

*Jonah 3:1–5, 10*

*Ps. 62:5–12*

*1 Cor. 7:29–31*

**Mark 1:14–20**

## It's Time!

### Goal for the Session

*Tweens will ponder how they, like the fishermen, could respond to Jesus' call to follow him and share in God's exciting work.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Mark 1:14–20

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Leslie J. Hoppe

Jesus used a metaphor that appears sixty-six times in the New Testament, “the kingdom of God,” to announce the beginning of his ministry. Jesus sought to contrast the goals of his mission with the goals of Herod the Great. The kingdom of God that Jesus proclaimed was not bolstered by the construction of monumental buildings and great cities. God's kingdom is manifest in the human embrace of God's rule through repentance and faith. Jesus' mission was to call people to repentance, that is, a total reorientation of their lives so that they will be in a position to accept God's sovereign rule authentically.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Lee Barrett

Jesus' message, aptly characterized as “good news,” is a declaration of God's victory, an announcement of a wondrously new state of affairs breaking into the present. Mark's Gospel will proceed to illustrate how liberation, restoration, and reconciliation are already happening in Jesus' healing miracles, his casting out of demons, and his teaching. The trajectory initiated by Jesus' proclamation and ministry is promised to eventuate in the final consummation of God's purposes for humanity when the Son of Man returns in glory.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Elton W. Brown

Some of our churches so stress the moment of decision for Jesus that we fail to nurture the long-standing commitment. Decision is to be lived out in fidelity, service, even sacrifice. Some of our churches are so good at nurturing that we forget that even “cradle Christians” sometimes need to decide for fidelity, service, even sacrifice. Christianity is always both for now and for the long haul; both a moment and a lifetime. Sometimes in the more ordinary days we find courage for the drudgery or the dread by remembering those moments when we did know the call and did say, “Yes.” When we feel most like revoking our own discipleship, we remember the call.

#### NOW WHAT is God's word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Ted A. Smith

We do not repent in order to usher in the time of redemption, but because that time is already at hand. We do not become fishers in order to meet the quota that will summon up the reign of God, but because that reign has already come near. And we do not follow Jesus with the hopes that one day we might find him, but because he has already come to us and called us. God takes the initiative. The reign of God is not the product of discipleship, but the precondition of it.

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Mark 1:14–20**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Being part of a group is important to most tweens, and being part of something active and exciting is particularly attractive to them. Their experience of church will determine their perception of God's work as exciting or not. Be aware that they want to help in meaningful ways and will quickly see through token projects. As you prepare for this session, consider how you might equip and empower the young people in your group to be a meaningful part of God's exciting work.

*Active God, following Jesus and engaging in your work is an exciting adventure. Help me to convey this in ways that are attractive and contagious. Amen.*

**YOU WILL NEED**

- ☐ Color Pack 10, 19, 20, 21, 32
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1 from December 31, materials listed there
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheets 1, 2
- ☐ *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*; CD player
- ☐ alarm clock or timer
- ☐ newsprint
- ☐ markers
- ☐ slips of paper
- ☐ construction paper
- ☐ pencils, scissors, tape

**For Responding**

- ☐ option 1: brightly colored paper, markers, scissors, glue, glitter
- ☐ option 2: polymer clay, rolling pin, milk jug caps, toothpicks, lacing
- ☐ option 3: Internet-connected device

## ■ LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

Welcome tweens as they arrive. Ask about high and low points of the past week.

Gather the group and lead the opening ritual as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. This week's "Star Stuff" trivia question is:

In astronomy, what is the "great attractor"?

- a. a black hole believed to occupy the center of our galaxy
- b. a black hole in another galaxy
- c. an undefined force that seems to be pulling galaxies toward it (*correct answer*)

Display Color Pack 19, reading aloud the caption. Offer this prayer or one of your own:

*Light-giving God, as we explore the Scriptures today, shine your light into our hearts, so that we may see how to follow in your ways. Amen.*

Form two groups to sing "You Are My Beloved Child" (Color Pack 32; track 26 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*), with one group singing the first part of each verse and the other singing "hallelujah."

Introduce the session focus by ringing the alarm clock or timer. Discuss:

- ✿ What time is it when your alarm clock goes off in the morning? When a fire alarm goes off? When the school bell rings?
- ✿ Talk about other things that can help you know when it's time to do something: How do you know when it's time to plant a garden? When it's time to eat? When it's time to clean your room?

Comment that your Bible story today tells about some people who discovered it was time for a change.

**You Are My Beloved Child**

You are my beloved child,  
hallelujah,  
You are my beloved child,  
hallelujah.

And my face has smiled on  
you, hallelujah,  
And my face has smiled on  
you, hallelujah.

Then says God to everyone,  
hallelujah,  
Then says God to everyone,  
hallelujah.

You're God's daughter,  
you're God's son,  
hallelujah!  
You're God's daughter,  
you're God's son,  
hallelujah!

Small groups could do a dramatic reading, do a reading with sound effects, act out the story, make puppets with materials on hand, or retell the story in their own way.

**EXPLORING**

Use Resource Sheet 1 (It's Time!) to introduce the Bible passage. Recruit volunteers to read the various parts and ask the rest of the group to be the chorus. Give readers a few minutes to practice the words and set a rhythm and pace.

After performing the choral reading, ask tweens to turn to Mark 1:14–20 in their Bibles. Ask two volunteers to read the passage aloud, alternating verses. Discuss:

- ✠ What words and phrases in this reading indicate action or speed?
- ✠ Why do you think Jesus invited the four fishermen to follow him?
- ✠ What do you think it means to be fishers of people?
- ✠ Why do you think the fishermen decided to say yes and follow Jesus?
- ✠ What do you think will happen next in their lives?

Form three groups. Write each of the following references on a slip of paper and give one to each group: Mark 1:21–28, Mark 1:40–45, and Mark 3:7–12. Ask each group to look up the verses, read them aloud, and think of a way to present that story to the entire class. After a few moments for preparation, have small groups present their stories.

Draw a line down the middle of sheet of newsprint. Print the word *Before* at the top of the left-hand column and *After* at the top of the right-hand column. Ask:

- ✠ What kinds of things do you think the fishermen did before they met Jesus? (Record tweens' responses on the chart.)
- ✠ What kinds of things do you think they saw and did after meeting Jesus? (Record tweens' responses on the chart.)

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (Giving Their Yes to Jesus) and read aloud the stories there. Ask learners if they can offer additional examples of people who have said yes to Jesus and willingly have taken part in God's exciting work. Discuss the questions at the bottom of the sheet.

Display Color Pack 20 where everyone can see it; use a marker to print the following words at the top of the poster: *Come, follow me and be part of God's exciting work. Jesus.* Distribute construction paper, pencils, and scissors. Ask tweens to trace around one of their feet and cut out the footprint. Play "We Are Dancing in the Love of God" (track 23 on *Singing the Feast, 2023–2024*) as they work. Invite each tween to write one way he or she can follow Jesus on the footprint and place it around the poster.

EASY  
PREP



Be sensitive to group members who find it difficult to make financial donations. Perhaps you could arrange for them to earn the money by doing some work for the church. Ensure they get paid a fair wage.

## RESPONDING

1. **Starbursts** Jesus calls us to follow him. As a group, brainstorm snappy slogans that will encourage church members to follow Jesus and take part in God's exciting work. Cut large starburst shapes from brightly colored paper. Print your slogans on the starbursts. Add sparkle with glue and glitter. Place the starbursts around the church building where many will read them.
2. **Fish Pendant** From the early days of the church, the fish has been a symbol for followers of Jesus. The first Christians made up an acrostic to describe what they believed about Jesus: "Jesus Christ, God's Son, Savior." The first letter of each word spells the Greek word for fish. Squeeze polymer clay (from a craft supply store) in your hands until it becomes warm and pliable. Roll it out and use caps from gallon milk jugs to cut circles. Use toothpicks to etch fish shapes in the clay to make pendants. Make a hole in the top of each circle for lacing. Follow package instructions to bake the pendants. When cool, string thin plastic or leather lacing through the holes.
3. **Kiva Loans** Like the fishermen, Jesus calls Christians today to spread the good news of God's love. Explain that many people around the world struggle financially. It is difficult for them to make a living, and getting a loan to start or expand a business is almost impossible. Watch "The Power of Kiva" at [bit.ly/FOWKiva](http://bit.ly/FOWKiva). Direct tweens to the Kiva Web site, [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) (or if your denomination sponsors a microcredit program, visit that Web site) and look at some of the profiles. Choose a recipient and challenge tweens to raise \$25 to make a loan. They might have a fundraiser or donate a few dollars each. Once you have the money, log on to Kiva, open an account, and make the loan. Copy and print the recipient's profile and post it in your learning area. Pray together for the individual and the person's family.

## CLOSING

Gather the group and look again at Color Pack 19, recalling that some astronomers feel there is an undefined force called the "great attractor." As Christians, we can know for certain that Jesus is our "great attractor," drawing the first disciples and many others to follow him.

Introduce this session's "Star of the Week": The Disciples Star. Cut the pattern for the twelve-pointed star from Color Pack 21 and have learners trace it to make their stars, as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. As they work, explain that this star reminds us of the twelve disciples who were first called by Jesus.

Lead the closing ritual as described on Resource Sheet 1 from December 31. Extend signs and words of peace to one another as you depart.

January 21, 2024  
It's Time!

Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary  
**FEASTING on the WORD**  
CURRICULUM

**Tweens**  
**Resource Sheet 1**

**It's Time!**



It is important for the readers to keep a steady rhythm. The rhythm is interrupted only by the Questioner and God's voice; after those voices speak, establish the rhythm again.

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
tick-tock.

**Narrator 1:** For 700 years they  
had been waiting.

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock.

**Narrator 2:** Waiting for the  
promised one.

**Narrator 1:** Waiting for the  
messenger.

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock.

**Narrator 2:** The one, who comes

**Narrator 1:** To shout in the  
desert

**Messenger:** Get ready! Get  
ready!

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
tick-tock.

**Narrator 2:** The years pass  
slowly.

**Narrator 1:** When will it happen?

**Chorus:** Waiting, waiting,  
waiting.

**Questioner:** Is it time yet?

**Chorus:** No! Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
tick-tock.

**Narrator 2:** Waiting, waiting,  
waiting.

**Narrator 1:** John the baptizer  
shows up, shouts in the  
desert.

**John:** Repent! Turn around! Be  
baptized!

**Narrator 2:** John spreads the  
message.

**John:** The chosen one is coming.  
Get ready! Get ready!

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
tick-tock.

**Narrator 2:** Then Jesus shows  
up. He is baptized. The  
heavens open. God speaks.

**God:** My beloved Son.

**Narrator 1:** Sent to wilderness.  
Jesus is tempted.

**Narrator 2:** Getting ready.  
Getting stronger.

**Chorus:** Tempted, tempted,  
tempted.

**Narrator 1:** Forty days later, John  
is arrested.

**Chorus:** Tick-tock, tick-tock,  
tick-tock.

**Questioner:** Is it time yet?

**Chorus:** YES! (*Make the sound of  
an alarm.*) It's time! It's time!

**Questioner:** What now?

**Chorus:** It's time! It's time!

**Questioner:** Are you sure?


**All:** (*shouting*) It's time!

**Questioner:** Hey, I just wanted to  
make sure!

**All:** (*shouting*) It's time!



## Giving Their Yes to Jesus



William Wilberforce was born in 1759. As a young man, he became a member of the British Parliament. Some fellow Christians talked to him about slavery. They told him what it was like to be a slave. When William heard about the horrors of slavery, he felt called by Jesus to stop it. He worked his whole life to pass laws that outlawed slavery in the British Empire. William Wilberforce gave his yes to Jesus and took part in God's exciting work.

Mother Teresa was born in 1910. At the age of 38, while traveling by train in India, she felt called by Jesus to show God's love to "the poorest of the poor." Mother Teresa went to live in the parts of India where there was great poverty and founded a Christian community called "The Sisters of Charity." These followers of Jesus worked together to help those who were sick and hungry. Mother Teresa gave her yes to Jesus and took part in God's exciting work.

In 2009, there was an outbreak of disease in the slums of Cape Town, South Africa. In September of the same year, a group of young people from a church there felt called by Jesus to show God's love in action. They collected garbage and cleaned up the streets, making their community a healthier place to live. These young people gave their yes to Jesus and engaged in God's exciting work.

What does it mean to give your yes to Jesus?

In what ways can you be part of God's exciting work?

