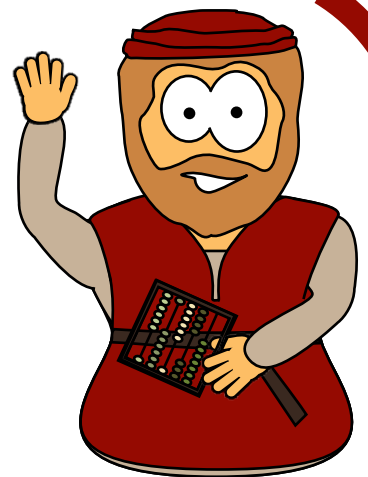


Bible Hero's



Matthew

Teachers
notes

Essential Teachers notes:

Matthew, also called Levi, is described by Jesus as part of a crowd who is sick and in need to a doctor. There is no need to sugar coat this character. Like the Pharisee Saul becomes the Apostle Saul, Matthew shows a great transformation. In typical gospel style the shortcoming turns itself into a blessing and gives us a way of warning the children about money worship.

Main Passage : Matthew 9

Most of Jesus' friends were fishermen, but today's hero was a tax collector, and that's not a very loved job. Jesus's followers would have known Matthew, our hero, for a long time. Matthew would open up his tax stand and collect money. Nobody likes paying taxes.

Capernaum wasn't a rich town. The tax system made many people very poor. If they could find a way of charging tax then there would be a tax, taking a boat out - tax, selling a fish - tax, buying food - tax... Sometimes the tax collectors charged even more tax, so they could keep it themselves. Most people hated the tax collectors, they weren't very honest.

People would walk as far away from a tax collector as possible, they wouldn't look at him, wouldn't talk to him, and wouldn't trust him. But Jesus was different. Jesus saw more. When Jesus looked at Matthew he saw somebody who was ill. Jesus knew that his other followers may find it hard to understand, but he also knew that Matthew was going to be one of his special friends. He walked right over to where Matthew sat, looked him straight in the eyes, sat and said just 2 words, "follow me".

Matthew didn't look ill. He looked rich. He was intelligent man, he knew 2 languages, read difficult texts and solved really difficult sums. He liked to investigate and find the best thing for him. Matthew didn't have many friends, he was an outcast, so his friends were other outcasts. He would invite them for meals and discuss ways to make more money. Matthew knew about God from reading the scriptures, but he didn't understand the words he read and the religious leaders wouldn't talk to him.

How do you think Matthew responded to Jesus's invitation? He had no time to explore or investigate, no time to think. *Matthew stood up and left where he was sitting and started walking along the road with Jesus.*

Can you image the peoples faces? Can you imagine how Jesus' followers might have felt? Can you imagine how the town would have looked at Jesus when chose a tax collector to join his party?

I wonder what Matthew had seen as he looked at Jesus? I wonder if Matthew had seen how ill he was inside, deep inside where nobody normally sees. I wonder if Matthew had realised the Jesus would help him understand God, would change his life and make it mean something much more than money.

That evening Matthew invited all his friends to come to his house for a big meal, he wanted them all to meet Jesus. The religious leaders peered through the windows making horrible comments about Jesus. Jesus calmly told them that he had come to heal the sick not the healthy, that these people were far from God and needed his help.

Matthew did become one of Jesus's special friends, he even wrote about the adventure of travelling with Jesus, there is a book with his name in the bible, and he got investigate Jesus's story. He even included his own story in the book!

Today's hero is Matthew because he shows us the gift of an outcast