

Come and See (John 1:35-51)

JOHN 1:35-51 (BSB) · TEACHER GUIDE · DIGDEEPER.AI

THE BIG IDEA · SAY IT AT LEAST FIVE TIMES

Jesus asks what you want, then says: come and see.

Open with it, bring it back after every section, close with it. By the end they should be able to finish the sentence for you.

- Before this passage (day 1): John 1:1-18, The Word Made Flesh.
- After this passage (day 3): John 2:1-11, The First Sign. Its big idea: Jesus saves the fine wine until now, showing who he is.

Open

Recall last time: John 1:1-18 told us the Word became flesh and lived among us. Today real people meet him face to face. Note that the 'John' here is John the Baptist, a prophet who called Israel to get ready for God's coming King. Ask: When has someone told you, 'You have to see this for yourself'? Read John 1:38-39. Big idea: Jesus asks what you want, then says: come and see. Ask one person what stuck from last time.

Run Sheet

1. What Do You Want? (John 1:35-39, about 10 min)

The one thing: Jesus meets seekers with a question and an open door.

Ask: If Jesus turned and asked you, "What do you want?", what would you honestly say?

2. We Have Found the Messiah (John 1:40-42, about 8 min)

The one thing: Jesus sees who a person is and who they will become.

Ask: Who, if anyone, first pointed you toward Jesus, and how did they do it?

3. Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth? (John 1:43-51, about 14 min)

The one thing: Jesus welcomes honest doubt, and he already knows the doubter.

Ask: Nathanael was invited to check Jesus out for himself. What might 'come and see' look like for someone with honest doubts today?

Close (never cut it)

Land on who Jesus is: the one who saw Nathanael under the fig tree before anyone called him, and the place where heaven opens to earth. Then leave Jesus' own question in the room, 'What do you want?', and give a moment of quiet without pushing for an answer.

PROTECT THE ENDING

If the last section starts late, drop its optional points and the discussion question, cover the fig tree and v51, and go straight to the close.

KIDS SIDE ANSWERS

Story order: 1, 3, 4, 5, 2 (top to bottom) · Feelings: The two men who followed Jesus happy, Andrew happy, Philip happy, Nathanael, after meeting Jesus happy · Code: COME AND SEE

Act it out: The teacher plays Jesus. One child is Andrew and brings a friend, who brings another, and each says 'Come and see!' The last child sits 'under the fig tree,' and Jesus says, 'I saw you!'

1. What Do You Want?

JOHN 1:35-39 · ABOUT 10 MIN · SECTION 1 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- John points his own followers away from himself, toward Jesus.
- Jesus turns and asks them a question before he teaches anything.
- He answers them with an invitation, not a lecture.

John saw Jesus and said, "Look, the LAMB of God!"

When they asked where he was staying, Jesus said, "COME AND SEE."

Discuss: If Jesus turned and asked you, "What do you want?", what would you honestly say?

Jesus meets seekers with a question and an open door.

MUST COVER

- v36: 'Lamb of God.' John had said this the day before too (v29). A lamb was offered to God for sin, so this hints at sacrifice.
- vv38-39: Jesus asks first, then invites. They 'spent that day with Him.'

IF THERE'S TIME

- 'Where are You staying?' is more than a request for an address. A disciple lived alongside his rabbi, so they are really asking, 'Can we be with you?'
- 'About the tenth hour' means around 4 p.m. The writer still remembers the hour of that meeting decades later.

Illustration idea: New in town, you ask for directions, and instead of pointing, someone says, 'I'll walk you there.'

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: Peace, answers, or to know it's real.
- Listen for: "I honestly don't know what I want."

If it drifts: Go back to v38. The two men dodged the question with a question of their own, and Jesus still said 'Come and see.' He doesn't grade the answer.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Jesus doesn't open with a test. He asks what you want and opens the door.

Short on time? Drop the tenth-hour point.

Bridge → One of those two men couldn't keep it to himself.

2. We Have Found the Messiah

JOHN 1:40-42 · ABOUT 8 MIN · SECTION 2 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Andrew goes first to his own brother.
- He simply says what he found and brings him along.
- Jesus looks at Simon and gives him a new name.

Andrew told Simon, "We have found the MESSIAH."

Jesus said to Simon, "You will be called CEPHAS."

Discuss: Who, if anyone, first pointed you toward Jesus, and how did they do it?

Jesus sees who a person is and who they will become.

MUST COVER

- v41: 'Messiah' is Hebrew and 'Christ' is Greek. Both mean the anointed King God promised to send.
- v42: Jesus 'looked at him.' He knows him as 'Simon son of John' and renames him Cephas/Peter, which means 'rock.'

IF THERE'S TIME

- Andrew had spent one afternoon with Jesus, and then 'He first found his brother Simon.' He didn't wait to be an expert.
- Later in this Gospel (John 18) Peter denies Jesus, yet the name Jesus gave him holds.

Illustration idea: A grandparent who calls you by a nickname that believes the best about you before you've earned it.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: A parent, grandparent, or friend.
- Listen for: "Nobody, really. I came to it on my own."

If it drifts: If it turns into stories about pushy witnessing, return to v42. Andrew only brought Simon. Jesus did the looking and the naming.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Andrew came, saw, and brought his brother. The same question waits for us: what do you want?

Short on time? Skip Peter's later denial.

Bridge → The next day Jesus goes looking himself, and he meets a skeptic.

3. Can Anything Good Come from Nazareth?

JOHN 1:43-51 · ABOUT 14 MIN · SECTION 3 OF 3

THEIR PAGE, WORD FOR WORD (ANSWERS FILLED IN)

- Jesus finds Philip, and Philip finds Nathanael.
- Nathanael's doubt is met with an invitation, not an argument.
- Jesus already knew him, and he promises heaven open.

Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from NAZARETH?"

Jesus said, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the FIG TREE."

Discuss: Nathanael was invited to check Jesus out for himself. What might 'come and see' look like for someone with honest doubts today?

Jesus welcomes honest doubt, and he already knows the doubter.

MUST COVER

- vv46-48: Nathanael sneers, yet Jesus calls him 'a true Israelite, in whom there is no deceit.' The fig tree was a quiet place to pray and study, so Jesus saw him in a private moment.
- v51: This echoes Jacob's dream in Genesis 28:12. Jacob, Israel's ancestor, dreamed of a stairway joining heaven and earth. Jesus says he himself is where heaven and earth meet.

IF THERE'S TIME

- v50: Jesus himself slows Nathanael down: 'You will see greater things than these.'
- The titles pile up: Lamb, Messiah, the One Moses wrote about, Son of God, King of Israel, Son of Man.

Illustration idea: Getting a kind note from someone who noticed a hard week you never mentioned to anyone.

RUNNING THE DISCUSSION

- Listen for: Read a Gospel for yourself.
- Listen for: Come to a group where questions are welcome and there's no pressure.

If it drifts: If it becomes a debate about proofs, go to v50. Jesus says there is more to see. The answer is to keep looking at him.

TRY SAYING SOMETHING LIKE

Nathanael came to check out Jesus and found Jesus had already seen him. Come and see.

Short on time? Skip the list of titles. Keep the fig tree and v51.

Bridge → So who is this man who sees us first? Let's land there.

With One Friend, Over Coffee

ABOUT 30 MINUTES · FOR A FRIEND WHO IS CURIOUS, OR NOT SURE

1. Start with them. Ask what made them curious, and listen more than you talk.
2. Read vv35-39. Read it together. Notice that Jesus asks 'What do you want?' before he teaches anything, and then simply invites them to spend the day with him.
3. Meet the skeptic. Read vv45-51. Nathanael doubts out loud, and Jesus calls him honest and says he saw him under the fig tree.
4. Name the objection. Admit that Nathanael believes fast. Point out that Jesus himself answers, 'Do you believe just because I told you...?' and promises more to see.
5. Leave the question. Say that Jesus' question is the one this passage leaves with them: 'What do you want?' Let it sit, and offer to keep reading together whenever they'd like.

QUESTIONS YOU MAY HEAR

"Isn't Nathanael believing way too quickly?"

Jesus seems to think so too (v50). He doesn't ask for instant certainty. He promises there is more to see, so faith here starts with looking.

"What does 'Lamb of God' mean?"

In Israel's worship, lambs were offered to God for sin. John is pointing to Jesus as the one who would take that role, a hint of the cross.

"What's a 'Messiah'?"

It means 'anointed one', and 'Christ' is the Greek word for it. It refers to the King God promised through Israel's prophets.

"What if I don't know what I want?"

The first two men didn't answer either. They asked where he was staying, and he still said, 'Come and see.'

Evergreen Principles

Four standards every week. The rest rotate: each lesson brings the few that fit its passage best.

EVERY LESSON

1. Pray before you prepare

Teaching the Bible is spiritual work first (John 15:5).

If you're new: Pray for your class by name during the week.

If you've taught for years: Pray for the one person you find hardest to reach.

2. Study the text first

Understand the passage yourself before any help.

If you're new: Read it in two translations; write your own questions first.

If you've taught for years: Don't lean on old notes. What did you miss last time?

3. Teach one big idea

People remember one sentence, not four points.

If you're new: Write it in 12 words or fewer before anything else.

If you've taught for years: Test every story against it. If it doesn't serve it, cut it.

4. Point to Christ

All of Scripture points to him (Luke 24:27).

If you're new: Ask: what does this show about Jesus?

If you've taught for years: Show grace as the reason for obedience, not just the rule.

FOR THIS LESSON

1. Ask good questions, then wait

Jesus opens this passage with a question and doesn't rush the answer.

If you're new: Ask the section 1 question and count to ten silently before speaking.

If you've taught for years: Let the room's answers to 'What do you want?' shape how you pace the rest of the lesson.

2. Plan for the skeptic and the grieving

Nathanael is an honest doubter, and Jesus honors him.

If you're new: Tell the class that questions like Nathanael's are welcome here.

If you've taught for years: Have v50 ready for the 'too fast' objection, and invite the skeptic to keep looking.

3. Let the passage land the way it lands

This passage shows who Jesus is. It doesn't hand out homework.

If you're new: End on Jesus and his question, not on a to-do list.

If you've taught for years: Resist the urge to turn Andrew into a mandatory evangelism assignment.

BEFORE CLASS

- ☐ Read the passage three times
- ☐ Big idea in one sentence
- ☐ Opening and close chosen
- ☐ Know what you'll cut
- ☐ Handouts, pens, extra Bibles
- ☐ Prayed for the class by name

Openings, Closings & Hard Moments

Pick one opening and one close; rotate so class doesn't get predictable.

OPENINGS

- ask a real-life question: When has someone told you, 'You have to see this for yourself'?
- use an object: Hold up a house key. Handing someone a key says 'come in and stay', which is more than directions.
- start in the text: Read v38 aloud and pause on 'What do you want?' before saying anything else.

CLOSINGS

- restate the big idea: Jesus asks what you want, then says: come and see.
- allow quiet reflection: Read 'What do you want?' once more and give a minute of silence.
- call back to the opening: Return to 'see it for yourself.' Nathanael did, and found he'd already been seen.

WHEN CLASS GETS HARD

- Someone who has drifted says they feel God stopped noticing them.: Don't argue. Point gently to v48: Jesus saw Nathanael in a moment no one else saw. Leave it there, and offer to talk afterward.
- A skeptic says this is just excited people believing too fast.: Agree it's a fair question. Show them v50, where Jesus pushes back on quick belief himself and promises more to see.
- Silence after a question: Wait. Then rephrase simpler, or ask them to talk to a neighbor first.
- One person dominates: "Thanks. Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." Talk privately if it continues.
- A question you can't answer: Say so, write it down, bring an answer next week.
- A tangent takes over: "Great question. Let's catch it after class so we can finish the passage."

READ THIS WEEK

- Genesis 28:10-17
- Isaiah 53:7
- Psalm 139:1-12

Free at digdeeper.ai/devotionals/john/1-35-51/lesson

Come and See (John 1:35-51)

JOHN 1:35-51 (BSB) · WHO DO YOU SAY I AM? · DIGDEEPER.AI

Key verse: ““Come and see,” He replied.” John 1:39

THE BIG IDEA

Jesus asks what you want, then says: come and see.

1. WHAT DO YOU WANT? · JOHN 1:35-39

- John points his own followers away from himself, toward Jesus.
- Jesus turns and asks them a question before he teaches anything.
- He answers them with an invitation, not a lecture.

John saw Jesus and said, "Look, the _____ of God!"

When they asked where he was staying, Jesus said, "_____."

Discuss: If Jesus turned and asked you, "What do you want?", what would you honestly say?

2. WE HAVE FOUND THE MESSIAH · JOHN 1:40-42

- Andrew goes first to his own brother.
- He simply says what he found and brings him along.
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Andrew told Simon, "We have found the _____."

Jesus said to Simon, "You will be called _____."

Discuss: Who, if anyone, first pointed you toward Jesus, and how did they do it?

3. CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME FROM NAZARETH? · JOHN 1:43-51

- Jesus finds Philip, and Philip finds Nathanael.
- Nathanael's doubt is met with an invitation, not an argument.
- Jesus already knew him, and he promises heaven open.

Nathanael asked, "Can anything good come from _____?"

Jesus said, "Before Philip called you, I saw you under the _____."

Discuss: Nathanael was invited to check Jesus out for himself. What might 'come and see' look like for someone with honest doubts today?

Read this week: Genesis 28:10-17 · Isaiah 53:7 · Psalm 139:1-12

For Kids: Come and See (John 1:35-51)

JOHN 1:35-51 · NAME: _____

Big idea: Jesus sees you and says, come and see.

1. PUT THE STORY IN ORDER! NUMBER THE BOXES.

- ☐ John says, "Look, the Lamb of God!"
- ☐ Andrew brings his brother Simon to Jesus.
- ☐ Jesus tells Philip, "Follow Me."
- ☐ Nathanael meets Jesus and believes.
- ☐ Two men follow Jesus all day.

2. HOW DID THEY FEEL? CIRCLE ONE.

The two men who followed Jesus: happy · sad · worried

Andrew: happy · sad · worried

Philip: happy · sad · worried

Nathanael, after meeting Jesus: happy · sad · worried

3. WORD SEARCH

Y G P A N G E L S
G N H D P E T E R
H A I U D C P O C
O Z L A N D R E W
O A I K S R H F L
R R P K I A G O A
D E F U M B K U M
B T D R O B V H B
K H H S N I Y U B

LAMB · ANDREW · SIMON · PETER · PHILIP · NAZARETH · RABBI · ANGELS

4. SECRET CODE

1=A 2=C 3=D 4=E 5=M 6=N 7=O 8=S

2 7 5 4 1 6 3 8 4 4

5. DRAW IT!

Draw Nathanael sitting under a fig tree, and Jesus seeing him from far away.

6. MEMORY VERSE

"Before Philip called you, I saw you under the fig tree." John 1:48 Say it to a grown-up: ☐ ☐ ☐

If Jesus asked me what I want, I would say _____. _____