



**Educate
+ Engage**



THE CALL
OF GOD



called to Belong

OVERVIEW

Before God calls us to do anything, He calls us to Himself. Being a Christian isn't about a checklist of good deeds; it starts with a relationship. God calls us to belong to Him. He created us, loves us, and wants us to know Him personally. In this first lesson, we explore what it means to be called into a relationship with God and how that changes everything about our identity. Belonging to Jesus isn't just a concept—it's a truth that shapes our decisions, our confidence, and our future.

Optional Activity

Supplies: Sticky name tags and markers

Instructions: Have each student write their name on a tag, but instead of putting it on themselves, have them place it in a bag or basket. Have students pick names randomly. Then have each person try to find the person they "belong" to without asking or answering direct questions (e.g., "Do you have my name" is a direct question).

Follow-up: It's fun to find who you "belong" to in this game, but in real life, we all want to know where we truly belong. Today we're talking about how God calls us to belong to Him—and that identity gives us purpose.

Scripture Passages

Romans 1:5–6 (NKJV)

Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for His name, among whom you also are the called of Jesus Christ;

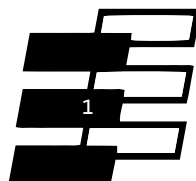
John 15:15–16 (NIV)

No longer do I call you servants, for a servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

EDUCATE

Point 1: God calls us to Himself before He calls us to do anything.

We often think the Christian life starts with us doing something for God—preaching a sermon, being better, helping people. But the truth is, God doesn't begin by giving us a to-do list. He be-



Lesson 1

gins by calling us into a relationship with Him. Romans 1:5–6 reminds us that we are “called to belong to Jesus Christ.” Before God sends us out, He invites us in.

Jesus didn’t call His disciples just to follow a list of ritualistic rules. In fact, because Jesus was God and fulfilled the law of the Old Testament (Matthew 5:17), He called them to follow Him. And He calls us to follow Him today. That’s a big difference! God wants us to walk with Him, talk to Him, and know Him deeply. He cares more about your heart than your habits. Of course, how we live matters, but it flows from knowing Jesus first. You’re not called to perform—you’re called to be present with Him.

What do you think it means to “belong” to Jesus? Have you ever thought of your faith as a relationship before a religion?

Belonging to Jesus means being part of something bigger than yourself. It’s knowing that no matter where you come from or what you’ve done, God says, “You’re Mine.” That kind of belonging is powerful because it speaks to our deepest need—to be fully known and fully loved.

When we understand this, it takes the pressure off. You don’t have to pretend. You don’t have to perform. You simply get to be with the One who knows you completely and still chooses you every day.

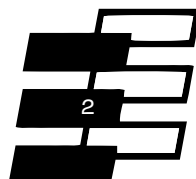
Point 2: God’s call is rooted in love and grace, not our performance.

Sometimes we feel like we have to earn God’s attention or approval. But John 15:15–16 shows us something amazing: “You did not choose me, but I chose you.” Jesus chose us, not because we were the best, the brightest, or the most talented, but because He loves us.

Have you ever felt like you had to earn someone’s approval? How is God’s love different from that?

That kind of love is hard to understand in a world where acceptance is often based on appearance, popularity, or performance. But God’s love doesn’t work that way. You can’t impress Him into loving you more, and you can’t mess up so badly that He stops loving you. His love is constant, steady, and full of grace.

Think about that: the God who created the universe knows your name and calls you His own, not because you’ve earned it, but because He’s that good. This means your worth isn’t based on your grades, your social status, or how many likes you get—it’s based on God’s decision to love you.



Lesson 1

When we really understand this, it frees us. We stop striving to be “good enough,” and instead, we start resting in His grace. God’s love isn’t a prize to be won, it’s a gift to be received. And once you receive it, you can live from a place of peace and confidence.

Grace it makes us grateful. It inspires us to respond, not out of fear, but out of love. Because Jesus chose us, we can choose to follow Him joyfully, not because we have to, but because we get to.

Point 3: Our identity is found in being God’s children.

In John 15:15–16, Jesus tells His disciples, “I have called you friends.” That’s a powerful identity shift. We aren’t just servants or followers, we are His friends, His chosen ones. When we understand that, it transforms how we live. We’re not trying to be someone else, we’re living from the truth of who we already are.

The world tries to define us by our looks, our talents, or our popularity. But God defines us by our relationship with Him. You are a child of God. You are chosen. You are called and belong to God.

Why do you think it’s important to know who you are in Christ? How does that change the way you live?

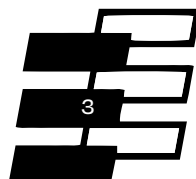
This truth helps when we face peer pressure or self-doubt. Instead of asking, “Do they like me?” we can ask, “What does God say about me?” And He says, “You’re loved. You’re mine.” That identity brings confidence and not arrogance. It stirs in us a humble strength that says, “I know who I am.”

Knowing who you are in Christ anchors you. It becomes the foundation for every decision, every relationship, and every challenge you face. When you’re secure in your identity, you don’t have to chase after the world’s approval—you already have God’s.

It also gives you purpose. You’re not just here to survive junior high or high school or fit in. You’re here to walk with Jesus, grow in Him, and be a light to others. And all of that starts with knowing who you are. You are a child of the King.

Belonging to Jesus brings freedom and responsibility. When you belong to Jesus, you are free. Free from shame. Free from fear. Free from trying to earn your value. But with that freedom also comes responsibility. We are called to represent Jesus to the world. That means living in a way that reflects His love and truth.

How can knowing you belong to Jesus change how you treat others?



Lesson 1

When we know we belong, we're less likely to tear others down. We become encouragers instead of critics. We see others the way Jesus sees them—with compassion and grace. Belonging to Jesus transforms how we treat people.

Belonging to Jesus also challenges us to grow. We don't just settle—we pursue Him. We read His Word. We pray. We gather with other believers. Why? Because we want to know the One we belong to. And the more we know Him, the more we reflect Him.

Closing

In this first part of our series, we learned that the call of God starts with a call to belong. God doesn't begin with a task list; He begins with an invitation. He wants you to know Him, walk with Him, and live from a place of being loved. When you understand that you belong to Jesus, everything else begins to fall into place.

When you know you're chosen, you don't have to chase after the world's approval. When you know you're loved, you can love others more freely. And when you know you belong to Jesus, you can stand strong in any situation.

You are not an accident. You are not forgotten. You are not too far gone. You are called to belong. And that truth changes everything.

ENGAGE

Do you believe that you truly belong to Jesus?

Spend time in prayer, thanking God that He chose you. If you've never responded to His call to belong, now is a great time to do that. Simply talk to Him. He's listening. If you're already walking with Him, ask God to help you live each day from the confidence of belonging.

Write down one truth from this lesson that stood out to you. Put it somewhere you'll see every day this week. Let it remind you who you are and whose you are.

Teacher Note: Give space for students to respond privately or with a leader. Consider playing a worship song that reinforces identity in Christ. Invite those who are ready to talk more to stay after or meet with a leader. Create a time for students to write a letter to God expressing their desire to belong or thanking Him for choosing them.

