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Before jumping into this sample, make sure you check out all the amazing features that **DNowStudies** puts at your fingertips. There really is nothing else like it anywhere . . .

### **What You'll Find In This Sample**

- A Sample of a Small Group Lesson Plan
- A Sample of the Student Book
- A short version of the *Follower* Overviews

Of course each of these components, and dozens more, are available to your teachers through their Online Lesson Manager. But this PDF will simply give you an idea of the main content of *Follower*.

- If you have questions email us at [dnow@leadertreks.com](mailto:dnow@leadertreks.com)
- Or, give us a call at 1-877-502-0699

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# FOLLOWER

LIVING AN AUTHENTIC FAITH



## LESSON OVERVIEW

*The Lesson Overview is a glance at some of the Big Picture details of each session.*



### LESSON TITLE:

The Call To Follow



### LESSON PURPOSE:

To introduce the concept of “following” as the true foundation for their faith-relationship with Christ, and to get students thinking about whether or not they follow Christ’s example or someone else’s.



### MAIN SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 4:17-22, Matthew 9:9, John 1:43

### SUPPLEMENTAL SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 16:21-26



### LESSON SNAPSHOT:

Becoming a Christian is about faith. Salvation is made possible by God through the work of His Son, Jesus. Most of your students know what kind of life they were saved from. But what kind of life are we saved to? What does it mean to truly live an authentic faith-life? In this lesson your students will learn that living out their faith starts with following Christ. They’ll be challenged to think about who or what they are following.

LESSON 1: SMALL  
GROUP LEADERS GUIDE

# BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is a focused, brief overview of some of the background info for the main passage you will be teaching.



## TEACHER PREP VIDEO

Each Small Group Leader's Guide comes with a *Teacher Prep Video*. These are simply short videos designed to help you grasp the main point of the lesson as you prepare to teach.

To access your *Follower Lesson One Teacher Prep Video*, login to your account, navigate to your Small Group Lesson 1, and click on the "Background" tab in your Lesson Manager. You'll notice the Teacher Prep Video at the top of the Lesson Manager window.



## THE DETAILS

### Who wrote these Books?

The Gospel of Matthew was written by Matthew, a former tax collector, who was a disciple of Jesus and a firsthand witness to the stories he relates in his Gospel. The Gospel of John was also written by its namesake, John, son of Zebedee, a fisherman who left his trade to follow Jesus. John, referred to in various places in Scripture as the "beloved disciple", also penned the book of Revelation as well as the three letters in the New Testament that bear his name.

### When were the Books written?

Most people hold to Matthew's Gospel being written in the late 50's or 60's AD, though there are some who think it was written after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. The Gospel of John was probably written between 85 and 95 AD. John most likely wrote his Gospel in Ephesus before he was exiled to Patmos.

### What was the purpose for their writing?

Matthew was writing to a primarily Jewish audience to convince them that Jesus was indeed the long-awaited Messiah. But he was probably aware of a Gentile audience, as his Gospel makes the case that the saving truth of Christ is for all nations.

John's stated purpose for writing this book can be found in John 20:30-31, the last two verses in his Gospel: "Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." John's goal seems to have been to clearly communicate a full theology of Jesus as the Messiah, the promised Son of God.



## THE MAIN POINT

The main point in this first lesson is very straightforward, as the purpose is to introduce your students to the foundational call to follow Jesus. Each passage offers some treatment of this theme. The goal is to see just how integral this concept is to faith in Christ. By looking at various passages of Scripture that drive home the same point, you, in essence, build a case for the importance of this concept.



## THE TAKEAWAY

The main takeaway in this lesson is to help your students evaluate whom it is they're following. They all follow something, whether a person, the world, or Christ. Few truly march to the beat of their own drum, and even those individuals are following themselves. The idea is to help your students begin to personalize and contextualize this spiritual truth. You'll get the opportunity in this lesson to help them really take an in-depth look at their lives and to truly examine how their lives are being lived.



## GETTING STARTED

*Getting Started is a fun, interactive way of kicking off your small group time by introducing the lesson's general focus.*



### STUDENT BOOK PAGES

- This lesson will utilize pages 5-9 in the Follower Student Book.
- This activity will use pages 5 and 6.
  - To access the Leader's version of the Student Book, see the download section of your Follower Lesson 1 web page.



### ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

- As this is the first Small Group session, you'll want to make sure you communicate any specific instructions, announcements, or details to your students.
  - If you're staying in a host-home, make sure your students know the "house rules."
  - Pass along any other "need to know" info about the event.
- Make sure students have Student Books, a Bible, and something to write with.
  - You may want to make sure you have a couple of extra Bibles in case a student forgets his or hers.

**FIRST**, read or have a student read the Session 1 introduction on page 5. Ask if students have any questions, then transition to the opening activity.

Instruct students to look at page 6. Take turns reading or having students read aloud the narratives on page 6. When you've finished, lead your group in a short discussion afterwards. Consider asking questions similar to the following:

- **What do each of these narratives have in common?**
  - Answer: In each of them, there is some aspect of something fake or inauthentic.
- **What's the problem in each one of these stories?**
  - Answer: Beyonce not truly singing; Braun used drugs to enhance his natural performance; celebrities mask their real appearance using computer software.
- **Why is it such a big deal that these people aren't real?**
  - Answers may vary. Lead students to begin to think about the concept of authenticity and being real.
- **Why do we value authenticity?**
  - Answers will vary.

**FINALLY**, explain that you're going to be spending the next few sessions together talking about what real, authentic faith looks like. Explain that, similar to our dissatisfaction with people who are somehow inauthentic in their lives, settling for living out an inauthentic faith won't cut it either. Say:

- **We're going to examine exactly what it means to live out an authentic faith, a faith that's true to God's call. And in this session, we're going to see the heart of this call. Let's jump in.**

## DIGGING IN

*Digging In is the part of the lesson where you'll settle down and dig through Scripture.*



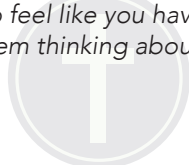
### STUDENT BOOK PAGES

- This activity will utilize pages 7 and 8 in the Follower Student Book.



### ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

- In this first session, you're going to introduce the idea of Jesus' call to follow Him as a foundational aspect of their faith. But you're just introducing it. You'll spend a lot of your time in discussion helping students examine this idea from a few different angles. You'll spend sessions 2-4 really going deep into what it means to follow Jesus. Resist the urge to feel like you have to leave students with a full picture after this first lesson. If anything, your goal is to get them thinking about their own lives and whether or not they follow Christ's example or someone else's



**FIRST**, take a moment and set the stage for what you're about to be discussing. Explain that the purpose of the next few sessions is to examine what it means to truly live out a real, authentic faith. What you're NOT necessarily focusing on is how you come to faith. (This is an important distinction that will become more apparent as the study moves forward.) Say something like:

- **The Bible is extremely clear that we come to a saving faith in Christ through faith. We are all sinners and our sin creates separation from God. Jesus came to make peace between God and us through His death on the cross. Only when we believe that Jesus was who He said He was and did what He said He did on the cross are we saved from the penalty of our sins. Our actions can't save us. Yet, as Scripture makes clear, when we come to a saving faith in Christ, we're made new and our lives are transformed. There are certain expectations of our new lives. There is a certain path we're called to follow. This living out of our faith is what this study is about.**

The idea is to make sure students know that you're not talking about a works-based salvation. You're talking about how to live life as one who has been saved, how to journey with Christ. (As the study progresses, there will be some natural moments to create conversation with students who may not have a saving relationship with Christ.)

**THEN**, instruct students to turn to page 7 in their *Follower* Student Book. Guide their attention to the large question printed on the page, "What Makes A Person A Christian?" Lead students in a discussion using the follow up questions as guides to direct your conversation. Ask:

- **How would you answer this question from the perspective of someone who doesn't believe in God?**
  - o Answers will vary. But you are trying to lead students to really capture the image the world has of Christians. You might lead students to see that many of these responses might be action oriented, not belief oriented. In other words, you might expect answers that focus on what Christians are perceived to do or not do. Or maybe even what they are against or not against.
- **How would you answer as someone who believes in God?**
  - o Answers may vary some, but should all center around faith in the work and person of Christ as the atoning sacrifice for the sins of the world.
- **How does the world know a person is a Christian or not?**
  - o Answers will vary. This is a very interesting place to let your students speak as freely as possible. You'll learn a lot about how they see themselves and their faith lives as they answer this question.

When they have finished with this last question. Say:

- **These are all good responses. Let's take a moment to look at a few passages in Scripture, then we'll come back to these thoughts.**

**NEXT**, instruct students to look at Page 8. Lead students to examine the passages on the page. Read or have a student read through each passage. Then, when you've finished, lead the students in the following discussion. Ask:

- **It doesn't take long to figure out what each of these passages have in common. What is it?**
  - o Answer: Each passage is a description of Jesus calling one or more of people who would become His disciples to follow Him.
- **Instruct students to circle the word follow in each passage. Then, ask students to describe Jesus' call of the disciples. What do they notice about it? What stands out at them?**
  - o Answers may vary, but your goal is to lead them to see just how sparse it was. How little information He gave them.
- **What information is not present in Jesus' call?**
  - o Answers will vary, but lead students to see that Jesus doesn't flesh it all out for them. He didn't spell it out word for word. There was a little bit of mystery and a lot of faith involved.
- **If we read between the lines in Matthew 4:18-20, we get the idea that there is a little more detail than we might first see. What did Jesus call Peter and Andrew away from?**
  - o Answer: Not just their literal nets, but their actual careers. By informing them that He would make them "fishers of men," Jesus was essentially giving them a new vocation, a new career, a new life's purpose.



- **What clues does Matthew give us in verse 20 that their commitment to follow Jesus was one that would dynamically change their lives?**
  - *Answer:* They “walked away from their nets.” They never returned to fishing as their life purpose. They would follow Jesus, become transformed in the process, and grow to become the leaders of the early movement of Christianity.
- **So, why do you think each of these men followed Jesus?**
  - *Answer:* They were compelled by Christ, and most probably by the Holy Spirit, to act. While their belief of Jesus would have been somewhat incomplete at this early stage of their journey with Him, there was at least a tentative acknowledgment of Jesus as the Messiah. They responded to who Jesus was.

Help your students see that what we see in these passages is that a foundation to an authentic faith is being willing to follow Jesus wherever He leads. Explain to them that this sounds easier than it actually is. Say something like:

- **We hear this concept and we’re like, “I don’t get it. I follow Jesus. No big deal, right?” But we step back and think about it, our faith is often less about truly following Jesus and more about following ourselves. Or our friends. Or the world. Few of us can say that we truly live our lives looking only to Jesus to steer our path. Even the disciples couldn’t always say this. Let me show you what I mean.**

**THEN**, explain to students that you’re going to show them a passage that you’ll actually spend a good bit of time on in the next session. But for now, you’re going to look at it and see what it says about following our way of thinking verses following Jesus’ way.

Instruct students to turn to Matthew 16:21-26 in their Bibles. Explain that this comes after a pretty huge moment in the life of Jesus and His disciples. Peter has just accurately confessed Jesus as the true Son of God, the promised Messiah. Explain that this is a big moment. But tell students that it’s followed by what can only be described as a kind of setback for Peter.

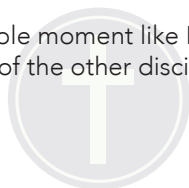
Read or have a student read verses 21-23 then ask:

- **What happened in verses 21-23? What was shocking about what Jesus told them?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **When you read that Peter “rebuked” Jesus, how does that make you feel?**
  - *Answers will vary.*
- **Why do you think Peter said what he said?**
  - *Answer:* Peter had his own ideas of how things should go. He wasn’t a bad guy. He was just looking at things through his agenda, not Jesus’ agenda. Peter was trying to lead, not follow.
- **How do you take Jesus’ response?**
  - *Answer:* Jesus didn’t mean that Peter was actually Satan. He was saying that His road was already difficult enough. He didn’t need anyone, especially friends, tempting Him with an easier path.
- **How does Jesus refer to Peter’s mindset here? How does He point out Peter’s faulty way of thinking about His faith relationship?**
  - *Answer:* This is a perfect example of what happens when we see our lives and our faith through the lens of our own leadership, and not that of Jesus’ leadership.

**THEN**, direct students’ attention to the bottom part of page 8. Explain that you’re going to bring this concept forward. Instruct them to look at the question on the page and define in their own words what does it mean to follow their own will for their life and not God’s? If you have time, encourage them to work in pairs or in groups. If they want an extra challenge, encourage them to come up with some practical examples of what this looks like in the real world. When they’ve finished, have them share their answers with the class. Then, say:

- **When we choose to follow our own path, we cut ourselves short. Just like Peter thought He knew best, Jesus knew better. Jesus knew how important His mission was because He knew how it would play out. Jesus knows how His plan for our lives will play out, as well. Following Him instead of following our own desires insures that we’ll be in the center of God’s will for how He wants to use us to impact the world in His name.**

**NEXT**, explain that Jesus used this crisis as a teachable moment like He always did. Explain that Peter’s confession of Jesus as Messiah was accurate. Yet Peter, and some of the other disciples, might have had the idea that the Messiah





would be a political ruler. Peter might have been rebuking Jesus because Peter had ideas of a position of power in the Messiah's government. But explain that Jesus set Peter straight pretty quickly, and in doing so, once again defined what it looks like to have a faith relationship with Himself.

Read or have a student read verses 24-26, then remind them that you'll look in-depth at this specific verse next session. But make sure they see Jesus once again reiterate the phrase "follow me." Ask:

- **What does Jesus say we must do in order to follow Him?**
  - Answer: Deny ourselves.

**FINALLY**, explain that this idea of denying ourselves and our own will is the key to following Christ. It can't happen when we still want to do things our way. Say:

- **Jesus made it clear. If we believe in Him we must follow Him. It's not a faith that keeps us on the sidelines. Jesus is in motion. His mission is moving all around us. True faith starts with letting go of our lives and following Jesus. Wherever and however He leads.**

Make sure there are no questions, then transition into the Wrapping Up activity.

## WRAPPING UP

*Wrapping Up is where you'll be focusing on giving students some practical "takeaways" to apply in their lives.*



### STUDENT BOOK PAGES

- This activity will utilize page 9 in the Follower Student Book.



### ADDITIONAL INSTRUCTIONS

- None

**FIRST**, direct students' attention to the big, funny looking word on page 9 of their Student Books. Have students take turns trying to say it, and then guessing what it means. Remind students that the Bible is written in Greek. The word they see is a transliteration, or a phonetic spelling, of the Greek word "mathetes," pronounced *muh-THAY-tace*. Explain that this is the word used in the New Testament for "disciple." In the blank on the left hand side, have students write down the definition of *mathetes*. Have them write something like, "Student, apprentice, or learner."

**THEN**, explain to them that this word was in use long before Jesus' time. But inform them that Jesus changed the meaning of the word. Jesus' disciples, or students, were more than just learners. They were followers. In the space on the right side of the arrow, have students write "follower."

**NEXT**, instruct students to look back at what they did in the first of the lesson where they defined what it meant to be a Christian. Check and see if any one of their definitions reflected the idea of following Christ. Explain that this is the foundation for a true and authentic faith. To live the life Christ wants them to live, they must follow Him. Lead them in a short discussion to help them apply this concept using the questions on page 9. Ask:

- **How do we know where Jesus wants us to go? In other words, how do we know where He is leading?**
  - Answers will vary. Lead them to understand that the Bible directs our paths. Through God's various commands, we know how to live our lives that line up with God, and we know what it looks like when our lives don't. But also, we see models. We see examples of the things Jesus did. When He says "follow me," He's saying to live as He lived.
- **Why is it impossible to follow someone on their journey if you're trying to plan your own journey?**
  - Answers will vary.
- **Following is about trust as much as anything. Why can we safely follow Jesus?**
  - Answers will vary, but help students see that it's because the Bible tells us He is good and trustworthy. We know His track record. And we have the Holy Spirit as a guide.







Explain to students that we all follow someone. We either follow ourselves, others, or a model put forth by the world. The goal, however, is to commit to truly following Christ. Challenge them to leave from this time of study asking themselves one question: Are they someone who knows about Jesus? Someone who goes through the motions? Or are they a true *mathetes*? Are they a true follower? Encourage them to have this question on their hearts and minds as they go through your time of study.

**FINALLY**, ask students if they have any questions or additional comments. Inform students of the devotions located on pages 35-41 in their *Follower* Student Books. Provide them with a schedule or some structure as to when you would like for them to work through them.

- The first devotion is on page 35 and works in concert with this lesson.





# FOLLOWER

LIVING AN AUTHENTIC FAITH

★ ★ ★ This Book Belongs To

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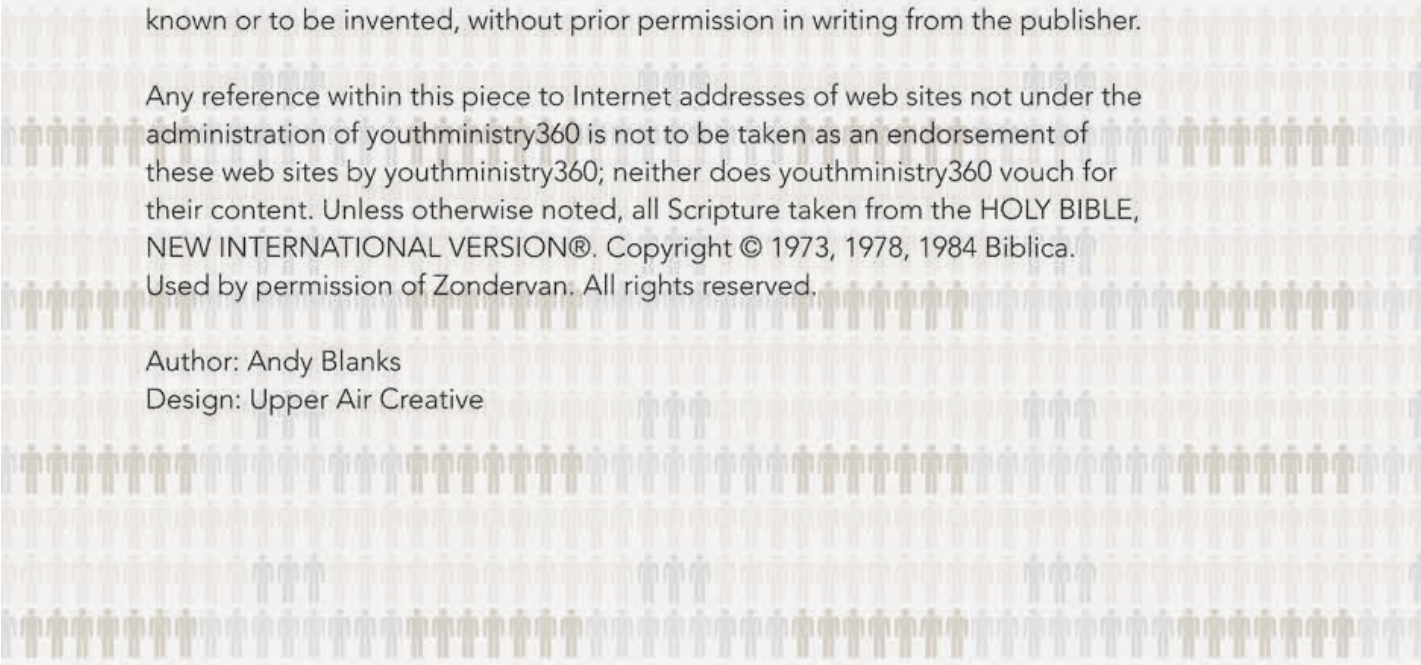
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Author: Andy Blanks  
Design: Upper Air Creative



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# STARTING TO FOLLOW

*What does it mean to follow?* Over the course of the next few days, you'll learn the answer to this question, and how this answer could dramatically impact your life. But your time will only be meaningful if you want it to be. Here's what we mean . . .

## HAVE YOU PREPARED YOUR HEART?

Ask yourself: Am I open to learn more about what a real follower looks like? Am I willing to learn? If you can't answer "yes" to these questions, your time spent learning about following might not be as impactful as it could be. If you need to, take a moment and silently talk to God in prayer. Ask Him to give you a heart that is open to His leading.

## THIS BOOK WILL GUIDE YOUR JOURNEY

This book is the key to discovering what being a follower is really all about. It will help guide your experiences. Hold on to it. Write your name and the date in the front. If this journey turns out to be as meaningful as it could be, you'll want to look back and remember this time in your life.

## MAKE AN IMPACT. BE IMPACTED.

As you start to discover more about living an authentic faith, keep your heart open for those moments where God reveals things to you. Also, don't miss the chance you have to impact your friends, and be impacted by them. God speaks through you and them, you know.

**YOU'LL SOON LEARN EXACTLY WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A REAL CHRIST-FOLLOWER. ARE YOU READY?**



# Follower Session 1 Intro

What do you think when you hear the word “authentic”? If you think of words like *real*, *true*, or *original*, you’re headed in the right direction.

The word “authentic” has become something of a buzzword in our culture. But it’s a buzzword for a reason.

## **YOU SEE WE VALUE AUTHENTICITY.**

We want the people we do life with to be *authentic*.

We want the brands and movements we support to be *authentic*.

We expect *authenticity* out of those who lead us.

We want the things that matter to us to be *real*. To be *true*. We want the experiences and encounters we have to be what they are supposed to be.

**But what about when it comes to our faith?** What then? Do we ask the same questions? Do we truly care what a real or true pursuit of our faith looks like?

What if we were willing to ask this same question about our relationship with God? What does an authentic relationship with Christ look like? How do we pursue a faith that’s real?

Over the next few sessions, you’ll have the opportunity to answer these questions. And what you discover might change the way you look at following Christ.

## **ARE YOU READY?**

# LARGE GROUP NOTES

SESSION 1

These two pages are designed for you to take notes on during Large Group Sessions. The stuff you're learning will really build on itself over the next few sessions. So even if you're not much of a note taker, you might want to at least jot down what you think is important.

Try writing down:

- Any specific teaching points
- Verse references for Scripture passages
- Quotes that make you think
- Anything you have a question about

**The *Follower Student Book* comes with space to take notes for each Large Group Session.**

**These pages are intentionally left blank.**

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SMALL GROUP

## SESSION 1 INTRO

Think about the last off-brand soda you drank. You know, one of the many knock-off drinks you buy at the big supermarkets. They taste pretty close to the “real thing.” But not close enough. There’s still a pretty big difference between the poser and the authentic soda.

Have you ever used a knock-off mp3 player? They may look like an iPod, but all it takes is a few minutes of trying to load songs to realize that looks can be deceiving.

HERE’S THE DEAL: IMPOSTER SODAS OR ELECTRONICS CAN COME CLOSE TO THE REAL BRANDS THEY TRY TO EMULATE. REALLY CLOSE. BUT EVEN IF THE DIFFERENCE IS RAZOR SLIM, IT CHANGES EVERYTHING.

**The Bible paints a clear picture of what it means to be a real follower of Christ.**

The problem, however, is that many people’s faith-lives don’t look like the picture the Bible paints. They aren’t living an authentic faith. Like the knock-off soda brand, they’re close. But being close only highlights just how badly they’ve missed.

The purpose of the next few sessions is to help you define what this authentic faith looks like. And to challenge you to embrace it.

In this first session, you’re going to learn that the definition of an authentic faith starts with a two word command.

**The command?**

**“FOLLOW ME . . .”**

# Session 1 Getting Started

*What's wrong with faking it? Follow your leader's instructions to work through this activity as a group.*

## ALL THE LIP-SYNC LADIES

In January of 2013, President Obama was inaugurated for his second term as President of the United States. As part of the traditionally elaborate inauguration ceremony, Beyonce sang the National Anthem to rave reviews. Or did she? Almost immediately, people began accusing her of lip-syncing the anthem to pre-recorded music, a fact that she admitted several weeks later. Worried that she was unprepared after missing a practice with the Marine Corps Band, who was to accompany her on the song, Beyonce decided to go with a pre-recorded track of her singing because, in her words, she is "a perfectionist."

## LEAST VALUABLE PLAYER

Ryan Braun plays left field for the Milwaukee Brewers. In 2011 he won the National League Most Valuable Player award, confirming what most already knew: he was one of the best players in baseball. The problem is what happened next. In October 2011, Braun tested positive for performance enhancing drugs. He successfully won his appeal, thanks to a lawyer-driven campaign aimed at blaming the positive test on the man who tested him. Braun claimed he was innocent and many believed him. But in 2013, he was suspended again for 50 games for another accusation of using drugs.

## NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING

From models to actors, celebrities who appear in advertising routinely have their images digitally enhanced to appear flawless. Any imperfections in their skin are smoothed over using Photoshop and other software. Using post-production software, these images of their bodies are trimmed and clipped to make them slimmer. It doesn't take long to find a ton of before and after images online. The results are incredible. Stars go from looking like normal people to almost robot-looking images of themselves. Many stars such as Keira Knightley and Jennifer Lawrence have spoken out against the practice, while celebrities like Kim Kardashian embrace it.

Sources: [http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/relatable-source/post/beyonce-speaks-out-on-national-anthem-lip-sync-controversy-at-super-bowl-press-conference/2013/01/31/11e2-bd3e-c01e61a205f6\\_blog.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/relatable-source/post/beyonce-speaks-out-on-national-anthem-lip-sync-controversy-at-super-bowl-press-conference/2013/01/31/11e2-bd3e-c01e61a205f6_blog.html)  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryan\\_Braun#Performance-enhancing\\_drugs](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ryan_Braun#Performance-enhancing_drugs)

# SESSION 1 DIGGING IN

Work with your group to answer the question below.

## WHAT MAKES A PERSON A CHRISTIAN?

1. How would you answer this question from the perspective of someone who doesn't believe in God?

2. How would you answer as someone who believes in God?

3. How does the world know a person is a Christian or not?

Get ready to talk it up. Read the following passages and discuss them with your group.

<sup>17</sup> From that time on Jesus began to preach, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.' <sup>18</sup> As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup> 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will make you fishers of men.' <sup>20</sup> At once they left their nets and followed him. <sup>21</sup> Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup> and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him." – Matthew 4:17-22

"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. 'Follow me,' he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him." – Matthew 9:9

"The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, 'Follow me.'" – John 1:43

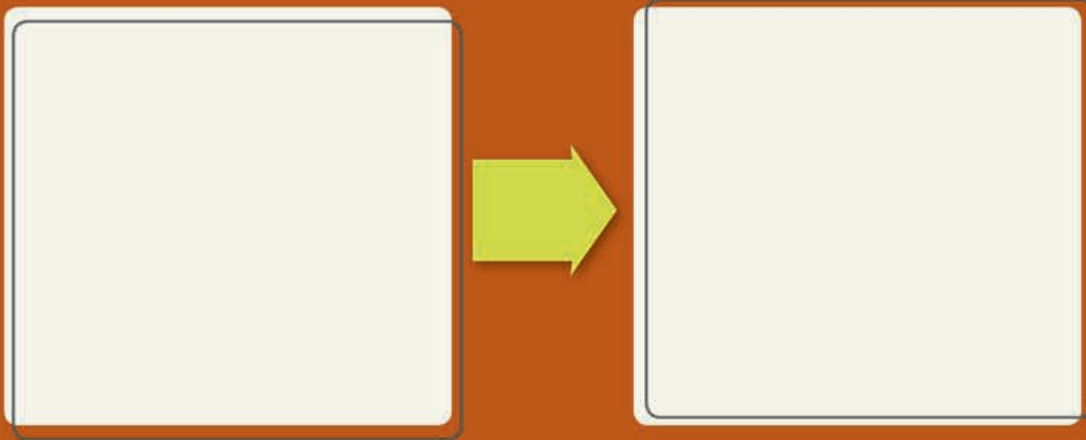
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**IN YOUR OWN WORDS, DEFINE WHAT IT  
MEANS FOR PEOPLE TO FOLLOW THEIR  
LEADERSHIP AND NOT CHRIST'S.**

# SESSION 1 WRAPPING UP

*Time for a little language lesson. Work with your leader to define the word you see below.*

## mathetes



1. How do we know where Jesus wants us to go? In other words, how do we know where He is leading?
2. Why is it impossible to follow someone on their journey if you're trying to plan your own journey?
3. Following is about trust as much as anything. Do you trust Jesus to lead you along the right path?



## ***Follower: Living An Authentic Faith Life***

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There is a craving in our world for realness. The buzzword “authentic” is a buzzword for a reason. We want the people we do life with to be *authentic*. We want the brands and movements we support to be *authentic*. We expect those who lead us to be *authentic*. We want the things that matter to us to be real. To be true. We want the experiences and encounters we have to be what they are supposed to be.

**But what about our faith?** Are we willing to ask what an authentic relationship with Christ looks like? And once we find out, are we willing to do something about it? How do we pursue a faith that’s real? The Bible goes into great detail to show what an authentic faith looks like. But the heart of this definition comes in a few words from Jesus, a short phrase, uttered by Christ at the beginning of His ministry. “*Follow me.*”

Living out a faith that is true and real in today’s world? It’s about being a follower. A Christ-follower. *Follower* will help you understand what real faith looks like and how to live it out.

### **Small Group Outlines**

#### **Small Group Session 1**

- **Session Title:** The Call To Follow
- **Session Purpose:** To introduce the concept of “following” as the true foundation for their faith-relationship with Christ, and to get students thinking about whether or not they follow Christ’s example or someone else’s.
- **Main Scripture:** Matthew 4:17-22, Matthew 9:9, John 1:43
- **Supplemental Scripture:** Matthew 16:21-26
- **Session Snapshot:** Becoming a Christian is about faith. Salvation is made possible by God through the work of His Son, Jesus. Most of your students know what kind of life they were saved from. But what kind of life are we saved to? What does it mean to truly live an authentic faith-life? In this lesson your students will learn that living out their faith starts with following Christ. They’ll be challenged to think about who or what they are following.

#### **Small Group Session 2**

- **Session Title:** What Does It Mean To Follow?
- **Session Purpose:** To define what it means to follow Jesus, and to challenge your students to compare their own faith with this definition, looking for ways they’re both on and off track.
- **Main Scripture:** Matthew 16:24, John 12:25-26, Matthew 3:1-10, Matthew 10:37-39
- **Supplemental Scripture:** None
- **Session Snapshot:** In session 1, you helped set the table for this session’s focus. Your students should have firmly grasped the concept that the foundation of an authentic faith is not just admiring Jesus from afar, but fully following Him. This lesson will answer the vitally important question: “What does this look like?” In this session, you’ll look at four different snapshots from Scripture to define what it means to follow Jesus. When this session is over, your students will know what it means to be a follower and will have a chance to look at their lives and see if their faith matches up.

#### **Small Group Session 3**

- **Session Title:** The Cost Of Following
- **Session Purpose:** To remind your students that following Jesus is not without its cost, but to encourage them that following Christ is still the only way to real life.

- **Main Scripture:** Luke 9:57-62, John 15:18-21, John 16:33
- **Supplemental Scripture:** None
- **Session Snapshot:** Your students understand the call to follow. And they know what it looks like to follow Christ. They understand what the Bible has to say about it. And they know what it looks like to live this out in their day-to-day lives. But do they understand what it will cost them? This lesson will help your students understand the cost of following Christ, but will also help them see that it's worth every moment they spend walking with God.

#### **Small Group Session 4**

- **Session Title:** A Boost For The Journey
- **Session Purpose:** To encourage students as they commit to pursuing an authentic faith with Christ, empowering them to make real change in their lives.
- **Main Scripture:** 1 Corinthians 9:24-27, 2 Corinthians 4:7-9, John 14:25-27, Hebrews 12:1-3
- **Supplemental Scripture:** None
- **Session Snapshot:** In this final lesson, you'll spend time wrapping up your time spent studying *Follower* by encouraging your students as they strive to live out what they've learned. You'll use four different passages of Scripture to help encourage them to be intentional in their faith (1 Corinthians 9:24-27), to be strong when it gets tough (2 Corinthians 4:7-9), to be encouraged that the Spirit goes with them (John 14:25-27), and to be motivated by Christ (Hebrews 12:1-3).

#### **Large Group Outlines**

Large Group Session 1: John 10:1-6

Large Group Session 2: John 10:7-10

Large Group Session 3: John 10:11-16

Large Group Session 4: John 10:22-24, 25-30

#### **Student Book Devotional Outlines**

Devotion 1: Acts 13:1-5, 13-15, 48-52, and 14:26-28

Devotion 2: Matthew 11:1-6

Devotion 3: Acts 6:8-15 and Acts 7:54-60

Devotion 4: Luke 7:1-10