

WE NEED JESUS

We need a friend

MATTHEW 9:9–13

faith **in kids**

We need Jesus – We need a friend

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Big Idea:

Jesus is the friend of sinners; he came to bring in those who feel left out.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who welcome and include outsiders, because they love that that Jesus has done that for them.



Where are we going?

This is Matthew's conversion story; he wants us to feel both the joy and the shock of the day that changed his life. He was the obvious bad guy, the corrupt cheat and traitor, but Jesus went to him and called his name. Matthew was deliberately sought out and personally invited. Jesus' actions that day were not a photo opportunity to give the impression that he related – Jesus actually related! He went to Matthew's house, ate with him and became his friend. Matthew must have had tears in his eyes as he recounted the events of the day when this outcast sinner was

included by Jesus. We also hear the shock in the voices of the onlookers, 'this is not right; these people are not good enough for God'. Jesus' response highlights what we must understand. Only when we know that we are sinners will we look to Jesus to save us and not to our own good works.

Knowing and feeling Christ's inclusion of sinners like us will melt our hearts and change our attitudes. We will not look down on others but will instead long to point them to Jesus who is willing to call us friends.



Set the table

Set your children the challenge of setting a table for a special lunch. What would they get out to impress someone? How would they make it look really good? Once they have run around and risked your best dishes(!) ask them who they would like to come round for a meal? Why would they choose them? Is there anyone they definitely wouldn't want? *For older children – just discuss a dream vs nightmare guest list.*



Link: Today Jesus goes to eat with someone who would be at the bottom of everyone's list. The people watching are shocked and complain, but Jesus says he came to be a friend to someone like him.



Click here to watch

or scan the code





Teaching Time

Younger children

Have 2 hearts drawn ready with the word "sinner" written on the back. Set 2 places for a meal. 1 place is for Jesus. Who will he choose to eat with?

Write the name "Matthew" on the front of the first heart. Matthew was a tax collector. Even though he was one of God's people, he worked for their enemies collecting money and stealing some for himself. Matthew was a bad guy, and everyone knew it. No one would have invited him to their party. What do you think people said about Matthew? Write answers on the front of the heart.

Write the word "Pharisee" on the front of the other heart. This man worshipped God and made sure people saw him doing the right things. He kept away from people who weren't like him. People thought he seemed a very good man, they would have wanted him at their party. What things do you think he liked

people to say about him? Write answers on the front of the heart.

So, when Jesus went to talk to Matthew, called Matthew to follow him and went to eat with Matthew - put Matthew's heart on the place next to Jesus - Mr Pharisee was furious! He thought he deserved to be there. Jesus explained that he came to save sinners. Turn Matthew's heart over to reveal the word 'sinner'. Matthew knew he needed Jesus, so Jesus went to find him. Mr Pharisee hasn't understood yet that he has the same problem. Turn his heart over to reveal the word 'sinner'. He doesn't realise that he's a sinner too. He thinks Jesus needs him more than he needs Jesus!

Jesus came as the friend and Saviour of sinners. Matthew was delighted that Jesus came to be with him. Jesus is a friend of sinners like Matthew, like me, like you. How wonderful that he welcomes us!

Older children

Have ready paper and pencils, to draw the story.

Split the Bible passage into 4 scenes. For each scene, read the verse and then draw the picture together using simple stick men. Explain it in your own words, perhaps using the examples below.

1) Jesus meets Matthew at his money booth – v9

Matthew was a hated man in his community. He worked for the Romans, taking money from his own people and cheating them. Jesus knows who he is and what he does, yet he goes to his tax collecting booth, calls him by name and basically says "I want you on my team".

2) Jesus eats with Matthew and his mates – v10

Matthew is elated and all in, straight away. Jesus is in his house and meeting his "dodgy" mates. Jesus was genuinely welcoming to Matthew. He wanted to be in Matthew's life.

3) The Pharisees kick off – v11

The Pharisees are horrified that Jesus would choose to be with bad people.

4) Jesus settles it – v 12–13

Jesus challenges them to think and explains that he came to save bad people, not righteous people. If they thought about it for long enough, they would realise that there are no righteous people! Even they are sinners, too.

Do you feel like you identify with the shock of the Pharisees, or the joy of Matthew in this story? Or maybe a bit of both? Why is it good news for both that Jesus came to save sinners?



Hearts and Hands

Younger children

Craft time

Make a welcoming hug person from paper / card. Cut a long strip of card to use as arms, draw around their hands, cut out and stick on either end. Make a body and head for the middle from a toilet roll tube and a circle of paper. Write "Jesus, friend of sinners" on the arms. Stretch out the paper arms and talk about how Jesus welcomes everyone who knows they need him.

Did you spot it?

- What did people think of Matthew? *They thought he was bad, naughty, a cheat*
- Did people who thought they were good want to be his friend? *No, they stayed away from him*
- How did Jesus treat Matthew? *He went to see him, asked Matthew to follow him and went to his house.*

Work it out

- Why were the Pharisees cross with Jesus for going to Matthew's house? *They thought he should be friends with good people*
- Jesus said he came for sinners (bad people), not the righteous (good people). Is there anyone that doesn't need Jesus?

So what?

- Jesus came to save you, he can be your greatest friend. How does that make you feel?
- Jesus was a great friend to someone who others left out. How could you be more like him?

Pray

Thank you Jesus that you came to save sinners like us. Thank you that you are the greatest friend and that you want to be with us. Help us to understand your love and love others like you do. Amen.

Older children

Make time

You could decorate a plate with sharpie markers. If you bake it in the oven for 30 mins at 180 degrees C the pattern will stick (as long as you hand wash it!). You could write on the plate the good news you've learned from this passage, that Jesus came to save, is a friend of sinners, calls us by name etc.

Did you spot it?

- What did people think of Matthew? *He was bad, a cheat, a traitor.*
- What did people think of the Pharisees? *They a good reputation, seemed to do good.*
- How did Jesus treat Matthew? *Went to find him, went to his house*

Work it out

- What does the reaction of the Pharisees tell you about their hearts? *Proud, think they are good enough*
- Who do you think understands their heart problem, Matthew, or the Pharisees? *Matthew knows he is a sinner, the Pharisees still thinks they're good enough.*

So what?

- What makes you right with God- what you do or what Jesus has done?
- How does it make you feel that Jesus came to save and include you?
- Jesus was a great friend to someone who others left out. How could you be more like him?

Extra Stretch

- When we look down on other people, like the Pharisees do here, what mistake are we making?
- Jesus quotes Hosea 6:6 to the Pharisees and asks them to think about it. What do you think he wants them to understand?

Pray

Thinking back to that first discussion about who you would and wouldn't want round for a meal, thank Jesus that he welcomes sinners and outsiders and ask him to soften your heart to be more like him.