

What Can I Do

Week 4

BIG IDEA

I can include people who aren't like me.

BIBLE

Jesus Calls Matthew:  
Matthew 9:9–13; Psalm 111

LARGE GROUP TIME

What a month we've had! Today is the last week in our series, *What Can I Do?* Not only did we learn about some things we can do when we grow up, we learned what we can do right now, like listening to God, being confident God knows us, and trusting God's plans for us. But we're not done yet! So let's go ahead and learn one more really important thing that we can do.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

QUESTION | "Have you ever felt left out?"

- **Everyone close your eyes. Now raise your hand if you've ever felt left out.**
- Okay, open your eyes and look around — there are a lot of us. Feeling left out can happen a lot as a kid. It happens to grownups, too. Maybe you feel left out because you're young. Maybe it's because there is something unique about you. Maybe you are new to a group. Maybe someone has just left you out because they are not being kind.
- No matter the reason other people might have, Jesus never thinks there's a reason to leave anyone out. We'll see how Jesus treated people who were normally excluded and what we can do to be more like Jesus, too!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Matthew 9:9–13 (Jesus Calls Matthew)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Each week for the Bible story section, invite a professional to talk to kids as a mini Career Day interview. Have them share a little about what they do (bonus points if they bring visual aids!) and help you tell the Bible Story, too. This week, consider bringing in someone with a “non-traditional” occupation, like a social media influencer, small business owner, stay-at-home parent, or a ministry leader. If you cannot find somebody to invite, use the suggested script below and show a video of anyone with a non-traditional job (considering showing parts of a compilation [like this](#)). For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this](#)!
- Hey, everyone! It's our final *What Can I Do?* Career Day! **Which of the careers we've learned about so far did you find the most interesting?** Well, I've got one more for you to add to the collection.
- **With guest.** Today, we have (introduce guest and their profession.) Let's welcome our guest with a huge round of applause!
  - (Allow guest to speak for about five minutes and give a basic rundown of what they do and how.)
  - That is super interesting! I know what you do is not one of the first things people think of when they think of careers. What do you love about what you do? (Have guest respond and elaborate. If there's time, allow kids to ask questions, then thank the guest for their time.)
- **Without guest.** Today, we are going to learn about someone with a unique job!
  - (Show video.)
  - There are a lot of jobs that we consider to be “non-traditional” because they're not really common or might be slightly unusual. When was the last time you met someone and they told you they were a professional horse jockey? Or an acrobat? Or a spy? Regardless of whether or not we think these jobs are kind of . . . out there, they all do important work for their communities. Even when things are not what we'd expect, we can appreciate and value them!
- All of this reminds me of our Bible story for today, where Jesus purposefully sought out someone who was a bit unique, too. **Let's check out Matthew 9:9–13 together.**
- In this passage, Jesus calls another one of his disciples. His name was Matthew. Matthew had a pretty unpopular job. He was a tax collector.
- In those days, Jewish citizens despised tax collectors and would treat them like “traitors” because their entire job was to take money from their own people and turn it over to the government . . . the very government that was treating them unfairly. If that weren't bad enough, tax collectors also had a reputation for collecting extra money and keeping it for themselves!
- Jesus was different. Instead of ignoring Matthew, as many others did, Jesus invited him to have dinner with him. That must have surprised Matthew and the followers of Jesus, too!
- There was a group of religious leaders called the Pharisees who didn't like what Jesus was doing. Why was he hanging out with people like tax collectors? They didn't understand the way Jesus loved all kinds of people the same.
- Jesus didn't care how different or unpopular someone was. He loved and accepted everyone the same. Jesus didn't just talk to Matthew. Jesus invited him to become one of his disciples. Jesus didn't care what other people thought. He showed God's love to everyone and left no one out!

BIG IDEA | I can include people who aren’t like me.

- **I can include people who aren’t like me.**

ACTIVITY | Unboxing Friends

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using painter’s tape, create four or five squares on the ground that will fit all of your kids. Leave some space in the middle of the room. Have kids sit in any box they want. Ask a series of questions, and if a question applies to them, have them gather in the middle of the room, then go sit in a different box than the one they came from.*
- **If this describes you, come to the middle!**
  - You were born in a different city than this one.
  - You’ve broken a bone.
  - You love vanilla ice cream.
  - You love any flavor *but* vanilla ice cream.
  - You love to play sports.
  - You love to play video or computer games.
  - You are the youngest sibling.
  - You are the only child.
  - You’ve been to your parents’ workplace.
  - You speak more than one language.
  - You ate breakfast this morning.
  - You love to read books.
  - You know what you’d like to do when you grow up.
- We tend to make judgments about people and assume things about them without getting to know them first. That’s called “putting someone in a box.” But there is always more to people than what we can see. It’s time we “unboxed” our ideas of people and start treating them the way Jesus does.
- When we take the time to know someone — even someone who seems extremely different from us — we can find things in common and make a connection. The greatest common ground we all have is that Jesus loves us. And that’s why **I can include people who aren’t like me.** That’s an “out-of-the-box” way to be!

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 111

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage or invite a volunteer to read it to the group.*
- **What reasons does this psalm say that we should praise God?**
  - Verses 2–3 praise the things God has done.
  - Verse 4 tells us God is “*gracious and compassionate.*” That means God forgives and cares about us so much.
  - Verse 5 reminds us God provides us with the things we need.
  - Verse 9 says God saves us and keeps promises.
- In today’s Bible story of Jesus calling Matthew, we see another reason we should praise God — God loves and includes everybody, even those who are different. God’s love is amazingly big and available to everyone!
- Just like Jesus loved and called Matthew, he loves and calls each and every one of us to follow him, no matter how different we might feel.
- **I can include people who aren’t like me,** because that’s what Jesus does!

VIDEO | What Can I Do?, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week’s episode of [Press Play](#).*

***NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?***

REFLECTION | Can I Include People Who Aren’t Like Me?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids discuss in pairs or small groups. You may want to ask some leaders to go around and help the conversation get going.*
- It’s natural for us to be drawn to people who are similar to us or like the same things we do . . . There’s nothing wrong with that. The problem is that sometimes, it can cause us to exclude those around us who look, act, or talk differently than we do. Sometimes, we leave out people who can’t do the things we do or don’t have the things we have.
- **Think of a time when you might want to exclude somebody. Or a time when you did in the past.**
- **What can we do differently so that everyone is included?**
- **What are some things we can say to someone who wants to exclude others?**
- Next time you see someone that may need a friend, a smiling face, or a kind word, consider Jesus’ example and say, “Hey, **I can include people who aren’t like me!**” And go include them!
- PLAY STRONG ENOUGH MATTHEW WEST

RESPONSE | My Career Log

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid their Career Log books from last week. Have them write or draw today’s response activity on the pages dedicated to this week. Allow kids to take their logs home this week to look at all the careers they learned about and the Bible stories and Big Ideas linked to them.
- **If you could have any job that we haven’t logged yet, what would it be?** Think outside the box! Will you be a monster truck racer, celebrity hair stylist, zookeeper, ice cream store owner, or something completely different?
- **Draw a picture of yourself in your future career. Why did you choose that?**
- **When you are all grown up and working this job, what will you do to make sure you include everyone?**
- **What is one way you can include people now? At home? At school? With your friends? When playing on a team or during recess?**

MEMORY VERSE | Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

- **“I can do all this through him who gives me strength.”**

PRAYER

- Jesus, thank you for being a friend to everyone, even people nobody else wanted to include. Teach me to be like you so that I can include people who aren’t like me. Because no matter how different we are, we are all identically loved by you! Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

- DISCUSSION
- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
    - **What made Matthew unpopular with people in his community?** *(He was a tax collector.)*
    - **What did Jesus do that was so shocking to the Pharisees?** *(He ate with “tax collectors and sinners,” people who were not well-liked and considered outcasts.)*
    - **Read Matthew 9:12. Why do you think Jesus said this?** *(Possible answer: He wanted to show he was spending time with the people who needed him most.)*
    - **Read Psalms 111:4. How can we be gracious and compassionate toward others, like God is to us?** *(We can include others who aren’t like us!)*
  - **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
    - **Do you recall a time when you felt excluded or left out?**
    - **Can you think of a time when you caused someone else to feel excluded?**
    - **Why do you think God wants us to include people who are different than us?**

- ACTIVITY | Collaborative Art
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have each kid start off with a piece of paper where they draw something on it. Then have them pass their papers to the right so that everyone gets to add to their neighbor’s drawing. Keep going until the papers have cycled through the entire group. For younger kids, consider having them all take turns writing the Big Idea one letter at a time. Use a variety of art supplies to make it more interesting!
  - Look how including everyone led to such unique and beautiful masterpieces! Having an “including others” mindset takes a lot of practice. But when we work on it together, it can be easier . . . and fun! No matter what kinds of pressures or feelings we might face, let’s remember: **I can include people who aren’t like me!**