

"I can do all this through him who gives me strength." Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

WEEK 1

I can listen to
God's voice.

WEEK 2

I can trust
Jesus knows me.

WEEK 3

I can trust God's
plans for me.

WEEK 4

I can include
people who
aren't like me.

What's your dream job? Do you want to be a pilot or astronaut? A teacher or musician? There are so many incredible jobs for us to pick from! God has given each of us special talents and skills that can help us discover what we want to do. But God gives us another job, too. It's the chance for us to follow God right now!



**I can include
people who
aren't like me.**

Matthew 9:9-13; Psalm 111



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.

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!

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!

Scripture/Application

- What made Matthew unpopular with people in his community?
- What did Jesus do that was so shocking to the Pharisees?
- Read Matthew 9:12.
 - Why do you think Jesus said this?
- Read Psalms 111:4.
 - How can we be gracious and compassionate toward others, like God is to us?
- 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?

WORSHIP

what can I do?

“Fully Known”

Tauren Wells

“I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

Songtime Kids

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

Philippians 4:13 (NIV)

ACTIVITY

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!

Have each family member 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 one letter of the Big Idea at a time.

Use a variety of art supplies to make it more interesting!

Give each child a piece of white construction paper. Have kids use washable markers to color on their papers. Encourage them to use lots of colors! When they are done, let them add water to their pictures with a spray bottle and let the colors run together.

Look at the colorful art you made.

When you look at this picture, remember that God made everybody different. There are people who are kind of like you and there are people who are not like you at all. But God wants us to love and include everybody!

What can you do to show God's love to someone who is not like you?

ELEMENTARY

PRESCHOOL

