

God Is Calling People

MAIN IDEAS

- **The appropriate response to the call of God is to follow Him.**
- **It is an undeserved privilege to be a child of God; it is worth more than anything else.**
- **God calls sinful people.**

MEMORY VERSE

But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,
—John 1:12

SCRIPTURE

- 1) Mark 1:16-20
- 2) Mark 2:13-17

CURRICULUM RESOURCES

- **Bigger (1A)**
- **More Valuable (1B)**
- **Prettier (1C)**
- **More Durable (1D)**
- Bible People Visuals:
 - › **Noah, Abraham, Sarah, David (1E)**
 - › **Daniel, Mary, Joseph, Peter (1F)**
- **Party Invitation (1G)**
- Medical Badge (1H, see Preparation)
- Heartbeat (1I)
- X-ray (1J)
- Strong Arm (1K)
- Nametags (see Additional Resources for Lesson 1)
- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each child)

OTHER SUPPLIES

- Bible (English Standard Version)
- Safety pins, tape, hole punch ribbon, or elastic (see Preparation)
- Six identical items (e.g., plates, glasses, pop cans, candy bars, etc.)
- Small table
- Five \$1 bills (or any denomination of play money)
- Safety pin or tape
- Optional: Medical equipment or clothing (e.g., stethoscope, lab coat, thermometer)
- Bandage (strip of white cloth) or a sling (large, triangular-shaped piece of white material)
- Two items—one in perfect condition and one imperfect (e.g., a candy bar and a smashed candy bar)

MATERIALS FOR OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

1. Memory Verse

- For each child:
 - › Memory Verse (OA-1A)
 - › Markers or crayons

2. Student Project

- For each child:
 - › The Call of God Student Project
 - › Scissors
 - › Glue stick or tape
 - › Crayons, markers, or colored pencils
 - › Envelope or zip-close bag
 - › Optional: Paperclip

3. Word Scramble

- For each child:
 - › Word Scramble (OA-1B)
 - › Jesus (OA-1C)
 - › Scissors
 - › Glue or tape
 - › Crayons/markers

4. Testimony

- › Invite someone to share his testimony of how God called him to be His child.

5. Ball Game

- › Tennis ball

6. Obstacle Course

- › Obstacles for the children to follow you over, under, around, etc.

7. Relay Race

- › Hat or container
- › Tape or chalk for start and finish lines
- › Slip of paper (for each child)
- › Pencil/pen (for each child)

8. Memory Verse Game

- › See Appendix for ideas.

PREPARATION

- Study the Scripture passages carefully and prayerfully. Ask God to make them real in your own heart. Be open to what God may be teaching you in this lesson. Study the lesson well. Pray for the children in your group.
- **Nametags**—Copy and cut out the **Nametags**. You may also wish to laminate them. They can be attached to clothing with a safety pin or tape or worn around the neck if you punch holes and run a piece of ribbon or elastic through the holes. (If you have the children wear their nametags around the neck, you may wish to remove them before certain activities.)
- **Medical Badge**—Attach a safety pin or tape to the back of the **Medical Badge** so it can be worn.

Large Group Lesson

Introduction

SIX IDENTICAL
ITEMS, SMALL TABLE

(Call a child to the front and show him the **six identical items** on the **small table**. Ask him to choose one of the six items to show to the class.)

Why did you choose this [item]? Is it BIGGER than the others?

Bigger

(Display the **Bigger** visual.)

Is it more VALUABLE—worth more money—than the others?

More Valuable

(Display the **More Valuable** visual.)

Is it PRETTIER than the others?

Prettier

(Display the **Prettier** visual.)

Is it more durable—better made and will last longer—than the rest?

More Durable

(Display the **More Durable** visual.)

This [item] is not bigger, more valuable, prettier, or more durable than the others. It is just the same. Nothing made it special so that it should be chosen.

What makes it important now is that it is the one you chose. You were the “chooser,” and you gave it importance. You could have chosen another one, but you didn’t. You chose this one, and that makes it special and important.

(The child can put the item back on the table and sit down.)

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God is also choosing. He is choosing and calling people to be His very own people—to be part of His family.



(Display the **Bible people visuals**, pointing to each person as you mention him or her.)

You might know about some of these chosen people because you have read their stories in God's book, the Bible. All of these people were God's chosen and special people: Noah, Abraham, Sarah, David, Daniel, Mary, Joseph, and Peter.¹



Were they chosen by God because they were more special than other people?

(Display the **item chosen** by the child in the illustration.)

Just as the [item] was not more special than the others, these people were not more special.

They were just ordinary people, no better than anyone else. It was the choosing by God that made them special and important. To be chosen by God makes a person very, very special.

Let me tell you a story about how God chose some people, called them to follow Him, and made them special and important.

(Tell the story of the calling of the first disciples from Mark 1:16-20. If they have Bibles, have them follow along, or ask five children to each read one verse.)

Mark 1:16—Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew the brother of Simon casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

Mark 1:17—And Jesus said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.”

Mark 1:18—And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

Mark 1:19—And going on a little farther, he saw James the son of Zebedee and John his brother, who were in their boat mending the nets.

Mark 1:20—And immediately he called them, and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him.

(Make the following points from the passage.)

- Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James, and John to be His special friends, to share His work, and to be part of the family of God.

1. If the children you are teaching do not know who these Bible characters are, it is not necessary to explain. The main point you want to make is that they had no merit of their own. See Deuteronomy 7:7-8.

- Simon, Andrew, James, and John did not hesitate—they didn't wait—when Jesus called them. They followed Him immediately.
- Simon, Andrew, James, and John left everything to answer Jesus' call.

? *Why do you think these men did not hesitate, and willingly left everything when Jesus called them?* [what Jesus was offering was so much better than what they had; to hear the call of Jesus and follow Him is more wonderful than anything else; God chose them as His special people, and they wanted to follow God]

When God calls, the right response—the right thing to do—is to follow Him.

Illustration.....



(Display the **Party Invitation** visual.)

What is this? What do you usually think when you get an invitation to a party?
(Let the children offer a few responses.)

Yes, you feel excited. You can't wait for the party. You think parties are fun, and you want to go. You want to be part of the party. God's call is like an invitation to a party—it is inviting you to be part of His family...and that is a wonderful thing.

? *Who do people send party invitations to?* [their friends; people they like; family]

Do they usually send party invitations to people who are mean, or to bad people who will do wrong things and wreck the party? Not usually.

But let me tell you about the kind of people that Jesus invites or calls to be part of His family.

(Tell the story of the calling of Levi from Mark 2:13-17, inserting the following comments. If they have Bibles, have the children follow along, or ask five of them to each read one verse.)

Mark 2:13—He went out again beside the sea, and all the crowd was coming to him, and he was teaching them.

Mark 2:14—And as he passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he rose and followed him.

Levi was a tax collector—He went to people and collected the money that they owed in taxes. In Jesus' day, many of the tax collectors were dishonest and greedy. So they cheated the people.

For example, if a person owed three dollars...

THREE \$1 BILLS

(Display the **three \$1 bills**.)

...a tax collector might collect five dollars from him.

2 EXTRA BILLS

(Display the **two extra bills**.)

Then he would give the government the three dollars the person owed, but he would keep the two extra dollars.

(Put the **two extra bills** in your pocket.)

Mark 2:15—And as he reclined at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners were reclining with Jesus and his disciples, for there were many who followed him.

So Jesus was friends with tax collectors and sinners—people whose hearts were bad, who disobeyed God and did wrong things.

Mark 2:16—And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?”

Why would Jesus visit with bad people? Didn't He know they were bad?

Mark 2:17—And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Jesus called Levi to follow Him, knowing that Levi was a tax collector. Jesus knew that Levi did bad things—he didn't love God or do what was right.

? *Why did Jesus become friends with sinners, with people who disobeyed and did wrong things? Why did He want someone like Levi to follow Him? [because Jesus came to save sinful people; Jesus came to make bad people right with God; Jesus came to give sinners a new heart; Jesus came to invite sinful people into God's family]*

Illustration.....

MEDICAL BADGE,
SAFETY PIN
OR TAPE, AND
OPTIONAL MEDICAL
EQUIPMENT OR
CLOTHING

(Call three children to the front. **Pin or tape the Medical Badge** on the first child. If you have **medical equipment or clothing**, this child could use these things as props.)

Who do you think this is? Right. He is a doctor. And he is a very good doctor. He knows all kinds of things. He knows how to put a cast on a broken arm. He can

check ears for ear infections. He can listen to a heartbeat and know if a heart is healthy, and all kinds of other things.

BANDAGE OR SLING (Wind the **bandage** around the second child's arm, or place his arm in a **sling**.)

Now this person is in bad shape. He was playing baseball and slid into first base. Unfortunately, he slid on his arm, and now his arm really hurts. In fact, it hurts so much that it might even be broken.

Now this guy [the third child], on the other hand, is in great shape. His heartbeat is strong and regular.

**HEARTBEAT, X-RAY,
AND STRONG ARM
VISUALS**

(Give the **Heartbeat** visual to the third child.)

No heart problem here. His heart is in great shape.

(Give the **X-ray** visual to the third child.)

No broken ribs—no broken bones anywhere.

(Give the **Strong Arm** visual to the third child.)

And look at those arms. He looks like he has been lifting weights. Yep, this guy is one healthy guy.

Which person will the doctor give his attention to? Who will he help? Why?

If you are healthy, you don't need a doctor. Sick people need doctors. Doctors help sick or injured people, not people who are well. Just as the doctor would go to help the sick or injured person...

(Point to the doctor and the injured person.)

...so Jesus came to help people who need Him.

(The children can sit down.)

? *What did Jesus mean when He said that He came for "sick" people? Did they have broken arms or bad coughs? [He meant that He came for people who were sick with sin.]*

Jesus was talking about people who have sick or sinful hearts—who want the wrong things, who do not want to follow God or do what is right, who have bad attitudes and bad thoughts. He came to invite people like Levi and other sick, sinful people into the family of God. His invitation to come to God is open to all kinds of people. Even people like you and me.

Illustration.....

PERFECT AND
IMPERFECT ITEMS

(Display the **perfect and imperfect items**.)

If you could choose one of these to bring home, which would you choose? It is natural and normal to choose the best one, the perfect one.

But Jesus chooses imperfect people to bring home to His Father and be part of His family. We don't have to be perfect or the best. We just need to know that we need Jesus.

Small Group Application

(Application can most effectively be done in a small group setting. These questions are suggestions for possible directions for the discussion. Pray for wisdom and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Be sensitive to the answers and the needs of the children.)

- Do you think that it is important to be in the family of God? Is it more important to be in the family of God than in your family? Why or why not?*
- Do you think that you deserve to be in the family of God? Why or why not?*
- What do you think it means to “follow Jesus”?*
- Discuss the memory verse:

John 1:12—But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God,

What does it mean to “receive” Jesus? What does it mean to believe in Jesus’ name? What does it mean to be a child of God?

End with prayer for the children, and invite them to pray for each other.

Optional Activities

(If time allows, choose one of the following optional activities:)

1. Memory Verse

As children color the **Memory Verse** handout, discuss the memory verse with them.

2. Student Project

Children can work on the Lesson 1 portion of the Student Project.

3. Word Scramble

Children can cut out and unscramble the letters from the **Word Scramble** handout to spell “FOLLOW ME.” Then they can attach the letters to the **Jesus** handout. They could also color and decorate it. As they are working, discuss the call of Jesus to His disciples and their response. Once the children have unscrambled the words, discuss how the disciples followed Jesus. Ask the children what they might need to give up to follow Jesus, or what they would be willing to give up.

4. Testimony

Invite someone to share his testimony of how he heard Christ’s call to receive him and be His child.

5. Ball Game

Divide the group into two equal teams. Assign the same Bible character name to one child on each team. For example, there will be one “Abraham” on each team. Suggested names are: Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Miriam, Aaron, Samuel, Deborah, David, Daniel, Esther, Daniel, Nehemiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, Joseph, Peter, John, Matthew, Luke, and Paul. (You might consider avoiding Bible names that also belong to children in your class, if you think this might be confusing.)

Line up the children facing each other. Do not match pairs. You will need a tennis ball. Place the ball in the middle and call the name of a Bible person. The two people with that name must run to the middle and try to be the first to get the ball. The person who grabs the ball first gains a point for his team.

Variations: Roll the ball into the middle as you call the name. Or place the children in a circle rather than in two rows.

Remind the children that just as their response to your call to them should be immediate and positive, they should respond in the same way to the call of God.

6. Obstacle Course

Set up an obstacle course. Make it difficult or unpleasant in spots. For example, lead the children under a low object, forcing them to crawl on their bellies. Have the children line up and tell them, “Follow me.” Periodically, as you are leading them through the course, repeat the phrase, “Follow me.” When you are finished, talk about when it was difficult to follow. Ask the children if they were tempted to sidestep an obstacle and go their own way. Talk about what Jesus meant when He said, “Follow Me.”

7. Relay Race

Ask each child to print his name on a slip of paper. Place all the slips in a hat or other container. Line the children up side by side. Mark start and finish lines for a relay race. Explain that the goal of the game is to get to the finish line first. The child who reaches the finish line first wins. Each time you call a person’s name, that person may take three giant steps. Pull names from the hat. After reading a name, put it back in the hat. Remind the children that they cannot respond unless they

are called. Tell them that just as you are calling them, so God calls people. (Note: If there are many children playing the game, you will need to call the names rapidly so the game does not drag on.)

Variation: Rather than three giant steps each time, vary the instructions (e.g., baby steps, frog jumps, hops, etc.). Be sure to give the instruction before the name is called.

8. Memory Verse Game

Play a memory verse game from the Appendix.

Send Home

- Parent Page for Lesson 1 (for each child, includes the curriculum scope and sequence chart)

Be Bigger

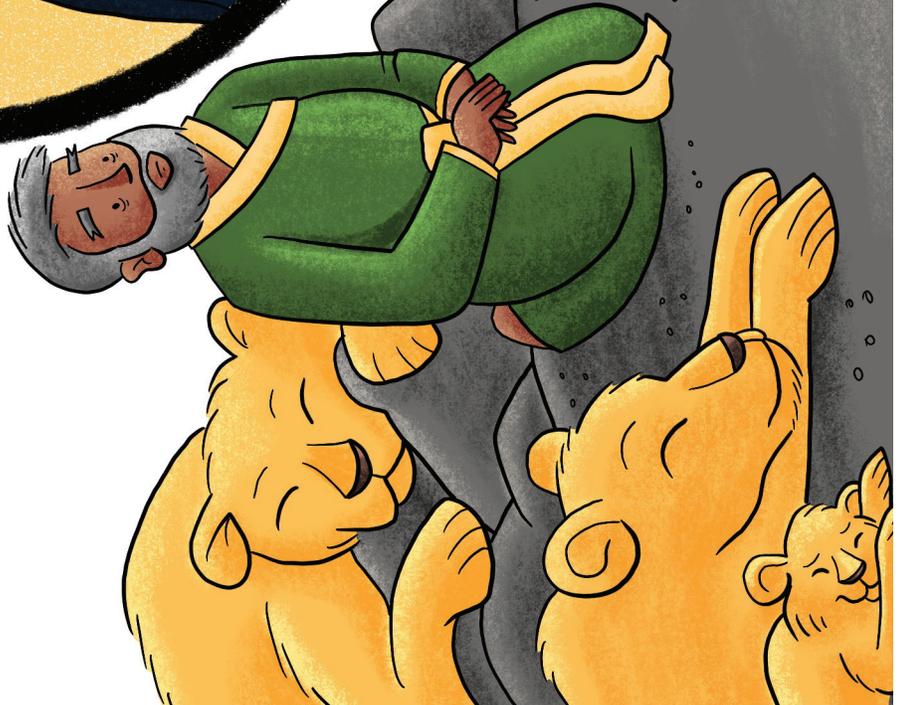
More

Valuable

Prettier

More Durable





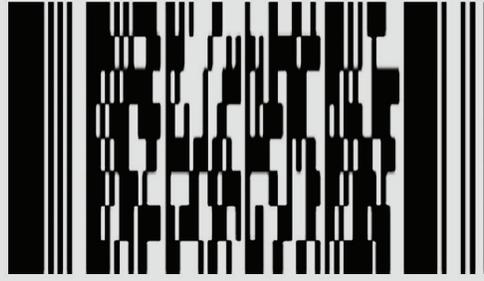


You're
Invited!



Sam's great big
birthday bash!

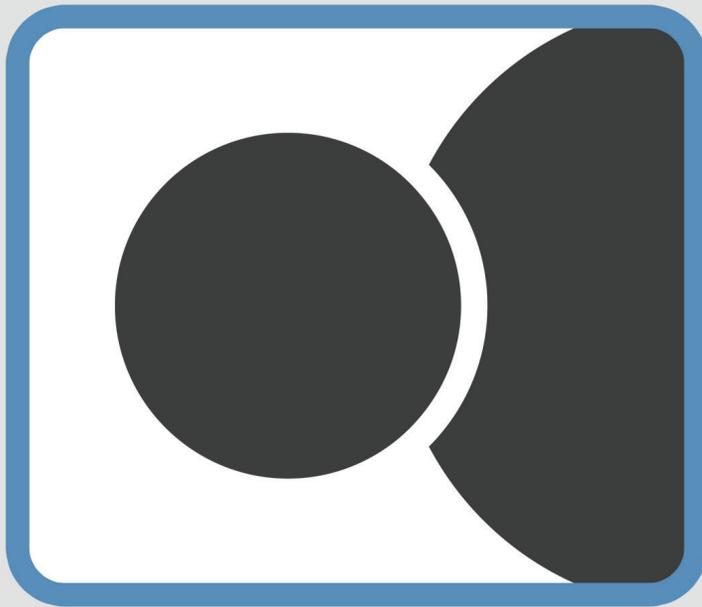




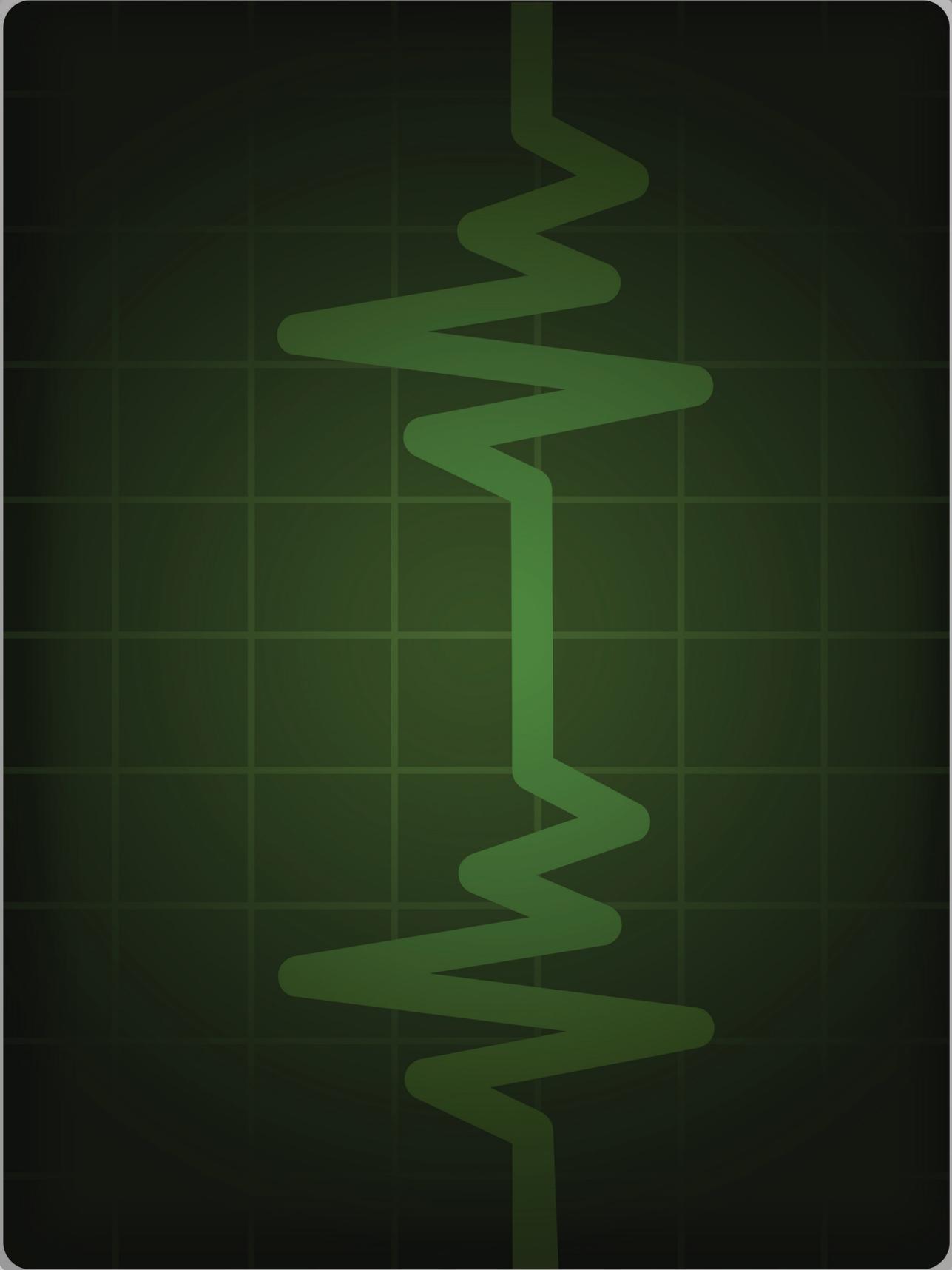
DR. WILSON

Surgeon

ID: 12345

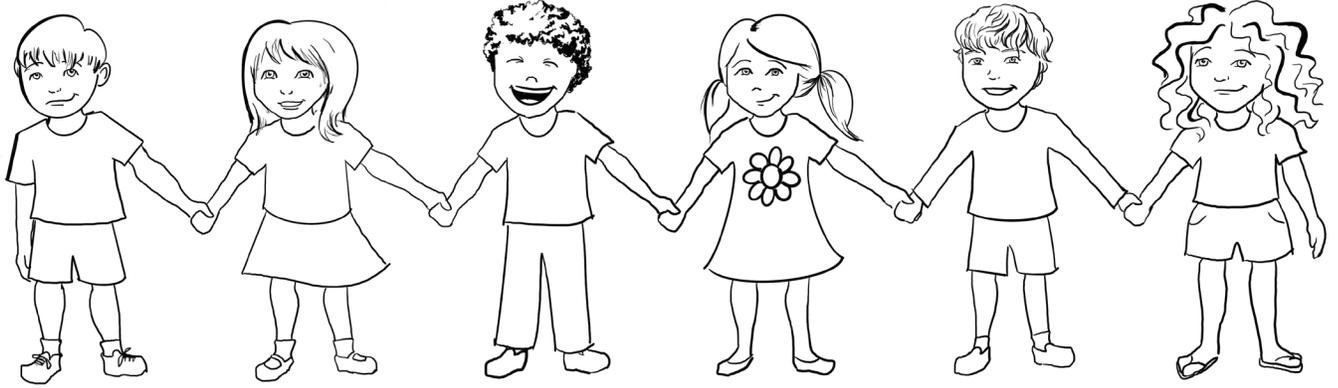


MERCY GENERAL HOSPITAL

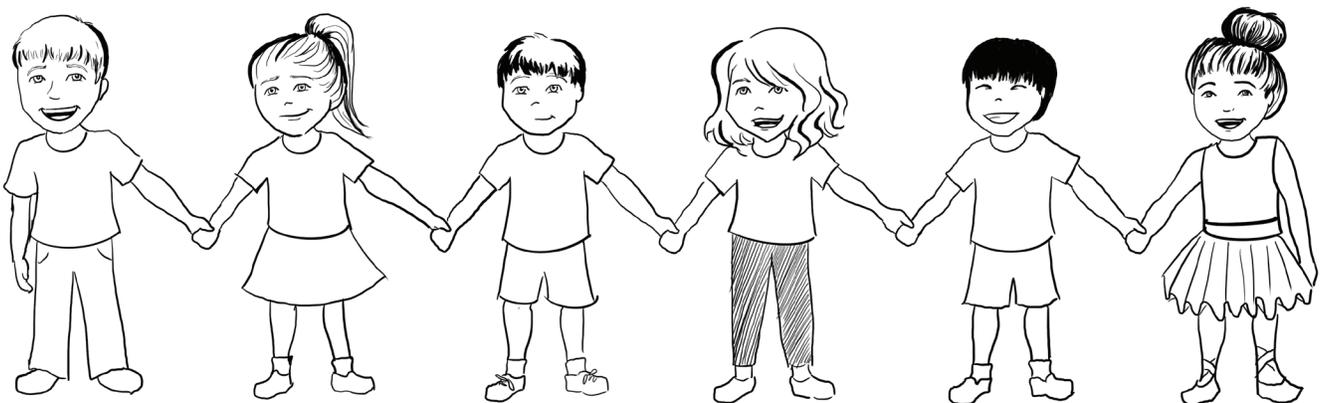








BUT TO ALL WHO DID
RECEIVE HIM,
WHO BELIEVED IN HIS
NAME, HE GAVE THE
RIGHT TO BECOME
CHILDREN OF GOD,
—JOHN 1:12



The Call of God Sample Lesson 1

L

M

W

E

F

L

O

O

Cut out the letters and use them to spell two words that show how Jesus calls His disciples. Attach these words to the sheet with the picture of Jesus. Then color and decorate the Jesus sheet.

