



## Called to Follow

### Lesson Overview

Week of January 10

#### 1 Life Need:

Discuss our need for Jesus' mission in our lives.

#### 2 Bible Learning:

Study how Jesus called His disciples to participate in His mission.

#### Suggested Material

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Poster and Reproducible Sheet—Called into His Light

#### 3 Bible Application:

Tell how we can participate in Jesus' mission.

#### Suggested Material:

■ *Adult Teacher's Resource Kit*: Reproducible sheet—Jesus' Mission: Our Mission

#### 4 Life Response:

Choose to participate in Jesus' mission.

**Church/Home Theme:**  
Christ Jesus Is Our Savior

**Lesson Focus:**  
Participate in Jesus' mission.

**Lesson Scripture:**  
Luke 5:1-11

As more people heard about Jesus' preaching and miracles, the crowd following Him increased. At one point, He used a boat on the Sea of Galilee as His pulpit. The boat belonged to a fisherman named Simon Peter. This initial encounter with the Savior eventually led to Peter becoming one of Jesus' most faithful disciples, totally involved in the Kingdom mission.

**Catching Fish**—After Jesus finished His teaching from Peter's boat, He offered a thank you gift. He challenged Peter to push away from the shore and let down his nets. Initially, Peter protested—they had fished all night without any success. In spite of Peter's apprehensions, he called Jesus "Master," which meant you are the boss, and he obeyed Jesus' instructions. Their catch was enormous, so large other fishermen had to lend a hand.

**Catching People**—Jesus' teaching on Peter's boat and the miraculous catch of fish caused Peter to realize Jesus' holiness and his own unworthiness. Peter felt so undeserving of being in His presence. Jesus understood Peter's fear and inner turmoil. But the Savior's mission was for all to realize the unfailing love of the Father. Jesus came to deal with man's sin issue so they could draw near to God and get to know Him.

Jesus used this occasion of the overabundance of fish to help Peter understand God's calling on his life. Jesus said to Peter that this event was only a depiction of the true "catching" Peter was going to do—the catching of people through the good news of the Gospel. That day Peter walked away from his fishing business and became one of Jesus' disciples.

**God's Ambassador**—The call to Christian discipleship is still being extended. Becoming a believer in Christ means you become His "ambassador" (2 Cor. 5:20). Paul used this term to bring home several points. As believers walk daily on this earth, they are to be Christ's representatives. God's people are to stand up for His principles, especially the Gospel message. Christians answer Christ's call to be reconciled to God. Now they are to participate in the ministry with the goal in mind of helping all humanity to understand why Jesus came and died. It's the Christian's job to get the message out: God longs to reconcile everyone to Himself.

### As Your Students Arrive

Ask your students to think of a time they were on a "mission" of some kind. An example might be a "mission" to finally finish a project they had started. Guide your students to note that Jesus' mission was one of redemption and reconciliation. Jesus

drew men to God by demonstrating love and forgiveness. Encourage them to discuss how we can know Jesus' mission from His actions here on earth. This week's lesson provides us with an opportunity to learn how Jesus went about His mission while on earth and how we can participate in His mission.

### **Link to Last Week**

If someone from the class was able to share the Gospel with another person this past week, let them share about it.

# 1 Life Need

**Discuss our need for Jesus' mission in our lives.**

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**W**hy are we doing this, again?" grunted Britany. The two women were bringing work out equipment into the gymnasium. Jasmine had asked the pastor of the large congregation to use the church's gymnasium. Jasmine and Britany's small church did not have one.

There were two things that the 32 year old was passionate about—Jesus and fitness. Jasmine found that several of her African-American girlfriends struggled with health and weight-related issues. Jasmine, who had battled weight issues in her teens, had become a fitness and nutrition expert.

Jasmine realized her mission was to use her knowledge of fitness and exercise to show the love of Christ and touch souls. Thus, Worship and Workout was created. She began in a circle with 10 minutes of prayer requests and prayer. A 45-minute cardio and strength-training session followed. The session concluded back in a circle for five minutes of praise reports. The cost was \$1 per session and was open to everyone.

Jasmine and Britany visited with many of the women after the class. One young woman, whom Jasmine was talking to, wanted to re-establish her relationship with Christ.

"Now I see why it's important to come early and stay late," said Britany, as the two women made it to their SUV. "All this work is worth it, to see just one person come to the Lord."

"Yes it is, Britany. Yes it is!"

- 1. How would you describe a mission, and how does it affect your actions?**
- 2. How did Jesus' mission affect His daily routine while here on earth?**
- 3. Why is Jesus' mission important and necessary for all mankind?**

**LESSON FOCUS:** Participate in Jesus' mission.

Read the anecdote in *Comprehensive Bible Study*, then form small groups for discussion and respond to **Questions 1, 2, and 3.**

For Question 1, people often think of a mission involving leaving your home for a foreign land to serve as a missionary, but a mission arises primarily from a conviction or passion about something. You don't have to be a Christian to have a mission. Non-Christians may partake in various missions—for example, social justice or political action. Also, help your students understand that our daily choices are affected by our mission. For example, those who have a mission to seek out equality in education will pursue opportunities to advocate for it.

For Question 2, your students may note that everything Jesus did here on earth was to fulfill His mission of drawing people to God through accepting Him. Discuss how people were drawn to Jesus and His mission through His actions.

Question 3 encourages your students to comprehend the importance of Jesus' mission to everyone. Guide them in discussing the consequences of not knowing and accepting Jesus' mission. Often, we don't understand and accept the eternal implications of not accepting Jesus' gift for us.

# 2 Bible Learning

Study how Jesus called His disciples to participate in His mission.



On the poster sheet, read the sixth paragraph, and on the poster, note the photo of a first century A.D. fishing boat like the one Jesus and His disciples would have used when fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

they were used to doing.

- The fishermen doubted if Jesus' request would be fruitful, but they obeyed Him anyway.

## SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 4

The crowd at the lake had become so large that Jesus needed to get onto one of the nearby fishing boats in order to preach to them. He saw two boats near the water's edge, left there by the fishermen who had spent the entire evening fishing and were

## SETTING OUT WITH DOUBT

Read Luke 5:1-5 and discuss these points of interest from the Scripture:

- Jesus was going about His daily routine when He observed the fishermen working.
- He continued teaching God's Word after joining the fishermen.
- Jesus' request of the fishermen wasn't anything different from what

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Growing Crowds

Although Jesus had been driven out of Nazareth (see Lesson 4), He went on preaching and healing throughout the region of Galilee—including healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39). Already, the crowds were becoming an issue. The closing verses of Luke 4 relate that Jesus had gone to a solitary place, probably to pray, and that the crowds had found Him and insisted He stay with them. However, "he said, 'I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent'" (Luke 4:43).

And as Luke 5 opens, we find Jesus again proclaiming the Good News. In fact, the size of the crowd forced Him to preach from a boat on the Lake of Gennesaret—better known as the Sea of Galilee. And it is in this unusual situation where Jesus calls His first disciples.

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## Setting Out with Doubt

*Luke 5:1-5, KJV*

1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

2 And saw two ships standing by the lake: but the fishermen were gone out of them, and were washing their nets.

3 And he entered into one of the ships, which was Simon's, and prayed him that he would thrust out a little from the land. And he sat down, and taught the people out of the ship.

4 Now when he had left speaking, he said unto Simon, Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught.

5 And Simon answering said unto him, Master, we have toiled all the night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net.

*Luke 5:1-5, NIV*

<sup>1</sup>One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup>He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

<sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

<sup>5</sup>Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

Once again, Jesus taught the people—although this time, instead of from inside of a synagogue, He preached in the open air, at the shores of the Lake of Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee). And once again, the crowds were eagerly "listening to the word of God" (vs. 1). The location may also be an indication that Jesus' ministry had already become too large for a synagogue to hold. The crowd was so large that Jesus needed to get onto one of the nearby fishing boats in order to effectively preach to them. He spied two boats near the water's edge, "left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets" (vs. 2). These men had spent the entire



Further commentary on this Scripture passage can be found on pp. 825-827 in *The Wiersbe Bible Commentary: New Testament*.

now cleaning up their equipment, ready to head home. Instead, Jesus asked them to take Him out on the lake.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 5

Simon and his crew were no doubt tired, but we see no objections from them; they “put out a little from shore” as Jesus requested. They were almost certainly honored to have this popular teacher on their boat. Jesus then sat down in the boat—the normal stance for teaching in those days—and taught the people from there.

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evening fishing and were now cleaning up their equipment, ready to head home. But Jesus had other plans for them.

He climbed into the boat belonging to Simon (Peter), “and asked him to put out a little from shore” (vs. 3) so He could preach to the crowds. Simon and his crew—who included the sons of Zebedee, James and John, who owned the other boat (vs. 10); and Simon’s brother Andrew (Matt. 4:18)—were no doubt tired but agreed, honored to have this popular Teacher on their boat. Jesus then sat down in the boat—the normal stance for teaching in those days—and taught the people from there.

After He had finished teaching, Jesus turned His attention to the fishermen. Instead of asking to go back to shore, He told Simon, “Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch” (vs. 4). At this point, Simon betrayed a bit of his exhaustion: “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything.” Clearly Simon thought it would be a waste of time to try fishing again, especially since it was late in the morning by this time, and he knew that the best fishing in the lake was at night. Also, they had just cleaned their nets, stretching them out to dry so they wouldn’t rot.

But Simon addressed Jesus as “Master”—a term found only in Luke—and obeyed this teacher who had managed to commandeer his boat: “But because you say so, I will let down the nets” (vs. 5).

The Lord at times may lead us to go somewhere or do something that does not make sense to us. Logic often fails to see the supernatural dimension. God does not always ask us to understand what He wants us to do, however. He simply asks us to obey.

4. What did Jesus need to do because of the crowd?
5. How did Simon respond to Jesus’ request “to put out a little from shore” (vs. 3)?
6. How did Simon respond to Jesus’ request to go fishing again?

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 6

This time, Simon expressed his exhaustion and perhaps a bit of frustration: “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything.” Simon undoubtedly thought that it would be a waste of time to try fishing again, especially since it was late in the morning. Yet he remained obedient to the “Master”: “because you say so, I will let down the nets” (vs. 5).

### RESPONDING WITHOUT HESITATION

Read Luke 5:6-11 with your class and note these important points as you discuss the text:

- The fishermen’s obedience resulted in their fruitfulness.
- Simon Peter’s response was one of recognizing who Jesus was and awareness of his own sinfulness.
- Jesus replied to Simon by declaring that Simon’s mission would change from

### BIBLE EXTRA

#### The Fishing Industry of Galilee

Catching, processing, and marketing fish was big business in Jesus’ time, especially for those who lived near the Sea of Galilee. Fish were dried and salted, or pickled, then packed and shipped throughout Israel and beyond. The Galilean town of Magdala (or Magadan; Matt. 15:39) was known to be a large fish-processing center; and in fact it is the Greek word for processed fish, *opsarion*, that is used in reference to the feeding of the five thousand in John 6:9-11.

Fishermen such as Simon and his crew would have used boats made of cedar or oak, measuring 25-30 feet long and five to ten feet wide, arguably large enough for fifteen men. A boat from this period, known as the Galilee Boat or Jesus Boat (although there is no direct tie to Jesus or His disciples other than its dating) was discovered on the lake’s northwest shore in 1986.

catching fish to drawing people to the Lord.

- The fishermen didn't hesitate in leaving everything to follow Jesus and participate in His mission.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 7

Once they had set into the deep and cast their nets, "they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break" (vs. 6). Simon signaled James and John, in the other boat, to come help them, and together they filled both boats with fish—at which point both boats began to sink. After spending the entire night coming up with nothing, Simon recognized that Jesus had brought this about.

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Sea of Galilee

The Sea of Galilee is located in the northern section of the Promised Land, near Jesus' hometown of Nazareth. Although it is best known now as the Sea of Galilee, it is also called the Sea of Kinnereth in the Old Testament (Deut. 3:17; Num. 34:11; Josh. 12:3; 13:27) perhaps because *kinnereth* is related to the Hebrew word for harp, and the lake is shaped somewhat like a harp.

In the New Testament, it is called the Sea of Tiberias (John 6:1; 21:1) because of the prominent town of Tiberias on the shore, and here in Luke 5:1 as the Lake of Gennesaret. This body of water measures about 13 by 8 miles, and thus "lake" would be a more accurate term for us today. That said, its "deep" is actually quite deep for a lake of this size—roughly 700 feet.

It is also the second-lowest body of water on earth; only the Dead Sea (which has a much better claim to the word "sea") is lower. Also, because of its location and situation, the Sea of Galilee was often pounded with quickly rising storms, as violent winds from the hills around the lake became trapped in the lake basin (see Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25). Thus, it behaved more like a "sea" than most lakes.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 8

At this point, Simon began to more fully grasp who this Teacher really was. As he saw the fish he was formerly unable to catch now threaten to capsize their boats, he fell on his knees in front of Jesus and pleaded, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (vs. 8). Simon had not only become more aware of who Jesus was, but of who he was in comparison to Him.

### SUGGESTED ANSWER TO QUESTION 9

Jesus tells Simon not to be afraid, then tells him, "from now on you will fish for people" (vs. 10). Simon and his companions would no longer be

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## Responding without Hesitation

*Luke 5:6-11, KJV*

6 And when they had this done, they inclosed a great multitude of fishes: and their net brake.

7 And they beckoned unto their partners, which were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.

9 For he was astonished, and all that were with him, at the draught of the fishes which they had taken:

10 And so was also James, and John, the sons of Zebedee, which were partners with Simon. And Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men.

11 And when they had brought their ships to land, they forsook all, and followed him.

*Luke 5:6-11, NIV*

<sup>6</sup>When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

<sup>8</sup>When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup>For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup>and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."

<sup>11</sup>So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Simon didn't want to go back out to sea to fish—and he certainly didn't expect what happened next: "When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break" (vs. 6). Simon signaled James and John, in the other boat, to come help, and together they filled both boats with fish—to the point that both boats were close to sinking. After their previous night of futility, Simon knew such a thing should not be happening.

At this point—if the healing of his mother-in-law hadn't

fishermen but apostles, entrusted with helping to establish Jesus' kingdom on earth. The response from these men is immediate: "they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (vs. 11). They were prepared to follow and participate in Jesus' mission, no matter what the cost.

already done so (Luke 4:38-39)—Simon began to more fully grasp who this Teacher really was. As he saw the fish, he and his crew were unable to catch on His own now threaten to capsize their boats, he fell on his knees before Jesus and pleaded, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" (vs. 8). In addition to marveling at Jesus and "at the catch of fish they had taken" (vs. 9), Simon had become acutely aware of who he was (let alone in comparison to Jesus): "a sinful man!" This is also the first time that Luke refers to Simon as Peter, likely signifying the spiritual change already taking place in Simon.

Jesus calmed Simon's fears, and then, just as calmly, redirected the entire trajectory of his life: "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people" (vs. 10). Simon and his companions would no longer be fishermen but apostles, entrusted with helping to establish Jesus' kingdom on earth. If catching loads of fish was a great miracle, catching innumerable amounts of people for Jesus was a miracle Simon couldn't even fathom. And yet, because it was Jesus who said it, it was believable.

Therefore, the response of these men is immediate: "they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him" (vs. 11). Even after the largest catch they had probably ever made, the business these men had been so engaged in no longer mattered. They were now ready and willing, at all costs, to participate in Jesus' mission.

Peter's simple act of obedience proved to be a turning point in his life. He was transformed from one who caught fish to one who caught people.

**7. What happened after Simon and his crew fished again?**

**8. How does Simon react—especially to Jesus?**

**9. What does Jesus tell Simon? How do Simon and his crew respond?**

## BIBLE EXTRA

### The Significance of 'Master'

Again, only Luke used the word "Master" as a title for Jesus. He used it four other times in his Gospel, all fairly early on in Jesus' ministry (Luke 8:24, 45; 9:33, 49). It has been suggested that Luke specifically used this title in place of "Rabbi" so as not to confuse his primarily Greek-speaking audience.

However, "Master" not only carries the idea of "teacher" or "rabbi," but also the idea of "overseer" or "leader." And as we see in verse 5, Simon was clearly willing to take orders from Jesus—even when it came to an occupation he had far more experience with than Jesus. It is also worth noting that while Simon used this "enhanced" term of honor for Jesus here, he will use a much more authoritative title for Jesus only a few verses later in today's passage.

## WINDOW ON THE WORD

### Jesus' Call

*It's amazing that Mark 3:13-14 tells us that "Jesus... called those he wanted, appointed them that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach..." Jesus depended on these 12 men to ignite His mission into the world. Acts 17:6 states that they actually did this by turning the world upside down. God's Word further explains how these men were able to do so through Paul's testimony that they did not rely on their own wisdom, but on the power of the Holy Spirit within them. Our participation in Jesus' mission demands the power of the Holy Spirit working through us.*

# 3 Bible Application

Tell how we can participate in Jesus' mission.

This lesson step provides your students an opportunity to consider various ways they can participate in Jesus' mission in their daily activities. Cut out the instructions for each group. Make copies of the handout from the Resource Kit for the group using it.



## Handout:

### 'Jesus' Mission: Our Mission'

Read the handout and follow the instructions. After you have completed the handout, provide time to share your answers with one another.

## GROUP ACTIVITIES

### Discussion Group

Read "God Uses Ordinary People" from the student book and respond to **Questions 10, 11, and 12**. The closer we are in our relationship with Jesus, the more we will know what He wants you to do. When He does tell you what to do, however, you must be ready to follow Him. Sometimes we know what we should do, but we hesitate to do it. When we see others following Him, though, we are encouraged to follow Him more.

### Participating in Jesus' Mission

Read Acts 10:1-33, then discuss the following questions:

- Describe Cornelius's relationship with God.
- How did Cornelius know how God wanted him to participate in Jesus' mission?
- What was the result of Cornelius's obedience?
- How does God lead Christians today in participating in Jesus' mission?

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## God Uses Ordinary People

Cathy, who dropped out of high school, came from a dysfunctional home. Like most young people, she sought for love in all the wrong places. Cathy always worked hard to provide for herself and her elderly mother.

One day her employer asked, "Cathy, do you have a personal relationship with God?" Cathy looked bewildered. She hadn't grown up attending church and really never thought about God. Her employer continued by sharing with Cathy how she could have a personal relationship with Jesus. Cathy didn't understand it all, but a few days later, Cathy prayed to accept Christ in her bedroom.

She eventually found a church that helped her grow in her faith. Cathy married, had children, and continued to seek God's face in everything she did. But the greatest experience in her life was learning how to listen to the Holy Spirit in sharing God's love in her small world.

While shopping, Cathy observed a young mother struggling with her child. She spoke gently to the mother, and said, "Don't worry, this too will pass. I raised six children. God will give you strength." This brought a smile and thank you from the mother. On another day, Cathy would walk down a street, see a homeless person, and reach into her grocery bag and give him some fruit. Or she would be driving, see an accident, and pray for those in the accident.

Cathy is an ordinary person with a passion to fulfill Jesus' mission in her little world. She knows how to participate in Jesus' mission by obeying the Holy Spirit in her daily routine. She draws others to Jesus by her actions of love.

**10.** *Why is it necessary to have a personal relationship with Jesus to participate in His mission?*

**11.** *What role does obedience play in participating in Jesus' mission?*

**12.** *In what ways have you seen others participate in Jesus' mission?*

# 4 Life Response

Choose to participate in Jesus' mission.

Your class has studied how we are called to follow Jesus and participate in His mission. Ask your students to read "Yes, I Will Follow" in the student book and give them time to individually answer the question.

Remind your students that participating in Jesus' mission is a command that we must decide if we will obey. We don't have to wonder how to participate in Jesus' mission, once we say "yes" God will guide us how to participate in Jesus'

mission in our own world.

Close the class by allowing your students a few minutes of silent individual prayer time to ask the Holy Spirit to guide them in participating in Jesus' mission in the next week. Then pray aloud that the Holy Spirit will lead each one of your students this next week to participate in Jesus' mission.

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## Yes, I Will Follow

Jesus didn't force the disciples to follow Him; they chose to follow Him. The disciples didn't stop to ask Jesus questions about where they would be going or what they would be doing. They trusted Him and immediately followed Him.

Jesus is calling us immediately to follow Him and participate in His mission of drawing all men to God through salvation in Jesus. This doesn't mean going around with a Bible and preaching to everyone we meet, although God may call us specifically to share His Word with others. However, one way we can participate in Jesus' mission is by being a light for Jesus wherever we go. A light draws people away from darkness and into the right direction.

► *In what ways has Jesus called you to follow Him and participate in His mission? Take time in the next week to ask God to show you how you can further participate in Jesus' mission.*

### KEY VERSE

Jesus said unto Simon, Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men. —Luke 5:10b, KJV

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." —Luke 5:10b, NIV

### DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of January 11 through January 17

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

**Mon.** Isaiah 57:14-21—Peace and Healing Will Come.

**Tues.** 1 Peter 2:18-25—Healed by Christ's Wounds.

**Wed.** Matthew 15:21-28—Canaanite Daughter Healed by Mother's Faith.

**Thurs.** James 5:13-16—Anoint Sick with Oil and Prayer.

**Fri.** Mark 5:21-34—Woman Healed by Her Faith.

**Sat.** Mark 2:13-17—The Sick Need a Physician.

**Sun.** Mark 2:1-12—Jesus Heals and Forgives the Paralytic.



As the class members are leaving, hand out copies of this week's *Power for Living*. Take or mail copies of *Lesson Leaflet* to those who couldn't be with you today, or send them to those you would like to join your class.

## Before Teaching Next Week's Lesson

Before next week, read Mark 2:1-12. Ask your students how they know if something is "whole."