

8. Jesus Calls Matthew

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Jesus Calls Matthew

Leader Notes:

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.

I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.

Breathe

Use this time to focus your attention on God.

Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out. *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

Tell and Wonder

Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear? *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.

Read "Jesus Calls Matthew" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.

You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.

Pray

Close with prayer. Thank God for inviting Peter and Matthew and us (name each child) to follow him. Together say "Amen!"

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #91 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

**God's Big Story cards can be ordered from FaithAliveResources.org.*

Easy Extra

Do what Matthew did—have a party for Jesus! Read about the party Matthew threw and then host your own party with your kids. Set an extra chair as a reminder of Jesus' presence. If you have time, sing some praise songs together.

If you're leading this session virtually, consider sending party hats, favors, and invitations to your kids the week before you'll "meet." When it's time for the party, have them pull out their supplies and spend some time celebrating together.

Story: Jesus Calls Matthew [Luke 5:27-32](#)

Listen to how this part of God's story begins. I'm reading from the book of Luke, chapter 5. (*Open your Bible and read only the first sentence (not the entire first verse) of [Luke 5:27](#).*)

It's not surprising that Jesus would see Matthew sitting in his booth at the side of the road. That's where Matthew usually sat—demanding taxes from people who used the road for business. If someone was carrying a load of fruit or grain, you can be sure that Matthew would call him over and demand that they pay the tax. That was his job. A tax collector, he worked for the hated Roman government. Every good Jew hated the cruel Roman rulers.

But the Jewish people also hated the tax collectors for another reason—many of the tax collectors were Jewish and cheated their own people by lying about the amount of the tax people owed. Because tax collectors cheated, they often became very rich.

I wonder how people felt when they walked past a tax collector's beautiful mansion. (*Pause for responses.*)

Tax collectors like Matthew weren't allowed to worship in the great temple in Jerusalem. No one wanted to be friends with a tax collector or go to a tax collector's home or hang out with them.

One day as Matthew sat in his booth watching people pass by, he saw Jesus coming. As usual, Jesus was talking to people who were walking along the road with him. Matthew had heard about Jesus and wondered if he was like the other Jewish leaders—the Pharisees—who believed that their God was not the God of tax collectors or sinners.

Then something surprising happened. Even though Jesus didn't need to stop at Matthew's booth, he stopped! He walked right over to the tax booth and looked right into Matthew's eyes.

I wonder what Matthew thought Jesus was going to say. *(Pause for responses.)*

Jesus looked into Matthew's eyes and also saw his heart. Jesus knew everything about Matthew—the cheating and the lying. Then Jesus said these amazing words: "Matthew, follow me!"

I wonder why Jesus would invite Matthew to follow him. Didn't he care that Matthew was a liar and a cheater? *(Pause for responses.)*

I wonder what Matthew's face looked like when he heard Jesus' words. *(Pause for responses.)*

Matthew didn't have to think for very long. He stood up, walked away from the tax booth, and became a follower of Jesus—just like that!

Matthew decided to have a great big party to celebrate the huge change in his life. He invited all his other tax collector friends to come and meet Jesus. It was a great party—Jesus was eating, drinking, laughing, and teaching a house full of tax collectors.

How do you think the temple teachers and Jewish leaders—the Pharisees—felt about that? *(Pause for responses.)*

The Pharisees were watching. And they were angry. They would never sit at the same table with such sinners! They complained to Jesus' disciples, "What is Jesus doing eating and drinking with tax collectors and sinners?"

Jesus heard the question. He knew the Pharisees thought they were too good to be friends with sinners like Matthew and the other tax collectors. But Jesus knew the Pharisees were wrong. So he said, "I came to save sinners. They will be my friends and followers. God sent me to save people who are sorry for their sins."

I wonder what the Pharisees thought and how they acted when Jesus said that to them. *(Pause for responses.)*

Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [Kindergarten-1st Grade: Matthew Follows Jesus](#)
 - [2nd-3rd Grade: Jesus Calls Matthew](#)
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