

RESCUED

God's Story. Your Invitation.

Session 1: Come and See

John 1:35-42 • about 55 minutes • Leader Guide for 6th Grade TRE

Part 1: Before You Begin

Read this before class. You do not need to be a theology expert to lead this session. You need to know the story, know where you are going, and trust the questions to do their work.

Where we are in the story

RESCUED is an eight-week journey through the heart of the Gospel, what the Church calls the kerygma (kuh-RIG-muh), the first proclamation of what God has done for us in Jesus. We begin with Jesus himself, who is at the heart of St. Peter's own first preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2:22-36), and let the rest of the story unfold from there. Tonight the students meet Jesus the way his first followers did.

Tonight's aim

Students discover that being a Christian begins with meeting a person, not passing a test. Jesus's first words to his first followers are a question, What do you seek?, and an invitation, Come and see. By the end of the hour every student should be able to say, in their own words, that Jesus invites people before he asks anything of them.

The passage in plain terms

John the Baptist is standing with two of his own followers when Jesus walks by. John points and says, Behold, the Lamb of God (1:36). His two disciples leave him and follow Jesus, who turns and speaks his first recorded words in this Gospel, a question: What do you seek? They answer with a question of their own, where are you staying?, and Jesus says, Come and see (1:38-39). They spend the rest of the day with him. One of the two is Andrew, who goes to his brother Simon and says, We have found the Messiah (1:41). When Jesus meets Simon, he gives him a new name, Cephas, which means Peter, rock (1:42).

Three details help the students. A rabbi is a Jewish teacher, and students in Jesus's day chose their rabbi by going to live near him and learn from him. Messiah is Hebrew for anointed one, the king God promised to send; Christ is the same word in Greek. And the tenth hour (1:39) means about four in the afternoon. The Gospel keeps the exact time, the kind of detail a witness remembers; the second disciple is unnamed in this passage, and tradition has long identified him as John himself.

What the Church teaches

At the heart of catechesis we find a person, the person of Jesus of Nazareth, and the aim of teaching the faith is to bring people into communion with him (CCC 426-427). That is what tonight models: Jesus does not begin with rules or a quiz. He begins with an invitation. The Church also teaches that faith must grow after Baptism (CCC 1254), so for the baptized students tonight's invitation is the next step of a friendship God began at the font, and for any student not yet baptized it is the beginning of the road toward it.

Two things to hold onto all eight weeks. First, God has already begun his work in these students; this study invites them to grow in a friendship that already exists. Second, following Jesus is never mainly about trying harder to be good. God's help comes first and makes our response possible (CCC 1996-2000), and his grace then shows up in real choices. When a discussion becomes only a list of ways to try harder, return to what God has done, and then help the students see what responding to that looks like.

Saints who said yes

St. Andrew

One of the first two people in John's Gospel to follow Jesus, and the first to bring someone else to him. He did not wait until he understood everything. He spent one afternoon with Jesus and went to find his brother. The Church honors him on November 30, and the Gospel keeps showing him bringing people to Jesus (John 6:8-9; 12:22).

St. Carlo Acutis

An Italian teenager who died of leukemia in 2006 at fifteen and was declared a saint in 2025. He loved video games, soccer, and computers, and he loved Jesus in the Eucharist more than any of them. He is remembered for calling the Eucharist his highway to heaven. Carlo is proof that a normal kid can say yes to Jesus with his whole life, right now, without waiting to grow up.

Questions students may ask

- Why does John call Jesus a lamb? Tonight's flashback answers the first half: on the night Israel escaped Egypt, a lamb was sacrificed and its blood on the doorposts spared the firstborn of each marked house. John is saying, before anyone understands it, that Jesus will be that lamb for the whole world (John 1:29). Session 4 shows what it costs him.
- Was Jesus real? Yes. Jesus is a real person of history, and the Gospels come from people who knew him or knew those who did. The tenth hour in verse 39 is the kind of small detail a witness remembers.
- What if I do not feel anything when I pray? That is normal, and it is not a sign that God is far away. The Church teaches that feelings are not the measure of God's grace (CCC 2005). Andrew did not report a feeling; he reported a person.

- Why did Jesus change Simon's name? In the Bible a new name means a new job and a new relationship with God. Jesus sees who Simon will become, not just who he is. We will meet Peter again in Session 7.

Materials

Catholic Bibles for every student (page numbers ready for John 1 and Exodus 12), pencils, a folded name tent for each student, and a reflection card for each student that they keep (it is never collected).

Timed plan

Welcome and opening prayer, 5 minutes. Opening situation, 6. Reading John 1:35-42 in segments, 5. Discovery questions, 17. Flashback to Exodus 12, 7. Personal question, 4. Catholic connection, 6. Prayer, one step, and closing, 5.

If you are running long: shorten the opening situation to one answer. Never cut the reading, the flashback, or the prayer.

Part 2: Discussion Guide

OPENING PRAYER

Leader prays, everyone answers Amen. Jesus, you asked your first followers what they were looking for. Tonight we are looking for you. Open our eyes and our ears, and help us come and see. Amen.

WHERE WE ARE IN THE STORY

Read aloud: *Over the next eight weeks we are going to read one big story, the story of what God has done to rescue us. We are not starting at the very beginning. We are starting with the main character. Tonight we meet Jesus the way his first friends did.*

OPENING SITUATION

Read aloud: *Imagine a friend texts you: Come with me right now, you have to see this. No explanation. Just come. What makes you willing to follow someone somewhere you have never been? What makes you say no?*

Leader: Let two or three students answer. There are no wrong answers here. Keep every situation in this study fictional; never invite a student to describe their own sins or family problems. Then say: In tonight's story, two people get an invitation almost exactly like that.

READ JOHN 1:35-42

Read the passage in segments, in parts: a narrator, John the Baptist, Jesus, and Andrew. Read verses 35 to 39, then discuss questions 1 to 3. Read verses 40 to 42, then question 4. Anyone may pass on reading aloud. Give the page number for the Gospel of John before you start.

Leader: Bibles will differ. The RSV2CE has Jesus ask, What do you seek? Other Catholic Bibles say, What are you looking for? Both are fine; the question is the same.

DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Read verses 35 to 39

1. What does John the Baptist call Jesus in verse 36? What do his two disciples do right after they hear it?

Answer • share after the discussion

John calls Jesus the Lamb of God. His two disciples leave John and follow Jesus. Notice that John does not try to keep them. He points away from himself toward Jesus, and they go.

Leader: If someone asks why a lamb, give the short version from Part 1: in Israel a lamb was offered for sin, and John is saying Jesus will take sin away. Promise the full answer in Session 4.

2. Jesus turns around and asks them a question in verse 38. What is it? Why do you think he asks that instead of just saying, Follow me?

Answer • share after the discussion

He asks, What do you seek? They are Jesus's first recorded words in the Gospel of John, and they are a question. He wants them to think about what they are really looking for before they follow him. Jesus does not grab people. He asks them what they want, and he takes the answer seriously.

3. They answer with a question of their own: where are you staying? What does Jesus say back in verse 39, and what is he inviting them to do?

Answer • share after the discussion

He says, Come and see. He does not give them an address or a lecture. He invites them to spend time with him and find out for themselves. That is how following Jesus starts for everyone: not by knowing everything first, but by coming and seeing.

Read verses 40 to 42

4. After spending the afternoon with Jesus, what is the first thing Andrew does?

Answer • share after the discussion

He goes and finds his brother Simon, tells him, We have found the Messiah, and brings him to Jesus. One afternoon with Jesus, and Andrew cannot keep it to himself. And when Jesus meets Simon, he gives him a new name, Peter, which means rock: Jesus sees who Simon will become, not just who he is. Meeting Jesus makes people want to bring someone else, and Jesus sees every one of us the way he saw Simon.

FLASHBACK: THE PASSEOVER LAMB

Read aloud: *One more thing before the personal question. John called Jesus the Lamb of God. To understand that, we flash back about 1,300 years. Israel is enslaved in Egypt and preparing to leave, and God gives each household instructions for one night.*

Read Exodus 12:3, 6 to 8, and 12 to 13 (give the page number; one reader)

1. What was each household told to do with the lamb, and what happened at the houses marked with its blood?

Answer • share after the discussion

God told the households to sacrifice the lamb, mark their doorposts with its blood, and eat the meal. That night, when the plague struck the firstborn of Egypt, God spared the firstborn in the houses marked with the blood. This rescue helps us understand why John calls Jesus the Lamb of God: he will be the lamb whose blood saves, for the whole world. Remember it. Session 4 shows what it cost him.

Leader: Do not explain the cross tonight. Plant the lamb and move on.

BACK TO THE PRESENT

Read aloud: *Back to the present. Jesus turns to two men following him and says, Come and see. Now you know a little of what they were going to see.*

THE PERSONAL QUESTION

Read aloud: *If Jesus turned to you tonight and asked, What do you seek?, what would your honest answer be? Take a minute and write it on your reflection card. That card is yours. Nobody collects it.*

Leader: Give real silence, at least a full minute. Do not ask anyone to share. Some students will write one word; that is enough. The reflection card stays with the student all eight weeks; you collect nothing.

THE CATHOLIC CONNECTION

Share after the discussion

Here is what the Church says about tonight. Being a Catholic does not start with rules, and it does not start with a test. It starts with a person. The Catechism says that at the heart of everything the Church teaches we find a person, Jesus of Nazareth. The whole point is to bring us into friendship with him (CCC 426-427).

Those of you who have been baptized received new life in Christ at your Baptism; some of you were babies, and others may remember that day. God did not wait for you to be ready. For anyone here who has not been baptized, you are welcome, and this is where the road toward it begins. Tonight is Jesus turning around, looking at you, and saying what he said to Andrew: Come and see.

Leader: *Never ask a student to say publicly whether they have been baptized. If one tells you privately they were not, or is not sure, welcome them warmly and talk with a parent afterward.*

PRAYER

Leader: *Remind them, every time: you do not have to feel anything special. Feelings are not the measure of God's grace.*

Read aloud: *Let us pray. Talk to Jesus honestly, in your head, while I say these words. Jesus, you asked, What do you seek? Here is my honest answer. Help me come and see who you really are. Amen.*

ONE STEP THIS WEEK

Read aloud: *One thing, not ten. Every day this week, take two minutes and ask Jesus one question: What do you want me to see today? Then be quiet for the rest of the two minutes. That is it.*

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, you looked at Andrew and Simon and you look at us. Thank you for inviting us before we understood anything. Help us come and see. Amen.

MEMORY VERSE

“Come and see.” (John 1:39)

Part 3: Leader Reference Card

TONIGHT'S PASSAGE

John 1:35-42 (read aloud in segments, in parts); flashback Exodus 12:3, 6-8, 12-13

SUPPORTING REFERENCES

- John 6:8-9 and 12:22 (St. Andrew bringing people to Jesus)
- Acts 2:22-36 (Jesus at the heart of St. Peter's first preaching)

CATECHISM

- CCC 426-427 (Christ at the heart of catechesis)
- CCC 1254 (faith must grow after Baptism)
- CCC 1996-2000 (grace comes first)
- CCC 2005 (feelings are not the measure of grace)

SAINTS WHO SAID YES

- St. Andrew (John 1:40-42; 6:8-9; 12:22)
- St. Carlo Acutis (1991-2006, canonized 2025)

MATERIALS

Catholic Bibles for every student (page numbers ready for John 1 and Exodus 12), pencils, a folded name tent for each student, and a reflection card for each student that they keep (it is never collected).

NOTE

Name tents are for names; reflection cards stay with the students and are never collected.