

**WEEK ONE  
ADULT SMALL GROUP  
JESUS CONNECTION**

**Jesus Calls Levi (Matthew)**

**THE JESUS TRAIL**

**INTRODUCTION: Have you ever heard of the Jesus Trail?**

The Jesus Trail is a 65-kilometer hiking trail in the Galilee region of Israel which connects important sites from the life of Jesus as well as other historical and religious sites. The Jesus Trail offers an alternative for travelers and pilgrims to experience the steps of Jesus in a way that is authentic, adventurous and educational by hiking through the rugged and beautiful landscape of the Galilee in Israel. It takes on average four days to journey this trail. (jesustrail.org)

[**BONUS:** See CBS news report on Jesus trail: [youtube.com/watch?v=9iWoUmN35sU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9iWoUmN35sU)]

**DISCUSS:**

- Why do you think people want to travel along the Jesus trail?
- How does hiking this trail, instead of driving, add to your experience?
- How might it help you connect to what you read in the New Testament?
- Do you think you would want to hike the Jesus Trail? Why or why not?

**JESUS CALLS LEVI:**

**SAY:** Along his journey, Jesus called people to leave their old life and follow him. They would then walk from town to town, learning from Jesus seeing him do amazing things. Jesus invited unexpected people to join him, from smelly fishermen to political radicals (Simon the Zealot). Perhaps one of the most controversial would be Levi (or Matthew) the tax collector.

**ASK:** Why would Jesus inviting a tax collector to be a disciple be controversial?

[**INFO:** Tax collectors were considered traitors to the Jewish people. They would collect money for the oppressive Roman government, and even extra for themselves.]

**READ LUKE 5: 27-31**

27 After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector named Levi (also Matthew) sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, "Follow me." 28 So, leaving everything behind, he got up and began to follow him.

29 Then Levi hosted a grand banquet for him at his house. Now there was a large crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining at the table with them. 30 But the Pharisees and their scribes were complaining to his disciples, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?"

31 Jesus replied to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a doctor, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

**DISCUSS:**

- Before Jesus called Levi, do you think he was happy? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Levi leaves everything behind to follow Jesus?
- Why were people so offended that Jesus was spending time with Levi and his friend?
- How did Levi's journey with Jesus provide him purpose and meaning?

**READ PSALM 128:1-2** (from the Message)

All you who fear God, how blessed you are! How happily you walk on his smooth straight road! You worked hard and deserve all you've got coming. Enjoy the blessing! Revel in the goodness!

**DISCUSS:**

- How did walking with Jesus bring Matthew happiness? How did it bless his life?
- How does walking with Jesus bring us happiness and blessing? How is that different than happiness and blessing that the world offers?

**RETURN:**

Go back to the main lesson. Wrap up with the *CLOSING TIME* prayer or choose an additional option in *PATHS FOR THE JOURNEY*.