are its beneficiaries today.

The Sermon on the Mount that followed the choosing of the 12 outlined in clear tones the constitution of God's new kingdom on earth. The way of the world had been changed by Christ—the Way. This new kingdom would be built on selfless love and devotion to God and fellow human beings. The disciples didn't know it at the time, but they had just been selected for the greatest mission ever entrusted to humans, and that mission transformed their lives.

God calls men and women to a life infinitely more meaningful than the one they are currently living. He gives all who answer the call a new way of living, a new way of being, in the world.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 30; 31.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

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STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-31; Matthew 5-7.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 30; 31.

Jesus calling



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keytext

"One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles."

(Luke 6:12, 13, NIV)

flashlight

"In training His disciples, Jesus chose to withdraw from the confusion of the city to the quiet of the fields and hills, as more in harmony with the lessons of self-abnegation He desired to teach them. And during His ministry He loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens, on some grassy hillside, or on the beach beside the lake. Here, surrounded by the works of His own creation, He could turn the thoughts of His hearers from the artificial to the natural. In the growth and development of nature were revealed the principles of His kingdom" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 291).

what do you think?

If you were going to launch a new mission initiative, calling people into God's kingdom, what kind of advertisement would you create to get people interested? Create a commercial campaign by supplying the information below.

Campaign slogan (short catchy phrase):

_____

Music: _____

_____

Budget (How much money are you prepared to spend on your campaign?):

_____

did you know?

Many people believe that all of Jesus' disciples were with Him from the very beginning of His public ministry, but that's not true. Five were, but most were not (John 1:40-49). The other seven were chosen about midway through the three and a half years that Jesus ministered publicly on earth. As Luke notes in Luke 6, Jesus already had a great following by the time the complete "posse" of disciples was chosen.

Jesus demonstrated the power of His ministry by healing the sick, casting out demons, and reaching out to the poor and forgotten. This led people to follow Him. From these people He selected some of His disciples, and then He shared the foundation principles of His kingdom with the 12 and all who wanted to hear about His new kingdom.

INTO THE STORY

"He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

"Looking at his disciples, he said:

" 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

" 'Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.

" 'Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

" 'Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

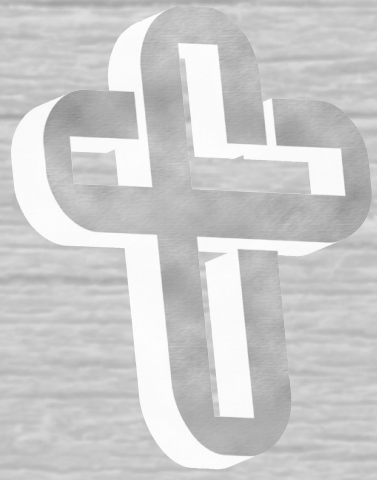
" 'Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

" 'But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

" 'Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

" 'But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you.'"

(Luke 6:17-31, NIV)



OUT OF THE STORY

These verses are some of the most quoted from the Sermon on the Mount. But there's much more to Jesus' message. Read the rest of Luke 6 to get the full message.

What parts of Jesus' sermon are new to you? *Place an X* by parts of the sermon that you have never read or heard about before.

_____
_____
_____

Why do you think Jesus took time to share these principles with His followers?

_____
_____
_____

What is the core message of the Beatitudes—the Blesseds? What do these statements tell us about the kind of society in which Jesus ministered?

_____
_____
_____

Underline portions of Jesus' statements that most people would consider "radical."

What would the world be like if all people lived by the principles of the kingdom of heaven as outlined by Jesus?

_____
_____

Can we live up to the principles shared in the Sermon on the Mount without Jesus?

_____

punch lines

"Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven" **(Matthew 6:1, NIV).**

"And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" **(Deuteronomy 10:12, NIV).**

"Humility is the fear of the LORD; its wages are riches and honor and life" **(Proverbs 22:4, NIV).**

"Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers" **(Galatians 6:9, 10, NIV).**

further insight

"He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 297

"God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service. . . . Through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 294

Sabbath

Read 1 Peter 4:10 and Romans 12:6-8.

God bestows upon all members of His church in every age spiritual gifts that each member is to employ in loving ministry for the common good of the church and of humanity. Given by the agency of the Holy Spirit, who apportions to each member as He wills, the gifts provide all abilities and ministries needed by the church to fulfill its divinely ordained functions. . . . When members employ these spiritual gifts as faithful stewards of God's varied grace, the church is protected from the destructive influence of false doctrine, grows with a growth that is from God, and is built up in faith and love" (Spiritual Gifts and Ministries, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 17).

Sunday

Read Luke 6:37, 38, and Matthew 6:25-27.

After reading the *Into the Story* section, explore the passage using the *Out of the Story* prompts. What are some of the other topics that Jesus addressed in His sermon? For instance, what did Jesus say about judging others (Luke 6:37)?

_____

_____

What important principle about giving did Jesus share with the crowd (Luke 6:38)?

_____

_____

What did Jesus say about worrying (Matthew 6:25-27)?

_____

_____

That's a whole lot to pack into one sermon. Why did Jesus feel that He had to speak on so many different issues?

_____

_____

Monday

Read Luke 6:12, 13.

There's a powerful nugget hidden in Sabbath's *Key Text*. Read the text again and see if you can find it.

What did Jesus do before He chose the men who would become His disciples?

_____

_____

Jesus spent an entire night in prayer to be sure that He was selecting the right people for the task of sharing the good news of salvation with a dying world. Jesus knew when He chose the 12 disciples that He would be crucified and that they would carry on the work in His absence.

Explain in your own words how you think the disciples did after Jesus died. Did Jesus choose the right people to build His new movement?

_____

_____

Tuesday

Read Psalm 19:1, 2.

This week's *Flashlight* quote highlighted the role that nature played in the ministry of Jesus. What do you think the psalmist David meant when he wrote the two verses in the reading for today?

What do you love about nature? Take a few moments to write a few sentences explaining what nature says to you about God.

_____

_____

Wednesday

Read Galatians 6:9, 10.

Let this week's *Punch Lines* really sink in. Zero in on Galatians 6:9, 10. One of the central messages in Jesus' sermon was the call to change the way in which humans treat each other. The apostle Paul tells us that by doing so, we will reap a great harvest one day when Jesus comes. But think about this for a moment. Are there benefits to be gained right here and now on earth by treating people with love and care, and by doing good to all people?

Share some tangible benefits we can receive now by doing good.

_____

_____

Thursday

When Jesus chose His disciples, He knew their gifts, talents, and weaknesses. Read again about each of the disciples listed below. What were some of their weaknesses, blind spots, areas in which they needed to make changes?

Peter (John 18:10; 25-27): _____
James and John (Mark 3:17): _____
Thomas (John 20:25-27): _____
Judas (John 12: 5, 6): _____

If Jesus was willing to entrust the message of salvation to guys like these, why wouldn't He do the same with you? You will make a great disciple of Jesus if you give your life totally to Him.

Friday

Read Matthew 5:1, 2.

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them" (Matthew 5:1, 2, NIV). That's how Matthew describes the beginning of Jesus' sermon on the mountainside.

Jesus' life on earth was always intertwined with the lives of others. He always saw the needs of people. Do you tend to "see" people and their needs, or are you more concerned with your own needs?

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 30; 31.

* A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.