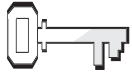


Jesus Makes New Friends



References

Matthew 9:9-13; *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 272–275



Memory Verse

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners” (Matthew 9:13, NIV).

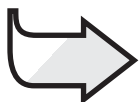


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God invites everyone to be part of His family.

Feel a desire to share God’s love with their community.

Respond by inviting others to be part of God’s family.



The Message

God invites everyone to join His family.

Monthly Theme

Jesus shows us how to love one another.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jesus sees Matthew sitting in his tax booth and says, “Follow Me.” Matthew follows Jesus. He holds a feast and invites his friends, who are tax collectors and social outcasts. The Pharisees criticize Jesus for mixing with sinners. Jesus responds by reminding them that healthy people do not need a doctor. He has not come for the righteous, but for sinners.

This is a lesson about community.

When Jesus lived on this earth, He spent time with social outcasts and sinners. As His followers, we are called to follow His example by being friendly to everyone that we might help some learn of Jesus.

Teacher Enrichment

“Of the Roman officials in Palestine, none were more hated than the publicans. The fact that the taxes were imposed by a foreign power was a continual irritation to the Jews, being a reminder that their independence had departed. And the taxgatherers were not merely the instruments of Roman oppression; they were extortioners on their own account, enriching themselves at the expense of the people. A Jew who accepted this office at the hands of the Romans was looked upon as betraying the honor of his nation. He was despised as an apostate, and was classed with the vilest of society.

“To this class belonged Levi-Matthew, who, after the four disciples at Gennesaret, was the next to be called to Christ’s service. The Pharisees had judged Matthew according to his employment, but Jesus saw in this man a heart open for the reception of truth. Matthew had listened to the Saviour’s teaching. As the convicting Spirit of God revealed his sinfulness, he longed to seek help from Christ; but he was accustomed to the exclusiveness of the rabbis, and had no thought that this Great Teacher would notice him” (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 272).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Find a Partner</i> B. <i>I Like You Because . . .</i> C. <i>Breaking In</i>	none music none
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> container world map or picture of globe
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	Bible-times costumes, table none Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>All Inclusive</i>	old clothes
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>All Are Invited</i>	invitations (see p. 116), pencils

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Find a Partner

Form pairs and have the children stand in two lines. One person should not have a partner. Say: **Hold your partner’s hands to form an arched tunnel.** [Name of child without partner] **will go through the tunnel, choose a partner, take them by the hand, and join the end of the line. The person without a partner now goes through the tunnel and finds a new partner.** Continue until all have had a turn.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did you choose [name] to be your partner? What does it mean to be a friend? How do you choose your friends? Who is the best friend of all? Why? God invites everyone to be more than friends. He invites them to be part of His family. And that leads us to our message for today:**



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

Say that with me.

You Need:
• music

B. I Like You Because . . .

Have the children form a circle and walk around to music. Choose one child to stand in the middle. When the music stops, the child in the middle chooses someone and says something nice to/about them. That child then stands in the middle. The same child cannot stand in the middle more than once. Give every child a chance to stand in the middle.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why do you think we did this activity? Why do we want to say good things about one another? When can we do that? How do you feel when someone says something nice about you?** (good, happy, nice) **Who usually says nice things about you?** (family, friends, teachers, etc.) **How do you choose your friends?**

Sometimes even family and friends say hurtful things or do not include us. God does not want to exclude anyone. He invites everyone to be part of His family. And that’s our message for today:



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

Say that with me.

C. Breaking In

Have the children form groups of six. Say: **Five of you in each group form a tight circle. It is your job to make sure that the sixth person cannot get in your circle. The sixth person has to try to break into the group.** Take turns at being part of the group and being on the outside trying to get in.

Debriefing

Ask: **Who liked being in the circle? What was it like to be on the outside?** (not nice, shut out, unwanted, etc.) **What was it like to shut someone out of the circle?** (Some will say it was fun, others will say they felt bad, felt guilty.) **Have you ever been kept from an activity or group? Do we sometimes exclude people by our actions? How? God does not want to exclude anyone. Our message says:**



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise Any Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "O, How He Loves You and Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 28)
- "Jesus Loves Children" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 37)
- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139)
- "I Will Make You Fishers of Men" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 135)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize community in the story.



Offering

Say: **When we give our offerings, we help give God's invitation to join His family.**



Prayer

In advance, cut up the map or picture so each child will have at least two pieces. Say: **I have a puzzle and wonder if you can help me.** Let the children put the puzzle together. Ask them to find different countries. **Are there any countries that God is not interested in?** (No, God invites everyone to be part of His family.) **Take a piece of the puzzle. During our prayer when I say "we pray for people in..." each of you name the countries on your piece of map.**

You Need:

- world map or picture of globe

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costumes
- table

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Matthew, Jesus, Pharisee.
The rest of the children can be the crowd with Jesus and/or the guests at the party.

Have an adult dress as Matthew and tell the story. The other characters interact as the story progresses. Have an adult helper prompt them as necessary.

When you say:	Children do:
tax collector	Point down.
Roman(s)	Shake head.
Jesus	Point upward.

Read or tell the story.

My name is Matthew. I am one of **Jesus'** disciples. I have many friends, friends who seem more like a family, but it was not always like this. Let me tell you what happened.

When the **Romans** conquered Judea, they demanded that all the Jews pay tax. Most people don't like giving money away, especially to an occupying army. Most people were angry about it and tried to think of ways to avoid paying. I'm a Jew, and I had a job as a **tax collector** for the **Romans**. My job was to make sure that people paid. I'm not trying to defend myself. That's what I was hired to do. It was a job and a chance to earn some money.

When I started working as a **tax collector**, all my old friends stopped speaking to me. My family did not want anything to do with me. The **Romans** did not really like me either. I was their servant, and they didn't talk to servants. All they wanted was their money. In fact, the only people who would talk to me were

other **tax collectors**.

People say that all **tax collectors** are liars, cheats, and thieves. There are good **tax collectors** and bad ones. The **Romans** did not pay us for collecting their taxes; they just assumed that we would charge people a bit more. The extra we could keep as wages. I must admit some **tax collectors** were greedy and did cheat a lot of people.

For some time I had been hearing about a man called **Jesus**. Even if people did not talk to me, they talked to each other while they were waiting to pay. I listened, and usually knew what was going on in the city.

Jesus sounded amazing. He healed people who had never been able to walk or see. I saw them running and leaping just for fun. They said that He forgave sins. I knew that I was cheating people. And I knew it was wrong. I wondered if **Jesus** could forgive my sins.

Then one day something wonderful happened. It happened like this.

I turned to my **Roman** guard and said, "It sounds like there is a riot in the street. I wonder what it can be."

[Matthew mutters to himself.] "Surely the people are not rebelling against the **Romans**. It will only cause more trouble. And there will be more soldiers on the streets. Believe me, I know how the **Romans** work. *[Jesus and crowd come and stand in front of Matthew.]*

[Matthew looks up.] "**Jesus!**"

[Jesus speaks.] "Matthew! Come!

Follow Me!"

When **Jesus** said that to me, I just got up and left everything to the other **tax collectors** and followed Him.

Once I decided to follow **Jesus**, I had a big party for all my friends. I wanted them to meet Him too. *[All sit down around a table.]*

The Scribes and Pharisees came to see what was happening. You cannot say that they cannot come in. They come anyway. When they saw that **Jesus** was my guest, and that He was eating with the other **tax collectors**, they were shocked.

[Pharisee:] **“Jesus! Why are You eating with tax collectors and sinners?”**

[Jesus:] **“People who are healthy do not need a doctor. Only the sick do. I have not come to help the righteous to repent, but to lead sinners to repent.”**

His answer gave us hope. **Jesus** welcomes everyone into His family—especially sinners! And He wants you to be in His family too.

Debriefing

Ask: **What was Matthew’s job? Did people like him? Why?**

What if no one wanted to be friends with you? How would you feel? (sad, lonely, left out)

What would you have done when Jesus said, “Come, follow Me”? (followed, wondered what to do about money, said to wait until I find someone to take over, etc.)

Why did Matthew have a party? (So his friends could meet Jesus.) **What did the Pharisees ask Jesus?** (Why are You eating with sinners?)

What does this story tell us about Jesus? (He welcomes everyone, He wants everyone to join His family.) **Do you want to be a part of Jesus’ family?**

Let’s say our message for today:



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

Memory Verse

Repeat the memory verse several times until the children can say it from memory. Use the actions with the words.

I	Point to self.
have not	Shake head.
come	Beckon.
to call	Cup hands on either side of mouth.
the righteous,	Point to class.
but sinners.	Point away from class.
Matthew 9:13	Palms together, then open.

Bible Study

Say: **Matthew left everything to follow Jesus, to become one of His disciples and friends. Let’s discover some of the things the Bible tells us about being part of God’s family.** Read and discuss the following texts together or form three groups and have each group read one text and discuss it with the class. Adults assist as necessary.

Luke 6:37, 38

Matthew 25:31-40

Matthew 28:16-20

Debriefing

Ask: **Who is included in God’s family?** (everyone, poor, rich, sick, healthy, young, old, etc.)

How does God expect us to behave toward people who are not yet part of His family? (He wants us to treat them as if they were, to invite them to join His family.) **How should we respond if they are not nice?** (Try to be positive and helpful.)

Let’s read Matthew 28:20 together.

What does Jesus promise us? (No matter what happens, He is with us.) Read aloud Matthew 28:20, last part, again.

Let’s say our message together:



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:
• old clothes

All Inclusive

Say: **There are many different reasons why we sometimes exclude people. I need some volunteers to help me.** Call attention to the old clothes. Ask for a volunteer to wear or display them. Have other volunteers role play the following (or choose activities that are more appropriate to your situation). Discuss each situation before going on to the next. After each role play ask: **What can we do to include this person?** Accept all ideas.

Someone wearing old clothes
Someone with a stutter

Someone with a limp
Three people—one much younger than the others. The older two exclude the younger.

Debriefing

Ask: **What is it like to be on the outside?** (lonely, unpleasant, etc.)
When we see someone on the outside, what can we do to include them?
Summarize the ideas you have talked about. **Who is happy when we do this?** (God/Jesus) **Why?** (He wants everyone to be part of His family.) **Let's say today's message together:**



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

For Lesson 11. Sharing the Lesson, page 117.

YOU ARE INVITED
TO A SPECIAL EVENT PLANNED BY THE CHILDREN
OF THE _____
SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH PRIMARY SABBATH
SCHOOL CLASS ON SATURDAY, _____ (DATE)
AT _____ O'CLOCK.
PLEASE COME!

SIGNED: _____
CHURCH ADDRESS: _____
CHURCH PHONE: _____

4

Sharing the Lesson

All Are Invited

In advance, plan a thirteenth Sabbath program, or other special event to which you can invite people. If your church has planned some meetings, the children could help with distributing invitations.

Say: **God wants everyone to be part of His family. Let's plan to invite people to come and be a part of our church family.**

Give out the invitations (see p. 116) and help the children decide whom they would like to invite. Decide on the event and talk about what you need to do to prepare for it. Assign tasks as needed.

As an alternative, have the children invite a friend to your regular Sabbath School class.

Debriefing

Allow time for appropriate responses.

Ask: **To whom will you give your invitation? What will you say?**

What do you need to do to get ready for [name event].

Do you really want to invite others

to be a part of God's family? Let's say our message together:



GOD INVITES EVERYONE TO JOIN HIS FAMILY.

Before ending this activity, pray for each child and for the person they choose to invite to attend the event you have planned. Encourage the children to invite family, friends, and others who may not attend church anywhere.

Closing

GRUG (Group Hug)

Have the children join hands and form a circle.

Say: **God wants us all to feel we are part of His family. When I count to three let's put our arms around each other's shoulders.** Allow time.

Now, step forward until our circle is very tight and have a grug or a group hug.

Have the children stand where they are and pray that they will know that they are part of God's family and will welcome others into His family, too.

You Need:

- invitations (see p. 116)
- pencils

Jesus Makes New Friends

References

Matthew 9:9-13;
The Desire of Ages,
pp. 272–275

Memory Verse

“I have not come
to call the right-
eous, but sinners”
(Matthew 9:13,
NIV).

The Message

God invites every-
one to join His
family.

Have you ever felt very lonely? As if no one cares about you? And that you don't have any friends? That was just how Matthew felt until he met Jesus. Then everything changed. It probably happened like this . . .

When the Romans conquered Judea, they demanded that all the Jews pay taxes. No one likes giving money away—especially to an occupying army. Most people were angry about it. Many tried to think of ways to avoid paying the taxes. The Romans hired Jewish people to help collect the taxes. And that's how Matthew got a job as a tax collector. His job was to make sure that people paid.

Soon all his old friends stopped speaking to him. His family did not want anything to do with him. The Romans did not really like him either. They treated him like a servant and usually ignored him. All they wanted was their money. The only people who would talk to him were other tax collectors.

People used to say that all tax collectors were liars, cheats, and thieves. But there were good tax collectors and bad ones. The Romans did not pay them for collecting the taxes. They just

assumed that the tax collectors would charge people a bit more. The extra money they collected was theirs to keep. So most tax collectors charged people more than they should.

For some time, Matthew had heard about a man called Jesus. Even if people did not talk to him, they talked to each other. And while they were waiting to pay, Matthew listened to them talk. That's how he learned what was going on in the city.

Jesus sounded amazing. He healed people who had never been able to walk or see. Matthew sometimes saw them running and leaping just for fun. People said that Jesus forgave sins. Matthew wondered about that. He knew he did wrong things. Could Jesus forgive his sins? Would Jesus even want to talk to him?

Then one day something wonderful happened. At first Matthew wondered if there was a riot in the street. He felt uneasy. Surely the people were not rebelling against the Romans! That would only cause more trouble. And there would be more soldiers patrolling the streets. What was happening?

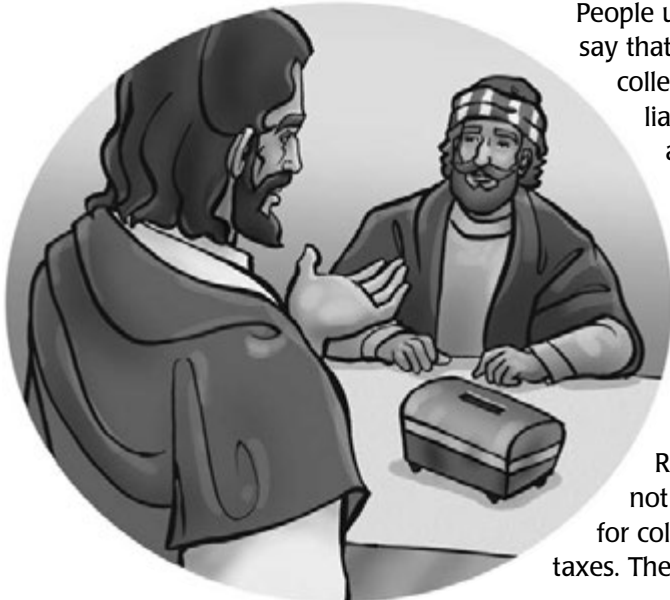
Suddenly Jesus was standing in front of Matthew—speaking to him. Jesus said, “Matthew! Come! Follow Me!”

Matthew did not hesitate. He got up, left everything to the other tax collectors, and followed Jesus.

Matthew decided to follow Jesus, to be one of His helpers. He wanted others to know, so he gave a big party for all his friends. He wanted them to meet Jesus too.

The Scribes and Pharisees came to see what was happening. They saw that Jesus was Matthew's guest. They saw Him eating with the tax collectors. And they were shocked!

“Jesus!” they said. “Why are You eating with tax collectors and sinners?”



Jesus looked up and smiled. "People who are healthy do not need a doctor," He said. "Only the sick need a doctor. I have not come to tell the righteous to repent. I have come to help sinners repent."

Jesus' answer gave everyone hope. No one is to be left out of God's family. Everyone is welcome to join.

What about you? Have you joined Jesus' family?

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- As a tax collector Matthew was good at counting. Go for a walk with your family and see who can count the most people you see. Tax collectors worked for the Romans. March like a Roman soldier guarding the taxes Matthew collected.
- Using a large coin draw 11 circles. Cut out the shapes. Write one word of your memory verse on each coin. Mix them up and then try to put them in the right order. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Thank God for being with you during the Sabbath.

Sunday

- During worship read and discuss Matthew 9:9-13. Why did the Pharisees think Jesus should not eat at Matthew's house?
- Plan with your family to invite some of your friends to your house this week. Tell them about Jesus asking Matthew to follow Him. And play Follow the Leader with them. Take turns as the leader.
- Thank Jesus for your friends.

Monday

- During worship with your family read Matthew 9:12, 13. What did Jesus mean when He talked about the sick needing a doctor?
- Hold two fingers on your wrist to feel your pulse. Count the times your heart beats in a minute. Now do the same for two other people.
- Visit someone who is sick or elderly and cannot get about. Do something to make them happy.
- Thank God for your family's good health.

Tuesday

- During worship today read about another Pharisee and a tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. Why did Jesus say that the tax collector was

blessed? Ask God to help you have the attitude of that tax collector.

- Look up the word *tax* in a Bible concordance. How many times does it appear? Can you find another story about collecting taxes?
- Thank God for your family's income.

Wednesday

- Read and discuss Matthew 17:24-27 during family worship. What does it tell us about paying taxes?
- Review your memory verse using your coins.
- Look in a Bible dictionary or an encyclopedia to find out about coins used in Bible times. If there are pictures, share them with your family. How are they different from the coins you use today?
- Find out the value of the coins and paper money used where you live.
- Ask God to help you always to put Him first.

Thursday

- With your family, read and discuss Matthew 28:19. Who does Jesus say is welcome to join His family? Whom do you want to invite to join?
- Think of ways to tell others about Jesus' invitation to be part of His family. Practice what you might say and do.
- Make a poster telling people that Jesus wants them in His family.
- Ask God to give you opportunities to talk to others.

Friday

- Read Matthew 9:9-13 again and act out the story with your family. Say your memory verse together.
- Sing "I Will Make You Fishers of Men" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 135). Then ask God to lead you to help others become part of His family.
- Ask God to be with your family and bless you on the Sabbath.