

True Disciples

Matthew 7:15-23

October
Week 4

4



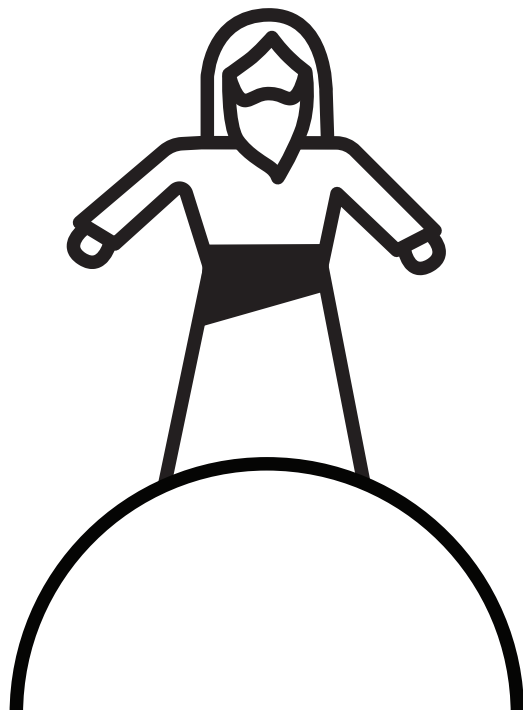
Teacher Background

What Happens: In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus warns about false prophets—people who seem trustworthy but aren't. Jesus says to determine who truly loves him by the fruit you see in their lives. Our hearts and lives show that we're Jesus' friends.

Why It Matters: Kids understand friendships and peer influence well. Help them see that the closer they grow to Jesus, the more people will be able to *tell* they're friends with Jesus.

Think About: What fruit have you seen in other Christians that shows they're friends with Jesus?

Pray for God's help with producing good fruit and be a model for your kids.



Point

Jesus' friends live like him.



Key Verse

"Do to others whatever you would like them to do to you. This is the essence of all that is taught in the law and the prophets."

Matthew 7:12

QUICK TIP

Avoid turning this lesson into a checklist or legalistic view of faith. Our good fruit comes not from trying harder to be good, but from planting ourselves in the rich soil of a friendship with Jesus. Emphasize the relationship that leads to good deeds.

This Lesson at a Glance



WHAT HAPPENS	KIDS DISCOVER
CHECK IN Connect about the week.	The importance of friendships at church.
SET THE STAGE Share about a topic related to the lesson.	The connection between their world and the Bible.
EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE Make chenille wire trees.	Staying connected to Jesus helps us produce good fruit.
HANDS-ON DISCOVERY Experiment with how washable marker dyes interact with water.	What it means when people—or Jesus—influence us.
PLAY A GAME Show off silly skills.	It can be fun to try to do what a friend does—especially Jesus!
PRAY TOGETHER Notice God at work and share God Sightings.	God is at work all around us today.

EASY SUPPLIES

- Bible
- chenille wires
- washable markers
- coffee filters (1 per person)
- large, clear plastic cups (1 per person)
- pitcher of water
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CHECK IN (5 MINUTES)

- Thank kids for coming and have kids high-five one of their friends.
- Make announcements and collect offering.
- Celebrate any birthdays by having kids whisper the “Happy Birthday” song.

ASK: What’s something you feel worried about right now? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share! For groups of more than six, have kids share in pairs so everyone has a turn to talk.



SET THE STAGE (5 MINUTES)

SAY: We’re learning Jesus’ most famous sermon! It’s called the Sermon on the Mount because he stood up on a hill to preach. Some of Jesus’ close friends heard him preach that day.

ASK: Tell about a friend who’s a lot like you. Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share!

SAY: The more time we spend with friends, the more alike we become! That’s true of our friendship with Jesus, too. ➡ Jesus’ friends live like him. In fact, Jesus talked about that very thing in today’s Bible story! Let’s find out more about what Jesus said.



EXPERIENCE THE BIBLE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- Bible
- chenille wires

DISCUSS

SAY: Let’s learn about one part of the Sermon on the Mount today. We’ll see how ➡ Jesus’ friends live like him. That means when we’re friends with Jesus, we do want to do the things he does. Jesus used fruit trees to talk about that.

ASK: What’s your favorite kind of fruit? Share your own quick story first, and then let everyone share!

ASK: Have you ever eaten a piece of fruit that had gone bad? Tell us about that.

SAY: Let’s see what Jesus said about fruit, and what that has to do with how ➡ Jesus’ friends live like him.

MAKE TREES

SAY: First, let’s make some trees, because Jesus is going to talk about trees.

Distribute chenille wires to each child, and allow time for kids to twist their wires to make trees.

SAY: Now pretend to pick good fruit off your trees.

Let kids pretend to eat the fruit they pick and have others guess what fruit they’re eating.

SAY: Now let’s imagine our trees are growing rotten fruit!

Have kids pretend to pick rotten fruit and make faces about how gross it smells and tastes.

SAY: Keep in mind the difference between good fruit and rotten fruit as you hear what Jesus said.



Read Matthew 7:17-18.

SAY: It might sound like Jesus was just talking about trees and fruit, but he was using those as an example for people. Good trees are like people who follow Jesus—they follow Jesus not only in what they say but also in what they do. Being a true friend of Jesus is the most important part of who they are.

Following Jesus means staying connected to him like the roots of a healthy tree. I wonder if you can make some roots for your tree.

Let kids use more chenille wires to add roots to their fruit trees. While kids talk, point out that trees need roots to get nutrients and water from the ground.

SAY: Because of *Jesus'* goodness, people who follow him grow fruit like love and kindness. ➡ **Jesus' friends live like him**—so they do things like Jesus did.

ASK: What other things might be good fruit we grow when we follow Jesus?

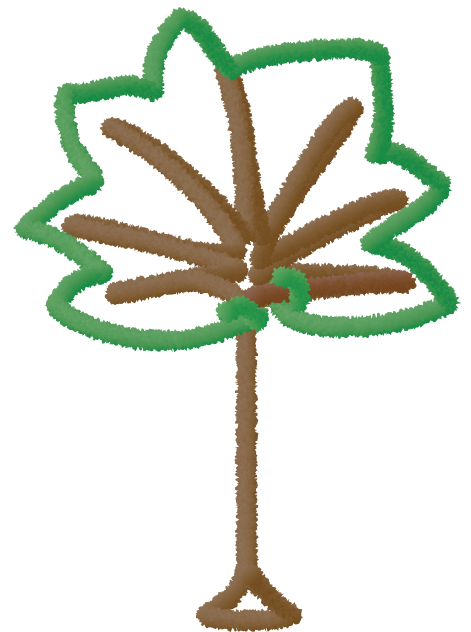
SAY: When we don't follow Jesus, it produces rotten fruit like hate and sin. So staying connected to Jesus is important because he's the source that will help grow good fruit!

Lead kids in taking the chenille wire roots off their trees.

ASK: What are ways we stay connected to Jesus?

SAY: ➡ **Jesus' friends live like him.** We spend time with him and get to know him, and then he grows good fruit in us!

Kids can take their trees home as a reminder of the lesson.





SUPPLIES

- washable markers
- coffee filters (1 per person)
- large, clear plastic cups (1 per person)
- pitcher of water

POUR WATER OVER WASHABLE MARKER INK

SAY: ➡ **Jesus' friends live like him**, and Jesus gave the perfect example of how to live. When we're friends with Jesus, it's natural to want to live like him. Jesus *influences* how we live. Let's take a closer look at what *influence* means with this cool water-changing experiment.

- Set out washable markers, three coffee filters, three cups, and a pitcher of water.
- Invite kids to make guesses about what each color will do to the water, if anything, and why they think so.
- Kids can each color the center of a coffee filter with a marker and then tuck the coffee filter partially into one of the plastic cups.
- Direct kids to hold the edges of the coffee filter against the outside of the cup (keeping the colored portion inside the cup) while you pour water into the coffee filter so the water drains into the cup.
- Let kids repeat the process several times, using different colors each time.

TALK ABOUT IT

Do a quick scan of the cups, looking at all the colored water.

ASK: What were your predictions about what would happen with each color and the water?

ASK: Were your predictions right?

SAY: Hmm, it seems like the water couldn't help but take on the color of the marker as it passed through the coffee filters. That's because the ink is water-based, so the dyes in the ink are already in water and flow easily into other water when it's added.

When you poured clear water from the pitcher over the colored coffee filter, it changed the water by adding color—or you could say the water was *influenced*, even if it was just a little bit.

People in our lives, like our friends, have influence over us, too. We can't really help that the people we're around the most influence the way we think and act.

ASK: Who are friends you want to be like, and why? Share an example of your own, such as a friend of yours who can always make people smile and laugh with his or her sense of humor.

ASK: How do those friends influence you or the way you act?

ASK: How might being a close friend with Jesus change the way you act?

SAY: Friends can influence us in good ways or bad, but our best influencer ever is Jesus. ➡ **Jesus' friends live like him**.



QUICK TIP

If you have a group of younger kids, you may want them to form pairs so they can work together to carefully hold the filter in place.



DEMONSTRATE HUMAN TRICKS

SAY: Today we're talking about how ➡ **Jesus' friends live like him.** As they spend time with him, they see the amazing things he does. Let's explore how that works with a quick game of Watch This!

- Have kids stand and form a circle.
- Explain that, one at a time, they can jump into the circle to show an amazing—or not so amazing—thing they can do. Then everyone else will also try to do it. For instance, perhaps a kid can roll his tongue or lick his own nose. Another child may be able to do a handstand or assume a ballerina position. Leaping high, bending low, hitting a high note, or spelling an insanely long word...all are circle-worthy!
- You begin. Crack your knuckles, do a dance move, or wiggle your ears. Have fun!

TALK ABOUT IT

ASK: How did it feel trying to do what someone else could do that, at least for now, you can't do?

ASK: How is that like trying to do what your friend Jesus does?

ASK: What might help you live more like Jesus lives?

SAY: The goal of being Jesus' friend isn't to *pretend* to be Jesus and do exactly what he did. You probably can't walk on water or feed 5,000 people with a few fish sandwiches. But if you stay connected with Jesus, he'll change you from the inside out. You might be more loving, kinder, more patient.

➡ **Jesus' friends live like him,** not because they try really hard but because Jesus changes them!

SUPPLIES

- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CELEBRATE SMALL

Fewer kids mean you can take this game and make it personal. What skill can you teach kids in 10 minutes? Give them a chance to strum a chord on your guitar, or teach them how to make a failproof paper airplane. They'll learn more about you *and* come away with a cool new skill!



ACTIVITY PAGES WITH A PURPOSE (10 MINUTES)



SUPPLIES

- “Sermon on the Mount: True Disciples” Activity Page (1 per child) (page 147)
- “Sermon on the Mount: True Disciples” Coloring Page (1 per younger child) (page 148)
- pencils
- crayons
- fruit stickers (optional)

QUICK TIP

For younger kids, provide the Coloring Page and crayons as an alternative.

SAY: Today we learned from the Sermon on the Mount that ➡ **Jesus’ friends live like him.** That means we copy the way Jesus loved people and forgave people. Let’s try copying something.

Distribute the activity pages and pencils. Kids will copy the picture, one square at a time.

ASK: How did the grid help you copy the picture?

ASK: What steps did you have to take?

ASK: How can that remind you of what it means to live like Jesus?

SAY: ➡ **Jesus’ friends live like him.** But we can’t do that on our own or by trying really hard! The more we spend time with Jesus, the more he helps us live like him.



PRAY TOGETHER (5 MINUTES)



SAY: It’s true! ➡ **Jesus’ friends live like him.** In our Bible story today, Jesus taught that people know we follow Jesus by what we do and say. When we live like Jesus, people get to see what it’s like to be friends with God. It’s a way they get to see God in action.

We can help people understand that God still works in big ways today.

Let’s pray a God Sightings prayer! We’ll each think of one way we’ve seen God at work this week. For example... Share an example from your own life. You could talk about an answer to prayer, something beautiful you saw in nature, or something kind someone did for you.

God Sightings are ways we’ve seen God at work. It’s awesome to think about the evidence that God is still working all around us—sometimes through people! Now it’s your turn. Turn to someone nearby and tell about a God Sighting from this past week. You’ll each have about a minute to share. Then we’ll pray and thank God for these reminders that he is with us.

ASK: Where have you seen God at work this week?

Allow time, then have kids hold hands over their eyes like binoculars to show they’re looking for God at work. Have them hold that pose as you close in prayer.

PRAY: Dear God, we love looking for you in the world around us. Thank you for all the ways you’ve shown up in the past week! May we notice more ways you’re at work in our lives and in our world this week. Help us be God Sightings by living like Jesus. Thank you that you are with us. In Jesus’ name, amen.

