



Who would you choose to be on your team? Your answer probably depends on the team’s purpose. If the goal was to win a basketball tournament, your roster would include people who could dribble, pass, shoot, and had a feel for the game. On the other hand, if the goal was to design a building, or dig a trench, or perform open heart surgery, your selection of teammates would be entirely different.

What if your goal was to save the world? Who would you choose as your companions in this endeavor?

For Jesus, this question was not hypothetical. His mission was clear: “For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.” (John 3:17). His message was compelling: “Repent, for the kingdom of God is near.” (Matthew 4:17). And his ministry was inviting: “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” (Matthew 11:28)

His *method*, however, was rather unorthodox. It began with an invitation, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (Matthew 4:19) He extended this invitation to no-account nobodies from nowhere—people who mattered to their families but to few others. He chose a tax collector, a couple of rebels, and some fishermen. There was not a marquee name or a first round draft choice among the whole bunch. They were supremely ordinary. Together, however, they became Jesus’ small group. Eventually, eleven of them would become his ambassadors. They would add another to their list and become the twelve Apostles, the leaders of a Church bent on joining Jesus in saving the world.

Jesus has extended his invitation to you too. Choose today to count yourself among Jesus’ no-account nobodies. Let him make you into a fisher of people and a full fledge member of his team of world savers.

**Personal Reflection
and Application**

Keep a journal to address the following questions and topics.

Jesus poured his life into his disciples and similarly makes himself available to you today. Each day this week consider one of the roles Jesus served as he ministered to and empowered his followers (see list below). You might use some of the following questions to guide your reflections:

In what ways does Jesus manifest this role in my life?

How comfortable am I in letting Jesus play this role?

In what ways do I resist Jesus playing this role?

In what ways do I cooperate with Jesus as he serves this role in my life?

In what ways does this role empower me to be one of Jesus’ disciples?

Roles Jesus Serves

Inviter (Matthew 4:19)

Teacher (Matthew 5:1-2)

Example (John 13:1-17)

Friend (John 15:15)

Chastiser (Mark 8:32-33)

Sender (Luke 9:1-2)

Intercessor (John 17:6-25)

Provider (John 20:24-30)

Savior (Luke 22:14-20)

P *Lord, thank you for choosing me as your disciple.*



Small Groups

Opening Question: Describe a time when you were chosen to be a part of some team or group and the reasons you believe led to the choice.

AC One way to gain insight on Jesus' choice of disciples is to examine some of their behaviors. Investigate the following passages, noting what the actions of the disciples reveal about Jesus' choice of followers: Matthew 16:15-23; 26:56; Mark 10:36-45; 14:66-72; Luke 8:22-25; 9:1-6, 51-56; John 20:24-29. (Note: these passages show the disciples before the coming of the Holy Spirit. See the *Acts of the Apostles* for a comparison of their behavior after Pentecost.)

AC Jesus chooses disciples for a purpose. Examine the following passages to gain insight on this purpose: Matthew 4:19; 28:18-20; Luke 24:44-47; John 15:16; 17:15-19. In what ways are you living this purpose(s) out in your life? In what ways do you tend to ignore or deny it?

Q Who in your life needs to have the opportunity to respond to Jesus' call? What steps are you willing to take to help them understand this call? Will you let your small group hold you accountable?

P *Jesus, thank you for choosing me to be your follower.*

One-on-One Relationships

Two stumbling blocks tend to pop up when people wrestle with the idea that Jesus chooses ordinary people to participate in his extraordinary ministry. The first push-back occurs when people struggle with the idea that Jesus would actually choose them. There might be such a strong sense of unworthiness that they can't fathom how Jesus would want them. If your disciple fits this description, you might help him or her see the ordinariness of the original disciples. If he or she remains unable to believe that Jesus intended his love to extend to her or him, seek additional help from a pastor or respected Christian friend.

The other stumbling block consists of thinking that Jesus chose us so that he might help us accomplish our goals. Jesus actually chooses people so that we might join him in his mission. Consider discussing this four part question with your disciple:

*How much of your
(1) thought life, (2) time,
(3) money, (4) strengths,
do you commit to Jesus' mission
in the world?*

Blessed to be a blessing. Jesus chooses to bless all of his followers. He also commands them to be a blessing to others.

Families

Pick and tweak items below to fit your own family's context.

AC Using your children's toys, set up a Galilean town, including a tax collecting booth, some fishing boats, etc. Set aside 12 action figures to serve as disciples and one action figure to play the role of Jesus. With your kids, reenact the stories of Jesus choosing his disciples. Talk to your kids about how Jesus calls each of us to follow him too.

AC As a family, plan and organize a meal to which you invite enough people so that there are exactly 13 of you at the table. You might consider using the internet to find some Jewish recipes. Let everyone know ahead of time that you're trying to help your family get a sense of what being one of 12 chosen disciples would have felt like. At the meal, set out name tags with the name of each disciple and a passage that mentions them. Celebrate Jesus' decision to choose and love his followers.

AC Have an outside-the-box brainstorming night with your family. Dream and imagine together what extra-ordinary things Jesus might use you to accomplish for his glory simply because each of you is one of his disciples. Don't let practicalities hinder you!