



Bible Point

Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.

Bible Verse

“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord” (Philippians 3:8a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Students will ■ identify what makes them too busy to listen to Jesus,
 ■ discover ways to make following Jesus their top priority, and
 ■ commit to following Jesus this week.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Mary chooses to listen to Jesus.

Luke
10:38-42



This account brings us into the home of Mary and Martha, who appear to be close friends of Jesus. The story begins with Mary sitting at Jesus’ feet and Martha in the kitchen, preparing a meal fit for their special guest.

We learn that Martha was concerned about what she felt were her obligations—providing food and comfort for her guest. Martha may have been a widow and appears to have been the head of the household. Her sister Mary lived with her. Martha probably wanted to sit and listen to

Jesus, too, but felt she must first get the meal ready.

“If only Mary would help,” she probably thought, “we could both sit and listen to Jesus later.” With this thought festering in her mind, she went to Jesus with a blistering accusation: Mary was loafing while she was doing all the work.

Jesus responded that Martha was worried and upset over the wrong things. Jesus wanted Martha to make a relationship with him her top priority, as Mary had done. Only one thing was truly important: spending time with Jesus—sitting at his feet and soaking in the truth that he imparted so that she could live more fully for him.

Prayer

- Read John 11:17-44.
- What more does this story reveal about Mary and Martha?
- Are you more like Mary or more like Martha?
- Pray: Dear God, show me how to draw closer to you. Help me to be more like Mary in the areas of...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
<p>Attention Grabber</p>	<p>Listen Up!—Make up a story that requires concentration and attention to details.</p>		
<p>Bible Exploration & Application</p> 	<p>Mary and Martha—Do actions with a reading of Luke 10:38-42, and discuss what makes us too busy to listen to Jesus.</p>	Bible	
	<p>Too Much, Too Loud—Find groups by making sounds; discuss John 10:11-15, 27-29; and discover why following Jesus is our top priority.</p>	Bibles, paper grocery sacks	
	<p>Knowing Jesus—Consider things that distract us from a relationship with Jesus, and learn Philippians 3:8a.</p>		
<p>Closing</p> 	<p>Time to Follow—Pray for each other as they commit to following Jesus this week.</p>	<p>“Time to Follow Jesus” handout (p. 97), pencils, scissors, glue sticks</p>	

Welcome



As kids arrive, ask them how they put last week's lesson into practice. Ask questions such as, "What things did you decide are the most important in your life?" and "How did you use the positive qualities God gave you to follow Jesus and not let anything else get in your way?"

Tell kids that whenever you ring the *bell*, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it's important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible.

Attention Grabber

■ Listen Up!

SUPPLIES: none



Have kids sit in a circle. Hold up a *mini noise drum*, and say: **Let's make up a story. I'll begin the story; then when I come to a point where the characters in my story hear or listen to something, I'll shake the drum and pass it to the person on my left, who will continue the story the same way. There's one rule for this story. You can't say *he, she, went, or said*. If you say any of those words, you have to stop the story right where you are and pass the drum to the next person.**

Begin the story as follows:

Once upon a time, there were two kids, Katy and Connor, who were playing together. Connor was bored. "Let's go exploring," Connor exclaimed.

Katy was worried because Connor usually got into trouble. Katy replied, "I'm not sure that's a good idea."

"Come on..." Connor begged, and headed toward the railroad tracks.

"Shhh...wait..." Katy replied. "Do you hear that?"

Shake the drum and pass it to the next person, who should continue the story. Monitor the kids to make sure they don't say any of the forbidden words. When everyone has had a turn, finish the story and put the *mini noise drum* away.

Ask: • **What was challenging about this activity?** (Thinking about what I was going to say so I didn't say one of the wrong words; adding something to the story that involved listening; having to concentrate on the words.)

• **To play this game we had to concentrate. When are other times we need to concentrate?** (At school; when I'm taking a test; when I'm playing soccer; when I'm riding my skateboard; when I'm playing a video game.)

• **How does concentrating help you in these activities?** (It helps me stay focused on what I need to do; it helps keep my mind on what's important; it keeps me from getting distracted.)

• **How can concentrating help you follow Jesus?** (When I focus on Jesus, I'm not tempted to do wrong things; concentrating on Jesus helps me do what's right; it's easier for me to be kind if I'm thinking about Jesus.)



Encourage active participation as students report back by following up kids' answers with questions such as "What did you mean by that?" and "Can you tell me more?"


BIBLE POINT

Say: **We all have lots of things we need to do—homework, chores around the house, clubs, church and school functions, music lessons, sports, hobbies, and fun things with friends and family, too. These things are important, but sometimes they can distract us from following Jesus.** ► ***Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.*** We need to concentrate on what he says. Let's discover how one woman was able to do this.

Bible Insight

Mary, sister of Lazarus, was a friend and follower of Jesus. She and her sister Martha lived in the town of Bethany, just outside Jerusalem. Jesus may have visited their home frequently, especially during religious feasts.

Bible Exploration & Application

■ *Mary and Martha*

SUPPLIES: Bible



Have kids stand in a circle. Say: **I'm going to read a story from the Bible about two women who made choices about what was important. Whenever you hear the name *Martha*, stand and pretend to be sweeping or dusting frantically, like this.** Pantomime hurried sweeping and dusting. **Continue that until you hear the name *Mary*. Then sit as if you're listening, like this.** Sit down with your head propped on one hand and the other hand cupped to your ear. **We'll also show we're listening by taking turns with the *mini noise drum*.** Give two children each a *mini noise drum*. When you say *Mary*, have those children shake the drums. When you say *Mary* again, have them pass the drums to other children.

Read **Luke 10:38-42** aloud, pausing at the names *Martha* and *Mary* while kids perform the motions. Then put the *mini noise drums* aside, and have children stand again. Say: **Raise your hand when you've thought of an answer to my questions. I'd like to hear lots of different, interesting answers. When someone gives an answer you've thought of and you don't have anything more to add, you may sit down. When everyone is seated, I'll ask you to stand again for the next question.**

Ask: • **If you were Martha, how would you have felt when Jesus said that Mary chose the better thing?** (Embarrassed; bad; like I'd ignored Jesus.)

• **How would you have felt if you were Mary?** (I would have felt bad for Martha; I would have felt glad that I made the right choice; I would have felt special to Jesus.)

• **Were Martha's actions wrong? Why or why not?** (They weren't wrong, but they weren't the best choice; yes, she should have been spending time with Jesus; no, she needed to get the work done.)

• **Why was Mary's choice better?** (Because it's better to put Jesus first; because being with Jesus is more important than doing chores.)

• **What kinds of things make you too busy to listen to Jesus?** (Sports; TV; hanging out with friends; doing more chores; music lessons.)

• **How does Jesus talk to us?** (Through the Bible; when we talk to him; when we listen at church.)



Say: **We'll go around the circle with this next question. After you've answered it, sit down.**

Ask: • **What will you do this week to make sure you have time to listen to Jesus?** (Turn off the TV for a few minutes to read my Bible; pray before I leave for school; go to church.)

Say: **I'm glad each of you wants to have time with Jesus, because Jesus wants to have time with you.**

He wants to be your very best friend. ► Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.



■ Too Much, Too Loud

SUPPLIES: Bibles, paper grocery sacks



Have kids scatter around the room. Distribute paper grocery sacks, and have children put the sacks over their heads so they can't see. Say: **I'm going to come around and tap everyone's bag, one at a time. When I tap your bag, I'll make a noise I want you to repeat. After I have indicated a noise for each of you, I'll ring the bell, and you will begin repeating your noise. You'll have to make the noise loudly so that others can hear. Move carefully**

around the room, and find the other people making the same noise. When you've found two other people who are making your noise, you all can sit down. No one may say any words; you may only make your noise.

Make sure you make the same noise to each of three different children. The noise doesn't really matter as long as you do the same thing for all three. If you're not comfortable assigning the noises yourself, ask a child to go around with you to do it. To jump-start your imagination, think of these sound effects: a creaking door, a cranky car engine, a meowing cat, a barking dog, a race car, a telephone, a fire engine, or "Here kitty, kitty." If you'd rather, just describe the noises and let the kids come up with their own interpretations! Ring the *bell*, and let the commotion begin. When all the groups have formed, ring the *bell* again to end the activity.

Say: **Take your sacks off now, and see who your fellow "disturbances" are. Stay in your group to answer my questions. Discuss them together, and then share your answers with everyone else.**

After each question, allow a few seconds for trios to discuss answers. Then ask each trio in turn to offer a response.

Ask: • **What was it like when you were trying to find your group?** (Confusing; I had to pay close attention to the sounds; I had to concentrate.)

• **Why did you want to find your group?** (I didn't want to be left out; so I wasn't the only one in the room wandering around and making a funny noise.)

Say: **In this game, you had to listen for a specific sound to find your group. In real life, we need to be listening to Jesus, who will always guide us the right way. Let's see what the Bible has to say about that.**

Distribute Bibles. Have a volunteer in each group read aloud **John 10:11-15, 27-29.**



If you have a large class, have kids form foursomes. If you have a small class, have kids form pairs.



Kids process new information best by interacting with one another. Keeping kids quiet and controlled doesn't necessarily mean your class is a success. A more accurate barometer might be seeing happy, involved, excited students moving around the classroom, discussing how to apply to their lives the new truths they're learning.

Ask: • **In our game, how were you like sheep?** (We were listening for a certain sound like the sheep listen for a certain voice; we were wandering around not sure where to go.)

• **Why is it important for sheep to listen to their shepherd and follow him?** (So they don't get eaten by wolves; so they don't get lost; the shepherd will protect them if they are near him.)

• **Why do you think Jesus said we're like sheep?** (Because we need to listen to him; if we don't follow Jesus, we'll be in danger.)

• **What good things happen when you listen to Jesus and follow him?** (We have a close friendship with him; we know what's right to do.)

• **What might happen to you if you decided other things were more important than following Jesus?** (We wouldn't be close to Jesus as a friend; we might become distracted from Jesus and start doing things that are wrong; we wouldn't have anyone to guide us.)

Say: **Jesus compared us to sheep because sheep can't get along without a shepherd. We need Jesus, our shepherd, to keep us safe and to show us how to live. But we have to decide to follow Jesus. You can see why following Jesus is the best thing we can do.**



BIBLE POINT ▶

■ Knowing Jesus

SUPPLIES: none



Place the Learning Lab items (but not the *seeds* or *grow crystals*) where the children can reach them. Have children form pairs, and have each pair choose one item. Say: **With your partner, think of one thing your item represents that might make it hard for you to follow Jesus.**

Encourage children to be creative as they consider their item and what things make it hard to follow Jesus. Remind children to think of things that distract them from their friendship with Jesus, such as toys, money, popularity, school, and so on. After a few minutes, have each pair tell what their item represents and how this item might make it hard to follow Jesus. Say: **The Bible tells us that Martha was distracted from listening to Jesus. Her chores and her desire to be a good hostess kept her from taking the time to listen to Jesus. Our Bible verse reminds us of this same idea. Our verse is Philippians 3:8, and it says, ▶“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.” Let's say that together.**

Lead children in saying the Bible verse together. Then ask:

• **What do you think this verse means?** (Knowing Jesus is better than anything else; Jesus is a priceless treasure; other things in life are worthless when we compare them to Jesus.)

Say: **Let's say this verse again, but as we say it, let's do an action to represent turning away from things that distract us from Jesus and focusing our attention on knowing Jesus and listening to him. When we say, “Everything else is worthless,” place your item on the floor. When we say, “knowing Christ Jesus,” let's put our hands to our ears as if we're listening to Jesus and getting to know him better.**

BIBLE VERSE ▶

teacher tips

Encourage kids to bring their Bibles to class with them next week. Bringing their own Bibles will help kids become familiar with using and turning to the Bible.

Repeat the verse together with the actions. Say: **When we're feeling distracted from our friendship with Jesus, we need to put other things aside and focus on the priceless treasure of our relationship with Jesus. ► *Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.***



HANDS-ON BIBLE

Say: **The Bible tells us that the two most important commandments are to love God and love others. God wants us to put following him first. Let's do an activity that will remind us that following Jesus is our first priority.**



Have children open their *Hands-On Bibles* to Mark 12 and read "The #1 Command" activity there. Then have children form pairs and complete the activity. They'll need newsprint, markers, and pencils.

When kids have finished this project, let them post their creations on a wall and share with others what their drawings represent.

Closing

■ Time to Follow

SUPPLIES: "Time to Follow Jesus" handout (p. 97), pencils, scissors, glue sticks

Before class, make photocopies of the "Time to Follow Jesus" handout. You'll need one handout for each student.

Have children form pairs. Give each pair scissors, pencils, and two handouts.

Say: **One of the best ways we can make sure we have time to listen to Jesus is to set aside time in our busy schedules. I've given each of you a handout with a calendar for next week. On your calendar, write at least three things you already know you have to do next week. Those activities are your Martha activities—stuff you know you'll have to get done. Maybe you have a test at school, a music lesson, or certain chores you have to do at home. After you've written your Martha activities, show your calendar to your partner and explain your Martha activities.**

As children are working, give each pair a glue stick.

When pairs have finished sharing, ring the *bell* to get kids' attention, and say: **► *Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.* And to follow Jesus, we need to spend time listening to him, talking to him, and learning all we can about him. But sometimes we don't follow Jesus because we just don't get around to finding the time to listen and learn about him. Look at the clocks on the bottom of your handout: They're round to remind you that it's time to get around to following Jesus! If we schedule time to spend with Jesus, we'll make time for him in our lives.**

In each clock, write one way you'll follow Jesus this week. Maybe you'll set aside time to pray, read your Bible, go to church, or ask questions to learn more about Jesus. When you finish writing, cut out the clocks and then glue them on your calendar.



Time to Follow Jesus							
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Prayer							
Activities							
Other							









BIBLE POINT ▶

After children finish gluing their clocks, say: **Now that you've scheduled time to follow Jesus, make sure to follow through! Take your calendars home to remind you that ▶ *following Jesus is the best thing we can do.***

Close by having kids pray for their partners, asking God to help them follow Jesus.



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.

Time to Follow Jesus

	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Morning							
Afternoon							
Evening							



Hands-On Fun at Home

LESSON 8



Following Jesus is the best thing we can do.



Bible Verse:

“Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord”
(Philippians 3:8a).

Talk It Over

Set aside some time this week to sit together and talk about these questions. Be sure you put aside all distractions so you can focus on each other:

- What things are making your life too busy?

- How are these things keeping you from spending time with Jesus?

- How can we help each other spend time with Jesus?

Faith Walk

Make listening to Jesus a priority this week. As a family, decide to eliminate something less important that you usually do, such as

watching a particular TV show or renting a movie. Use that time to read and talk about important things Jesus has to say. Some good passages to choose from are Matthew 5:1-12; Matthew 5:38-41; or Matthew 6:24-34.



Fun Food

Make yourself an apple smile. Cut two thin slices of a red apple. Put marshmallow creme or caramel sauce on one side

of each slice. Stick miniature marshmallows to the creme or sauce on one apple slice, and top it with the other apple slice. The apple slices will look like lips, and the marshmallows will look like teeth. As you eat your apple smile, say, “Following Jesus makes me happy.”

Check It Out

Read John 12:26.

What do you think God does to honor those who follow Jesus?

Read Philippians 3:12-14.

What kind of attitude does Jesus want you to have about following him?

Read 1 Peter 2:24-25.

What wrong things has Jesus helped you stay away from or quit doing?

Make Your Mark

Make a bookmark for your Bible. Cut a piece of cardboard or construction paper into the shape of a large ear. Use the bookmark to remind you that reading your Bible is one way to listen to Jesus.