

WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

OPPOSITE DAY

THE BIG IDEA

Following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.

THE BIBLE

Jesus Calls The Disciples: Luke 5:1-11;
Isaiah 55:8-9

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Worship

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You can lead kids in worship with any songs you like best, but here are a few songs that go along with this month's theme. Make sure you have purchased any licenses required to play or perform these songs. For more information, [read this!](#)*
 - "Everywhere I Go" (Tim Timmons)
 - "To The Edge" (Vineyard Kids)
 - "Your Love For Me" (North Point Kids)
 - "Believe It" (Gateway Kids Worship)

ACTIVITY | Fishing For Worms

- Welcome to our first Opposite Day this month! Show me a sad face if you're happy to be here!
- We are talking about opposites because we are going to find out together how sometimes Jesus taught things that seemed backward and upside down. But of course, we'll discover that he was right!
- In today's Bible story, we are going to learn about people who used to fish for a living. So let's do some fishing of our own! But since it's opposite day, let's try to catch worms instead of fish.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Prepare two containers with gummy worms and other edible items such as Goldfish crackers, Skittles, etc. Ask two volunteers to come up to the front and give them each a spoon. Whoever can get the most worms with their spoon and put it in the bucket in one minute wins.*

- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Embrace the “opposites” theme by challenging preteens to use their feet instead of their hands. You can play the same game but lay down a tarp, have items in a shallow tray, and instead of using spoons, they can use their toes!
- ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Let kids “fish” for the candies using their hands. For added tactile fun, cover the items in whipped cream.

ACTIVITY | Simon Doesn't Say

- Let's try another game of doing things the opposite of the way they're supposed to go!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Pick a leader for a game of “Simon Doesn't Say.” The kids will have to do the action the leader tells them not to do (e.g., Don't jump, don't run in place, don't do jumping jacks, etc.). If they don't, they're out! Encourage the leader of the game to get creative with their commands and move around the space.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Partner kids up and have them work together to figure out what they should/shouldn't do. For a simpler game, play “Simon Says” the usual way with someone to model the actions that are being called out.
- Great job NOT following directions! It was okay to do the opposite of what you were told to do because that was the point of the game.
- But in real life, whenever someone we trust tells us to do – or not to do – something, it's because they know that's the best decision for us. In moments like that, we have to learn how to follow those directions instead of doing it our own way.
- We'll hear a little bit more about how we can do that today!

POLL | Opposite World

- Let's pretend we live in Opposite World! In Opposite World, we like the things we dislike and we don't care about the things we usually love! Ready to vote? Remember to pick the opposite of what you'd ordinarily choose.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Create a list of things your kids traditionally really like and really dislike. Have them give you a “thumbs up” for things they dislike and a “thumbs down” for things they like.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

BIBLE STORY | Jesus Calls the Disciples

- For today's Bible story, we're going to do things a little opposite . . . you're going to teach me!
- After we read the Bible story together, you will be put in groups. Each group will get a chance to retell the Bible story we just heard. You can reenact the story, write a song, or even make up a dance. Be creative!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Luke 5:1-11 aloud twice. Pause periodically as you read the passage the second time and have the kids shout out the next word to keep them engaged. After reading the story twice, divide the kids into groups of four to five. Give each group a bin of props to help with their retelling of the story. Give groups ten minutes to prepare a way to retell and interpret the story to everyone. Provide a Bible or printout of the passage so kids can reference it as they prepare.

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Either using their own device or borrowing one from a leader, have a different preteen be in charge of recording each groups' retelling of the Bible story. Then, using Vimeo, YouTube, or a file-sharing site like Dropbox, make these videos available to families to show what kids learned today.*

- Now, it's time to see what you all came up with!
- **What do you think you would have done if you were in the boat and saw all of those fish caught in the nets?**
- In our story today, the disciples listened to Jesus even though they probably felt like they knew better. They were pro fishers, after all. But when they followed Jesus' instructions, they realized they made the right call to obey!

BIG IDEA | Following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.

- Just because some things are opposites of each other, that doesn't necessarily make one good and the other bad. We find that sometimes opposites go together really well.
- We see this most obviously in the color wheel. Certain colors are seen as opposites: red and green, yellow and purple, blue and orange. But we call them "complementary" colors because even though they are so different, they go together really well!
- The opposites Jesus taught us are things that complement us, too. Let's see if you can find the "opposite" colors on this color wheel to reveal today's Big Idea.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Create a large [color wheel](#) that you will use every week (see your Shop & Prep List for details). Put up only the primary colors (i.e., red, yellow, blue), leaving empty spaces where volunteers can come up and fill in with the secondary colors (i.e., green, purple, orange) to complete the wheel and reveal the Big Idea.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Add images to the complementary colors so kids can identify opposites easier. For example, Yellow/Purple = Sun and moon; Orange/Blue = Hot mug and ice water; Red/Green = Happy face and sad face.*
- Today's Big Idea is NOT . . . **Following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves!**
- Okay, just kidding, that IS our Big Idea! Happy Opposite Day!

VIDEO | Opposite Day, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

ACTIVITY | Balloon Fishing

- In today's story, we heard about how the boat's nets almost burst because there were so many fish!
- I wonder what that was like. When I count to three, you'll have one minute to capture as many balloons in your net as you can!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pick two kids and give them each a net. Blow up balloons and place them around your space. Give the volunteers one minute to gather the balloons. For an opposite twist, the kid with the fewest balloons wins!*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *Instead of a net, try using something larger like a laundry basket or trash bag to put balloons in once caught.*

- **What did Jesus tell the men they would be fishers of?** Yes! Jesus told them they would become fishers of people!
- **What do you think it means to “fish for people”?**

OBJECT LESSON | How Many?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Grab a fishing pole and fishing net for this next illustration. You can also use images of each object.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Place a certain number of gummy fish (i.e. Swedish Fish) or other sea creature-shaped candies in a jar. Have preteens guess how many are in there. They can write their name and guess on a slip of paper. Collect their paper using a small [aquarium net](#). The winner gets the entire jar!
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Get a [magnetic fishing game](#) and put the fish in a bin of water. Set a time for one minute then have kids first try getting the fish one at a time using the pole. Afterward, give them a net and have them see how much quicker and easier they can scoop up the fish.
- **How many fish can you catch with a fishing pole?** [Hold up the pole.]
- **How many fish do you think you can catch with this net?** [Hold up the net.]
- That’s right — a lot more! Jesus told the disciples they would fish for people, but it wouldn’t just be one or two people. These same disciples later went all over the world telling people about Jesus!
- Now they wouldn’t have been able to do that if they only listened to themselves and not to Jesus. That’s why a lot of times, **following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.** And when we follow Jesus, we can be like the disciples and help others follow Jesus, too.

BIBLE | Isaiah 55:8-9

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Split the group in half and have them sit on opposite sides of the room. Read each scenario below and ask one side of the room to come up with a “me” way to respond and the other side to come up with what might be Jesus’ way. Feel free to insert your own scenarios. Then read Isaiah 55:8-9 together.
- We learned today that **following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.** For the following situations, half of you have to think of how we might want to act if we were not following Jesus. The other half of you tell us how Jesus might want us to respond.
 - **Scenario 1:** Your mom asks you to clean up your toys, but doesn’t say anything to your little brother. You know you should listen to your mom but you don’t think it’s fair that you have to clean up alone. **What do you do?**
 - **Scenario 2:** Everyone is excited you have a new member at church, but you find out it’s someone you don’t really get along with at school. **What do you do?**
 - **Scenario 3:** You find out two of your friends have been saying some mean things about you behind your back. **What do you do?**
- **Let’s read Isaiah 55:8-9. What does it mean that our ways are not Jesus’ ways? How does that change how we think and act?**

NOW WHAT? *What does God want us to do about it?*

STORY | Following Myself

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about a time when you made a wrong or selfish choice and it backfired, and how, if you'd followed what God wanted for them, the situation would've turned out differently.*
- **Can you think of a time when you insisted on doing something your way and it didn't work out?**
- There are so many times when we think we have all the answers. And sometimes we do! But even when we think we're right, it's always best to first think about whether or not our choices seem like something God would want us to do. When we do that, we will see more clearly that **following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.**

RESPONSE | Empty vs. Full

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Prepare a glass of water that's filled halfway. Give each kid a paper cup and a permanent marker. You can also have them draw a cup on a piece of paper and have them write on a flat surface.*
- **How would you describe this glass of water? Is it half-full or half-empty?**
- This example is often used to tell the difference between people who are optimists (people who think positively) and those who are pessimists (people who think negatively).
 - That doesn't mean that an optimist's life is happier than a pessimist's. It just means that an optimist has learned to look on the bright side of things even when things aren't great.
 - Because this glass is *both* half-full *and* half-empty – they're both true. But we can choose to focus on the more positive, hopeful things.
- When we follow Jesus, we can do a similar practice. There are times when we are going to do things our way and there's nothing wrong with that. But sometimes our ways can be selfish and unkind. Whenever we want to react that way, we need to pause and override what we would normally do and choose what Jesus would want us to do!
- Draw a line all the way around the middle of your cup.
 - On the top part, write or draw something that worries you or brings you down.
 - On the bottom part, write or draw a way that you can see your situation differently because you have Jesus in your life.
- Instead of dealing with things on our own, we can take them to God and ask for help because **following Jesus is following the opposite of ourselves.**

MEMORY VERSE | Opposite Say

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Practice this month's memory verse from II Corinthians 12:9a by projecting the memory verse graphic (from your Programming folder) on a screen. Have kids read it with you once. Then have them say it a few more times by doing it in the opposite of what you tell them. A few examples might include . . .*

- Say it as quietly/loud as you can.
- Say it while sitting/standing.
- Say it really fast/slowly.
- Say it with your eyes open/closed.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for always knowing what's best for us. Help us to follow your ways because your ways are better than anything we can do on our own. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- Did the fishermen on the boat catch a lot of fish at the beginning of the story?
- What happened when they let down their nets into the water?
- What did Jesus tell the fishermen they would be catching instead of fish?
- Read Isaiah 55:8-9. Is it a good thing that God's thoughts are not like our own? Why?
- What is an example of following yourself instead of Jesus?
- How can you follow Jesus today?
- Who is a person you can "fish for" by telling them about Jesus?

ACTIVITY | Magnetic Maze

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a paper plate and have them create a circular maze (it can just be a [simple spiral](#)) and write "Jesus" in the middle. Have them draw a picture of themselves on a small piece of paper and attach a paper clip to it and place it on the plate at the starting point. Using the magnetic wand underneath the plate, have them guide their picture to the center of the maze. Check out [this page](#) for more details and instructions on how to make your own magnetic wand.
- Even though it would have been easy to ignore what Jesus said, the disciples were drawn to Jesus . . . like magnets! We can also draw closer to Jesus when we choose his ways over our own because **following Jesus is the opposite of following ourselves.**

MEMORY VERSE | II Corinthians 12:9a (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/II-Corinthians12-9a.
- Let's practice this month's memory verse together!
- **"My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."**