



Learning Centers

Jesus' Disciples Jan. 22 - Feb. 12 9:30-10:30 a.m.

Big Idea	Intelligence	Center	Room
January 22 Jesus Blesses and Prays for Children Matthew 19:13-15	Self Smart	Prayer Weave	Common Room
January 29 Jesus Needed Friends and Helpers Matthew 4:18-22	Body Smart	Fishers of People	Active Room
February 5 Jesus is a Friend to Outcasts Matthew 9:9-13	Logic Smart	Tax Booth	Toy Room
	Art Smart	Praying for Others	Art Room
February 12 Jesus Knew You Before You Knew Him John 1:43-51	People Smart	Where Are You From? Map/History Project	Quiet Room
Every Sunday	Thinking Smart	Dinner Table Discussion Questions	Home
Every Sunday	Word Smart	Picture Books	Quiet Room
Every Sunday	Music Smart	So He Cares for You Me	Worship Center
February 19 Community Event	Nature Smart	Feb. 19 @ 10:30 a.m. Skating	Neubergthal Rink

Story Time - 10:15 am - Theater Room

What the adults need to know:

In previous lessons, we looked at the first disciples Jesus called. Andrew, Simon, James, and John. The calling of Philip and Nathanael is told only in John's Gospel (John does not mention James and John). Like the first four men, Philip responds immediately.

But Nathanael is incredulous at the messiah coming from Nazareth. The town was of no significance. When Nathanael expresses his doubts, Philip gets him to come see Jesus for himself (see also 1:39). As Nathanael approaches, Jesus comments at how there is nothing "false" in Nathanael, which simply means that he is a good, decent fellow who is straight up and direct, as we see in his honest comment to Philip in v. 46.

The heart of this passage is in how Jesus knew Nathanael before Nathanael ever made the effort to come to know him. Jesus saw him sitting under the fig tree before Nathanael ever thought to "come and see." This is one of the great paradoxes of the faith: we come to Jesus only to realize that Jesus knows us before we know him.

This realization brought Nathanael to confess Jesus as rabbi (authoritative teacher) and Son of God/King of Israel. These latter two titles are interchangeable in this context. "Son of God" can mean several things in the Old Testament, including humanity in general, but it also refers to the ideal king, David (2 Samuel 7:14; Psalm 2:7; 89:27). Nathanael is not making a declaration of Jesus' divinity but of his kingship.

Jesus rewards Nathanael's faith by assuring him that he will see even greater things, namely "heaven open and the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man." "Son of Man" is a favorite term Jesus used to designate himself. Although the term typically simply means "human" (or more simply, "I"), in this context Jesus likely has Daniel 7:13-17 in mind, which was understood in his day to refer to a messianic figure. The ascending/descending issue refers to Jacob's ladder (Genesis 28:12). By alluding to the Old Testament episode, Jesus is saying two things: that he is the new Jacob - or better, the new Israel (since Jacob's name was Israel), and that his disciples will come to see plainly that heaven itself will bear witness to that.

This is a packed passage. Jesus is Rabbi, King, and Israel all wrapped up into one. And he also saw Nathanael before Nathanael knew him.

Dinner Table Wonderings:

I wonder what your favorite part of the story is?

I wonder who your friend is?

I wonder who was a friend in the story today?

I wonder if Jesus knows everyone?

I wonder if Jesus knows your name?