

## LESSON 9

# JESUS AND THE TWELVE

### LESSON NOTES

#### FOCUS: THE TWELVE APOSTLES

- SACRED STORY
- CORE PRESENTATION

#### THE MATERIAL

- LOCATION: SACRED STORY (NEW TESTAMENT) SHELVES
- PIECES: PICTURE OF LAST SUPPER, SYMBOLS FOR THE 12 APOSTLES, CONTROL CARD(S)
- UNDERLAY: NONE

#### BACKGROUND

The word *apostle* is a transliteration of the Greek word, *apostos*. While the term *apostle* suggests one who proclaims the faith, the term *disciple* suggests being a student of a religious leader. The title *apostle* is applied to Matthias, Barnabas and Paul. Matthias took Judas' place, but neither Barnabas nor Paul was one of the Twelve. Sometimes the word *apostle* is used to designate the leader of the first Christian mission to a country. For example, Patrick is called "the apostle of Ireland" and Augustine of Canterbury is called "the apostle of England." Technically, then, the Twelve were disciples until they began to proclaim the faith on their own; then they became apostles. As we look back from the perspective of today, however, we acknowledge that they did eventually share their own faith, so we call them "apostles."

There are four lists of the apostles in the New Testament, found in Matthew 10:2-4, Mark 3:16-19, Luke 6:14-16 and Acts 1:13. The four lists give contradictory names for the Twelve. This historical difficulty has several scholarly solutions, but our pedagogical purpose is to present the group as the Twelve, with a fixed set of names.

We will use this list, based on the traditional names for the Twelve, together with their traditional symbols:

<b>Name</b>	<b>Symbol</b>
Andrew	white X-shaped cross on blue background
Bartholomew	three knives
James (son of Zebedee)	three scallop shells and often a sword

<b>Name</b>	<b>Symbol</b>
James the Less (son of Alphaeus)	saw
John	cup and serpent
Jude	sailboat
Matthew	three money bags
Philip	cross with two loaves of bread
Thomas	builder's square and spear
Simon Peter	upside-down cross and crossed keys
Simon, the Zealot	book and fish

Those are eleven apostles. Judas, the twelfth apostle, removed himself from the Twelve through his betrayal and suicide. The twelfth shield is for Matthias, who replaced Judas after Jesus' ascension into heaven. His symbol is the sword and a book.

### **NOTES ON THE MATERIAL**

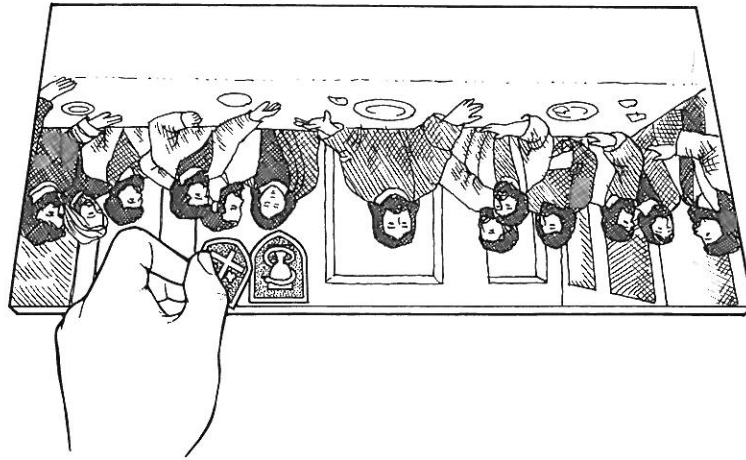
Find the materials for this presentation on the top shelf of the sacred story shelves. A reproduction of Da Vinci's *The Last Supper* leans against the wall in the New Testament section. In front of the painting, there should be a tray holding a small basket containing twelve small shields and control cards (described below).

The reproduction of the Last Supper can be mounted on foamcore. The moment Da Vinci depicts is the reaction of the disciples to Christ's statement that "One of you will betray me." Christ has one palm turned down, as if to say, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." The other palm is turned up, as if to say, "Not my will but thine be done."

Some historical notes on the painting, which you may want to discuss with older children:

- The people are dressed in the clothes of the painter's time and place. They are late 15th century, north Italian and wealthy. The painting was painted about the time Columbus discovered America.
- They look like someone who might buy a painting from Da Vinci.
- A more important cultural issue is the painting's display of anti-Semitism. The only person who looks "Jewish," dark with curly hair, is Judas. Children will remind you that they have Jewish friends, however, who don't look like that. For his time, Da Vinci painted a representative figure, a stereotype.

As you tell the story, you will place each shield above the head of the matching apostle. A control card shows the name of each apostle in Da Vinci's picture. Other cards could show pictures of the shields with the names of the matching apostles. You can buy a set of these cards from Godly Play Resources or make them yourself.



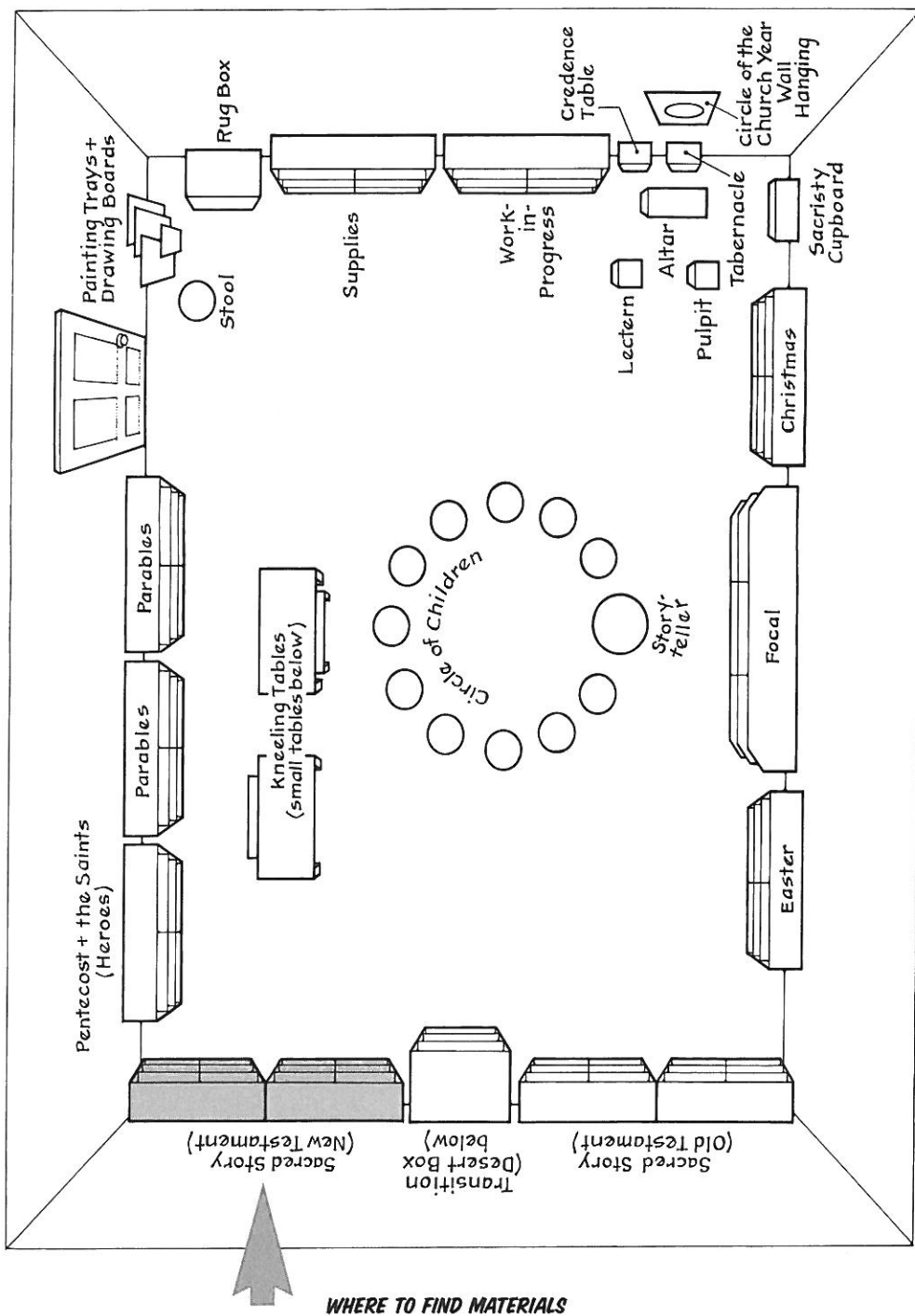
***MATCHING SHIELDS TO APOSTLES (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)***

### ***SPECIAL NOTES***

**Storytelling Tip:** In telling this story, you can change the order of presenting the Twelve from the one we give in order to tell the stories of those apostles whose symbols and stories you remember first, hoping the others will come to mind as you proceed! The lesson uses the four groupings of three apostles as suggested by the Da Vinci painting.

Additional significant groupings are:

- two sets of brothers: Peter and Andrew, James and John (sons of Zebedee)
- the inner circle, present at the Transfiguration: Peter, James and John
- one set of friends: Philip and Bartholomew
- those directly called by Jesus: Philip and Matthew
- the only one to die a natural death: John



## MOVEMENTS

*When the children are ready, bring the picture and tray of materials to the circle. Put the tray beside you. Put the picture in front of you, facing away from you. As you tell this story, you can tilt the picture up, laying it against your knees to help the children see it more clearly.*

*Sweep your hand over the picture as you name the Twelve.*

*Point to some of the bread and wine on the table when you name them.*

*Point to Jesus.*

*Sweep your hand over the apostles again.*

*Point to Judas.*

*Take the shields from their container and lay them out across the top of the picture in random order.*

*Use your finger to draw an imaginary circle around each one of the groups.*

*Point to John. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, John is seated directly to your right of Jesus.*

## WORDS

- Watch carefully where I go so you will always know where to find this lesson.

- When Jesus went to Jerusalem for the last time, he went with the Twelve. They were his special friends. Today we call them the apostles.

- On Thursday of the last week, they met in an upstairs room for their last meal together. It was when Jesus told them that he would always be with them—and us—when we share the holy bread and wine.

But something happened just before he shared the holy bread and wine with them.

- Jesus said, “Someone who is sitting at this table will betray me.”

- All the apostles were shocked and sorry and angry. They cried out, “Is it I?” “Who is it?” That is what you see happening in the painting.

- Later, Judas did betray Jesus. He showed the High Priest’s soldiers who Jesus was that night in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- These are the symbols of the apostles. Each one has a special sign to help us remember them and their stories.

- Jesus is in the middle. The apostles are in groups of three on either side. Let’s see who’s here.

- This is John. He is probably the one called the “beloved disciple.” John first learned about Jesus when he was with John the Baptist. Right away he told his brother, James, and they both began to follow Jesus. Both brothers were fishermen. Their father’s name was Zebedee. John is probably the one who wrote down the story of Jesus we call “The Gospel of John.”

## MOVEMENTS

*Move the shield for John down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Lean back and pause each time before moving on to the next apostle. Now point to Peter. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Peter is seated directly to the right of John, two places to the right from Jesus and behind Judas as you look at the picture.*

*Move the shield for Peter down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to Judas. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Judas is seated to the right and in front of Peter, three places to the right of Jesus.*

*Make a motion as if moving a shield for Judas down over his head, but with no shield: there is no symbol for Judas.*

*Move the shield for Matthias down from the row of shields along the top of the picture, over the head of Judas.*

## WORDS

- This is the symbol for John. On his shield are the cup and the snake. They help us remember how one time some people tried to put poison into his cup, but the snake came and drank it. The snake died to save John's life.

Stories say that John was the only apostle who was not killed. He died on an island when he was an old man, full of years.

- This is Peter. He is leaning in toward Jesus behind Judas. Peter often got angry. He looks angry now, but he became more peaceful as the years went by.

Peter heard about Jesus from his brother, Andrew, who was with John the Baptist. He is sitting next to his brother, but it is hard to tell because of the way he is leaning in towards John. The two brothers look a lot alike.

- Peter's sign is the crossed keys and an upside-down cross. One time Jesus said to Peter that he was the rock on which he would build the church. He then said that he gave Peter the keys to the kingdom.

When Peter was old, he went to be with the Christian people in Rome. It was against the law to be a Christian person in those days, and the soldiers caught him. When they were going to nail him to a cross like Jesus, Peter asked them to turn him upside down. He did not deserve to die like his Lord, he said. The soldiers did as he asked, and old Peter died on the cross, too, but upside down.

- Judas is the one who went against Jesus. See? He is holding a bag with thirty pieces of silver in it. That is what he was paid to show the soldiers who Jesus was when they went to arrest him in the Garden of Gethsemane.

- Sometimes the sign for Judas is a shield that is all black. Sometimes it has the thirty pieces of silver or a rope on it. I wonder if that is completely true. I wonder if Jesus forgave him.

- This is the sign for Matthias. He replaced Judas as one of the Twelve.

## MOVEMENTS

*Draw an imaginary circle around the next group of three, the three closest to the other side of Jesus.*

*Point to Thomas. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Thomas is seated to the left of Jesus, behind James.*

*Move the shield for Thomas down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to James. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, James is seated to the left of Jesus, in front of Thomas. Show how James is really sitting next to Jesus, even though the face of Thomas is closer to Jesus.*

*Move the shield for James down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to Philip. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Philip is seated to the left of James, three places to the left of Jesus. Trace how Philip is leaning in toward Jesus.*

*Move the shield for Philip down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

## WORDS

On the other side of Jesus are Thomas, James and Philip.

This is Thomas. He is leaning behind James, so we see his face next to Jesus, even though James is really sitting next to Jesus. Thomas was the one who always asked hard questions. He is sometimes called “doubting Thomas.”

His sign is a spear and a builder’s square. This is what a builder uses to make square corners on buildings. Thomas went to India to tell people the story of Jesus, so he began to build the Church in that part of the world. He was killed in India for telling the story.

This is James. He is really sitting next to Jesus. His brother, John, is on one side, and he is on the other. He and his brother were fishermen, like Peter and Andrew. They worked for their father, Zebedee.

James learned about Jesus from his brother, John, who learned about him when he was a disciple of John the Baptist. The two brothers, John and James, together with Peter, made up an inner circle of three very close friends of Jesus inside the group of the Twelve. The three were there when Jesus was praying on the mountain and when he was praying in the garden, but I’m afraid they went to sleep three times in the garden.

The sign of James is three shells. He was the first apostle to be killed. King Herod Agrippa I had him executed. This is why a sword is also sometimes on his symbol.

Philip is next. He was there when Jesus fed 5,000 people. They were hungry for the truth about life, and Jesus told them. The truth is that people need each other and need to love each other. Jesus shared a little bread and fish with all those people to show this in a way so they could understand and yet keep thinking about. Jesus was like that.

His sign has two loaves of bread on it to remember that day when so many were fed with the bread of truth.

## MOVEMENTS

*Move your finger across to the other end of the table, the right side of the table with the picture facing away from you toward the children. Then circle the group of three disciples there.*

*Point to Andrew. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Andrew is seated to the right of Judas, four places to the right of Jesus (from the storyteller's perspective).*

*Move the shield for Andrew down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to James the Less. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, James the Less is seated to the right of Andrew, five places to the right of Jesus.*

*Move the shield for James the Less down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to Bartholomew. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Bartholomew is seated at the farthest right of the table.*

*Move the shield for Bartholomew down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Move your finger across to the other end of the table, the left side of the table with the picture facing away from you toward the children. Then circle the group of three disciples there.*

## WORDS

Now we will go back to the other side, clear to the end of the table. Here there is another group of three people. They are Andrew, James the Less and Bartholomew.

Here is Andrew. We already know he is Peter's brother. See how he is sitting near to Peter? Andrew was one of John the Baptist's disciples, but when John the Baptist showed Jesus to him, he went to get his brother Peter, and they both followed Jesus. Both Andrew and Peter were fishermen.

Many centuries ago the people of Scotland liked Andrew so much that they made him the patron saint of Scotland. If you should ever go there, you will still see his sign, the cross that looks like an "X" with a blue background. He died on a cross that was this shape.

James the Less is next. People called him "the Less" because he was younger or shorter than John's brother James.

James the Less's sign is a saw. He was killed by a saw for telling the story of Jesus. Kings did not like to hear about following "a king" called Jesus, even though Jesus was a different kind of king.

Finally at this end of the table we come to Bartholomew. His name means "Son of Tolmai." He was told about Jesus by Philip after Jesus told Philip to follow him.

This is Bartholomew's sign. He was killed by knives for telling the story of Jesus by people who did not understand.

At the other end of the table is the last group of three. They are Matthew, Jude and Simon the Zealot.



## MOVEMENTS

*Point to Matthew. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Matthew is standing to the left of Philip, four places to the left of Jesus.*

*Move the shield for Matthew down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to Jude. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Jude is standing to the left of Matthew, five places to the left of Jesus.*

*Move the shield for Jude down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Point to Simon. With the picture facing away from you toward the children, Simon is standing at the farthest left of the table.*

*Move the shield for Simon down from the row of shields along the top of the picture so that it rests right over his head.*

*Sit back and pause a little longer than after each apostle's presentation.*

*Sweep your hand across all the apostles and then return to touch the shield above each head.*

## WORDS

Here is Matthew. He was a tax collector from Capernaum until Jesus called him. Matthew followed Jesus and later wrote down his story of Jesus, "The Gospel of Matthew." It is the first book in the New Testament.

Here is Matthew's symbol. It has three money bags on it to help us remember that he was a hated tax collector before Jesus called him and Matthew found peace.

This is Jude. His name almost sounds like "Judas." The next-to-last book in the New Testament may be a letter by Jude.

His symbol is a ship sailing, because he went across the sea to tell the story of Jesus.

Here is Simon. He was a fighter for his people and for God's law, so he was called "the Zealot." He was also a fisherman.

The symbol of Simon is a fish and a book. The fish helps us remember that he was a fisherman who became someone who fished for people to show them the truth about life. The book is the book of that truth. It stands for the Bible and especially the story of Jesus written down there.

These are the Twelve, the apostles, and these are their symbols.

Now, I wonder which one of the Twelve you like best?

I wonder which one was the most important?

I wonder which one is most like you? Where are you in this story?

## **MOVEMENTS**

*When the wondering subsides, put the material away and begin to help the children decide what work they are going to get out.*

## **WORDS**

I wonder if we can leave any of the Twelve out and still have all of this story that we need?