

# Followers

*Matthew 4:18-22; Mark  
1:16-20; John 1:35-50*



*Year A Epiphany 2 ; Year A  
Epiphany 3 ; Year B  
Epiphany 2 ; Year B  
Epiphany 3*

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## Parts by scene

■ = large part   ▲ = medium sized part   ● = small part

		1	2	3	4	5	6
▲	<b>Andrew</b> - younger brother to Peter; a disciple of John the Baptist at the start of the play	▲			▲		
■	<b>Phillip</b> - younger brother to Nathanael; a disciple of John the Baptist at the start of the play	▲		■		▲	▲
▲	<b>John</b> - younger brother to James; the more sensitive and spiritually attuned of the brothers		▲			▲	
▲	<b>James</b> - older brother to John; a no nonsense kind of guy who idolizes his father		▲			▲	▲
▲	<b>Zebedee</b> - the father of John and James, a shrewd but kind man whose whole mission is the good of his family		▲			▲	
▲	<b>Nathanael</b> - older brother to Phillip; not very bright or hard working, and so sensitive about it that he bullies Phillip to feel better about himself			▲			▲
▲	<b>Peter</b> - older brother to Andrew; a good natured fisherman and loyal family member who takes pride in his strength and hard work				▲		●
●	<b>Jesus</b>						▲

## Scene 1

**Andrew , Phillip**

*{Andrew and Phillip, currently disciples of John, are on their way to find Jesus on orders from Judas.}*

**Andrew** That shopkeeper said he lived just around this corner.

**Phillip** Yeah, with his *mother*.

**Andrew** Half the people I know live with their mothers. Or their mothers live with them.

**Phillip** I know, but why would the Messiah be living with *his* mother? Why would the Messiah even have a mother?

**Andrew** You think he'll just descend directly from Heaven?

**Phillip** Maybe. But even if he was born like everybody else, I don't see why anybody with a mission that important would waste a minute of his life with, you know, *family*.

**Andrew** Not everybody hates their family like you do.

**Phillip** I know, I know.

**Andrew** *[after a pause]* Are you really going to leave the rabbi's service?

**Phillip** You heard Judas. It's all over with him. He's not the Messiah, and he might even be nuts.

**Andrew** Where are you going to go?

**Phillip** I have no idea. Anywhere but home.

**Andrew** Come on, it can't be that bad.

**Phillip** I guess my parents are okay, except they're always favoring Nathanael. He made my life a living hell when we were growing up, but he can do no wrong in their eyes, and they're probably going to leave him everything when they die. I won't get a cent, and worse thing is, I just know he's going to blow everything he gets in about two years, so he ought to have just given it to me!

**Andrew** What makes you think he's going to lose it all?

**Phillip** He's a lazy bum - and an idiot!

## Scene 2

James , John , Zebedee

*{John rushes home to speak to his brother James and their father Zebedee.}*

**John** *[breathless with excitement]* James! Father! Is anybody home?

**James** Yo! Where's the fire?

**John** Is Father home? Father!

**Zebedee** *[calmly]* I'm here. What is it, son?

**John** Where's Mother? I have to tell you all!

**James** She just left to go to the market. What is it?

**John** *[pausing to collect himself]* I just met the most amazing man. I heard him speak and - I don't even know how to describe it. He told these stories - about birds, and seeds, and trees, and yeast: ordinary things - but it was like...it was like the sky got wider as he talked, as if the world were getting bigger, or I was. *[pauses, suddenly uncertain]* I guess that doesn't make much sense.

**Zebedee** Sit, son. *[to a servant]* Water!

**James** Come on, I'll take you to your room. I think you might have gotten too much sun.

**John** No, wait! I need to tell you. I spoke with him afterward. He was like - he was like you, Father. Strong but gentle, kind but shrewd. I think...I think he might be the Messiah.

**James** That's crazy!

**Zebedee** *[calmly as always]* Son, did he say it in so many words?

**John** No. But for a moment, I was so sure. It was the way he talked about things. He talked about a Kingdom that was coming.

**James** Okay, that's it! I'm locking you in your room and I'm not letting you out until you've had a good long nap.

**Zebedee** *[thoughtfully]* A kingdom...did he say anything else about this kingdom?

**John** He said it would start off small and then grow until it filled the whole world. That nothing would prevail against it. That the blind would see, and the deaf would hear. That the captives would be set free.

**Zebedee** The blind and the deaf healed...the captives set free...

**James** *[realizing this could be serious]* Father, what are you thinking?

**Zebedee** I'm thinking about the One who will come, the One who will rule.

**James** *[in a subdued, unconvinced voice]* That's crazy.

**Zebedee** John, find this man again and invite him to the house, but do it quietly, so no one else finds out. We must learn who and what he is!

### Scene 3

Nathanael , Phillip

*{Phillip returns to his home and approaches Nathanael, who's napping under a tree in one of the fields.}*

**Phillip** Nathanael! *[a pause, but Nathanael doesn't wake]* Nathanael? *[another pause]* Nathanael! Wake up!

**Nathanael** What? Who? *[dismissively, after a pause]* Oh, it's you.

**Phillip** *[as if reciting a speech he planned ahead of time]* Yes, it's me. I've returned home, when I said -

**Nathanael** *[interrupting]* Big deal! Get lost!

**Phillip** *[shaken, but trying to get back on track]* Listen! I've returned home, when I said I never would, because -

**Nathanael** *[belligerently]* Because you're a pest! Now beat it, or I'll beat *you!*

**Phillip** *[losing his patience]* I come home after almost a year and you don't even wonder why! You just take up exactly where you left off. All right, fine! I think I've found something big and I was going to share it with you. Why? Because I thought that maybe I loved my brother, after all. Well, thanks for curing me of *that* delusion.

**Nathanael** *[dismissively]* The day *you* find something big is the day camels fly.

**Phillip** I think I found the Messiah! Is that big?

**Nathanael** *[derisively]* You think you found the Messiah? Who is he?

**Phillip** Yeshua of Nazareth, son of Joseph.

**Nathanael** *[cackling]* Yeshua of Nazareth? Of Nazareth? Don't you know nothing good can come from Nazareth?

**Phillip** *[quietly]* Wanna bet?

**Nathanael** What you talking about?

**Phillip** A bet. A simple bet. *[looking around]* I guess you're supposed to be plowing this field, huh?

**Nathanael** *[annoyed]* I'll get around to it!

**Phillip** Maybe you won't have to. Come with me and just talk to this guy. If you decide he isn't the Messiah, I'll do the plowing for you.

**Nathanael** And what if he is?

**Phillip** *[suddenly unsure of himself]* If he is...I don't know. I might follow him, but you can do whatever you want. So what do you say?

**Nathanael** *[after a pause]* I say, Get lost!

**Phillip** What?

**Nathanael** You heard me! I'm not taking your stupid bet!

**Phillip** But you can't lose! You can only win! *[sarcastically]* And it's probably the only way the plowing's going to get done, anyway.

**Nathanael** I'm not taking the bet! Now get lost!

**Phillip** *[shaking his head in wonder]* You really are an idiot!

#### Scene 4

Andrew , Peter

*{Andrew visits Peter, a little worried about how Peter will greet him.}*

**Peter** Brother! It's good to see you!

**Andrew** *[carefully]* It's good to see you, too. I'm sorry I've been away so long.

**Peter** *[cheerfully]* Don't worry about it. How are things going with that John guy?

**Andrew** Not so good. It's kind of fallen apart. I'm probably going to leave his service.

**Peter** I'm sorry it didn't work out.

**Andrew** *I'm* sorry that I left you in the lurch for something that turned out to be...nothing.

**Peter** Hey, don't beat yourself up. If you meet someone you think might be the Messiah, you have to follow him!

**Andrew** Thanks. You're a great brother.

**Peter** Oh, it's nothing. And besides, trying to run the business alone's been kind of fun. It makes it more challenging. I'm glad to have you back, of course.

**Andrew** *[awkwardly]* Actually, about that. I'm not really coming back. I might be joining another teacher.

**Peter** Really?

**Andrew** *[rushing into a defensive explanation]* I know I just got finished following one guy, and I was wrong about him, but this time, I'm so much surer, I swear! And -

**Peter** *[simply]* Okay.

**Andrew** Okay?

**Peter** Go for it!

**Andrew** Just like that?

**Peter** Why not?

**Andrew** After I abandoned you to follow John, and it turned out he wasn't the Messiah, you're okay with me chasing after this new guy? What if I'm wrong again?

**Peter** If you're wrong, you're wrong.

**Andrew** *[overflowing with gratitude]* You're a great brother. Listen, do you want to come with me?

**Peter** Me, follow the Messiah?

**Andrew** Why not?

**Peter** I have to admit, I wanted to go with you to the first guy, but I didn't think he'd have any use for someone like me.

**Andrew** What do you mean someone like you? If he could use someone like me, then why wouldn't he want you?

**Peter** Well, let's face it: you got all the brains in this family.

**Andrew** And you got all the heart.

**Peter** *[after a pause]* Okay, brother. Where do we go?

**Andrew** We can find him by the seaside tomorrow, near where you keep the boat. If we get out there early, maybe we can do some fishing beforehand.

**Peter** Now you're talking!

## Scene 5

James , John , Phillip , Zebedee

*{The next morning, James, John, and Zebedee work on their boat.}*

**James** This net's just about shot.

**John** Yeah, I don't think it'll take much more mending.

**Zebedee** I think we can get another few weeks out of this one.

**James** *[quoting his father]* "Gain a good use from all things."

**Zebedee** That's right, son.

*{Phillip appears.}*

**John** Phillip! We haven't seen you around for months! Where have you been?

**Phillip** I joined up for a while with John the Baptizer.

**James** That nutcase?

**Zebedee** Son!

**James**      *[meekly]* Sorry, Father. Sorry, Phillip.

**Phillip**      That's all right. He did in fact turn out to be a little crazy. That's why I left.

**John**        Are you back on the farm now?

**Phillip**      No way! I'm about to start following someone else, someone I met when he came to be baptized.

**Zebedee**    Really? Who is this man?

**Phillip**      *[pointing into the distance]* There he is right now!  
*{John gasps.}*

**Zebedee**    *[to John]* Is that the man?

**John**        Yes!

**Zebedee**    *[to Phillip]* Who - or what - do you believe him to be?

**Phillip**      Before things ended with John, he admitted he wasn't the Messiah, but he said that this man would be. And after meeting him, I think he might have been right.

**James**      Who's that with him? It looks like...Peter and his brother.

**Phillip**      They're joining him, too.

**John**        *[in a daze]* He's accepting followers?

**James**      This is perfect! Peter was our biggest competition. Father, we should ask him about selling us his boat and his territory. I bet no one else knows he's quitting yet.

**John**        *[urgently to Phillip]* How do you - what is he - what does it take to be accepted into his service?

**Phillip**      Nothing! He's taking anybody who's willing.

**John**        *[formally to Zebedee]* Father, I ask your leave to follow that man.

**James**      *[angrily]* What are you saying? You're going to walk out on the business? on the family? I'd expect something like that from Peter or Andrew, but -



**Zebedee** *[interrupting]* Wait. *[a long pause while everyone stares at him and he thinks things over]* John, you should go.

**John** Thank you, Father!

**Zebedee** And James, you should go with him.

**James** What? Why? What will you do without us? What about the business?

**Zebedee** I'll manage. I'll hire the help I need. The business will be reduced, but not destroyed. But this man might be the Messiah. And he's looking for followers, for men who will stand by his side when the great Day comes. If you and your brother were among the very first to join him, that would do more good for the family than a fleet of fishing boats. And you can always come back if he proves false.

**James** Very well, Father, I'll do as you say. *[to John]* You and me, John! The Messiah's right hand men!

## Scene 6

James , Jesus , Nathanael , Peter , Phillip

*{John, James, and Phillip go to meet Jesus.}*

**Phillip** *[to Jesus]* Rabbi, this is John and James. They want to join us, too.

**Peter** *[heartily]* Welcome aboard!

**James** *[curtly]* Peter.

**Peter** I bet you never thought we'd fish together, did you? The rabbi says that from now on, we're going to fish for men!

**Phillip** Anything's better than farming.

**Jesus** Oh, we'll do some planting, too.

**Phillip** I guess that'll be okay, as long as I don't have to work the fields with my brother.

**James** *[pointing at the approaching Nathanael]* Speak of the devil, isn't that him?

**Phillip** Oh my God, it is! What's he doing here?

*{Nathanael enters.}*

**Jesus** Welcome! Have you come to join us?

**Nathanael** I've come to win a bet!

**Phillip** *[to himself]* Oh, no!

**Jesus** *[to everybody]* Behold! An Israeli in whom there is no deceit!

**Nathanael** *[belligerently]* What do you mean by that?

**Jesus** I saw how brutally honest you were with your brother when he came to you under the fig tree to tell you about me.

**Nathanael** *[alarmed and angry]* How do you know about that? Were you spying on me?

**Jesus** Now where on a barren unplowed field could I have hidden?

**Nathanael** *[thoroughly spooked]* Oh my God, you really are the Messiah!  
*[suddenly shy, in a low voice so that only Jesus can hear]* Let me follow you, too. Please! I'm sick of my life. I'm not going anywhere, and everyone hates me! I'm not the smartest guy, or the hardest worker, but I'll do my best for you, I swear!

**Jesus** *[to Nathanael]* Be welcome! And don't worry: I'm not the smartest or hardest working guy, either, but together, we'll do what must be done. *[to everybody]* Behold! This man has decided to follow me simply because I saw him under a fig tree. Follow me, and you will see greater things yet!

*{He sets off across the beach and the others follow.}*

**James** Hey, Phillip. I don't get it. What was the big deal about knowing you came to him in a field? He only knew because you told him, right?

**Phillip** No, I didn't say a word to the rabbi about talking to Nathanael.

**James** Wow, so he really saw him through some special power?

**Phillip** I guess so.

**James** But wait a minute. Even if it was a real miracle, how did your brother know that? If I were him, I would have just assumed you told him, but he didn't even question it. If I went up to him and said, "I saw you in your bed last night!" would he start believing

*I was the Messiah?*

**Phillip**

He might. He really is an enormous idiot!

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