

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

John 21:1-19

1 Peter 5:1-4

Session Theme:

Sending

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: "Tend the Flock!"

Write the following sentences on the board:

Feed my lambs / Tend my sheep / Feed my sheep

Read these phrases aloud and ask kids to notice what they all have in common. Each one mentions lambs and sheep, yes. But more than that, all of the sentences tell the listener to do something caring. Underline "Feed," "Tend" and "Feed." Who might have said these things, and why?

"Feed my sheep" sounds like farm instructions. But in this Bible story, the speaker is Jesus, and he is asking his followers to care for people. What made Jesus say this, and why do you think he called people "sheep"? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, you send us into the world to do an important job. Help us reach out to those in need and to share the good news of Jesus with them. Give us courage and strong faith. We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"Send Me, Jesus" (hymn)*
- *"Children, Go Where I Send Thee" (children's song)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Commission

After his resurrection, Jesus sent his followers to make disciples of all nations, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and teaching all that Jesus had commanded. then he ascended into heaven to be seated at the right hand of the Father.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help students think about details of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: John 21:1-19

1. Which disciples were gathered together in today's Bible story? Where were they at the time?

   Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael of Cana, the sons of Zebedee, and two others were together at the beginning of the story. They were all at the Sea of Tiberias (the Sea of Galilee). This is the same place that Jesus originally met some of these same men.

2. What did Simon Peter decide to do in verse 3? Did anyone join him? Were they successful in what they set out to do?

   It seems like Peter was bored and needed something to do, so he decided to go fishing, and the other men agreed to come along. But even after fishing all night, they didn't catch any fish! This illustrates something Jesus said to his disciples in John 15:5: "Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing."

3. When the disciples were on the water, who did they see standing on the shore? Did they recognize this person at first? What happened?

   Jesus himself was standing on the shore, but the disciples didn't know who he was. After asking if they had caught any fish, Jesus told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. They obeyed and filled their net to overflowing with fish!

4. In what way is this story similar to another miracle that happened *prior* to Jesus' death and resurrection, as described in Luke 5:1-11? On this occasion, how did Jesus use the image of "catching fish" to describe the disciples' true calling? What did he want them to do? How is this *our* calling as well?

   At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, he encountered Peter, who was a professional fisherman. Just as in today's story, before Jesus arrived, the disciples had caught nothing. But with Jesus present, the catch was overflowing!

   Jesus used this example to show how he would use the disciples to "catch people" — meaning through Jesus' power at work in the disciples, many people would come to faith.

5. Do you remember any other time in the Bible when Jesus miraculously produced bread and fish for his followers? (Can you find this story in your Bible?) What were the circumstances and setting of this miracle?

   One of the most often repeated stories in the Gospels is of Jesus feeding the multitudes with just a few loaves and fishes. This is recorded in many places, including Matthew 14, Matthew 15, Mark 6, Luke 9, and John 6. Jesus had been teaching with many crowds coming to hear him. But they were out in the country, far from a town, with nowhere to buy food. But by his miraculous power, Jesus was able to feed thousands!

6. What do all these stories tell us about Jesus? How do these stories give us confidence that we, too, can carry out the calling Jesus has given us?

   Jesus cared about the needs of his followers, and he wanted to show them that he had the power to provide for them. He wanted them to know that they could trust him.

   Note that the disciples did listen to Jesus and trust his guidance. Prior to the miracle, they would have no reason to expect what would happen. But Jesus revealed his power and gave them something in which to believe. So when it happened again and again, the disciples came to understand that God will provide.

7. In verses 15-19, what point was Jesus making to Peter? Why do you think Jesus repeated this point three times? How can you do this in your life?

   Jesus wanted Peter to be a leader among his followers and to show the same kind of love toward others that Jesus himself had showed. Not long before this (at the time of Jesus' arrest and trial), Peter had denied three times that he even knew Jesus. Now Jesus asked him three times if he believed and loved him, giving Peter the opportunity to make up for his previous sin and make a positive confession of faith.

   The way Jesus told Peter to show his love for the Lord is by taking care of those who belong to the Lord. This is the same thing asked of us. We serve God by serving our neighbors!

8. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. Who is Jesus' flock? What is a shepherd's relationship with the sheep? What is our relationship with the Chief Shepherd?

   Jesus is the Good Shepherd and we are the sheep of his flock (see also John 10:11-16). But we are also shepherds to one another, under his lordship. We do not boss each other, nor seek our own benefit. We serve willingly, giving of ourselves just as Jesus did, by caring for one another.

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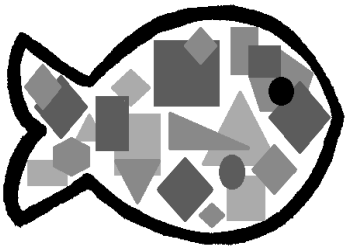
Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Christian Symbol Suncatcher

Materials Needed:

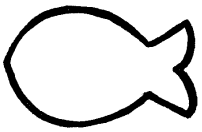
- Card stock
- Permanent markers
- Clear contact paper
- Colored tissue paper
- Masking tape
- Scissors



Instructions:

Before class: Draw several large, simple fish shapes about 6 inches to 10 inches long on card stock (see illustration). Cut them out. These will be used as templates later in the craft. Be sure there is at least one fish-shaped template per person.

To do the craft: Give each student two equal-sized pieces of contact paper, tissue paper in three different colors, a light colored marker, a template, and a pair of scissors.



For each student, take a piece of contact paper and peel off the backing. Place on a table or desk with the sticky side facing up. If it starts to roll up, simply tape the edges of the contact paper to the table or desk with a little masking tape.

Kids can tear or cut the tissue paper into small pieces and stick these onto the contact paper. Tell them to fill a good portion of the contact paper with different colored pieces, making an overlapping mosaic.

Remove the backing on the second piece of contact paper. With sticky side facing down, carefully place this on top of the tissue paper design, sealing it well.

Place the fish template on top of the sealed design. Trace around the template with permanent marker and cut it out. If desired, draw an eye and a smile with permanent marker.

When finished, kids will have a fish-shaped suncatcher to hang on their window at home or in the classroom. Explain that early Christians used this shape to identify themselves to other Christians. Ask if they've ever seen a fish shape on someone's car bumper, or in a church. The fish is a symbol, even today, of the Christian faith.

Activity 2: Caught in the Net Game

Materials Needed:

- Large open area to play a game, outdoors or indoors
- Masking tape, rope or cones to make starting/finishing lines



Instructions:

This variation of the classic children's game Tag ties in well with today's story. It involves fish swimming every which way, trying not to be caught in a net!

Make two lines, one on each side of the playing field. Use cones, rope, or masking tape to do this. When students are behind either line, they are safe and cannot be tagged out.

Choose two students to be a fish net. Those two kids will link arms at the elbow. Invite them to stand in the center of the playing field. All other students are fish and must stand behind one of the safe zones.

When the fish net shouts out, "Fishies, fishies, swim by me!" all the fish must run from one safe zone to the other safe zone, passing the fish net as they go.



If the fish net manages to tag someone (using only their free outer arms), that person must join the fish net and help try to catch fish.

Continue playing until only one fish is left in the sea. That person wins the game!

It must have been shocking for the disciples to go back out to sea (after having fished all night without success) and find their nets filling almost effortlessly! When they trusted Jesus and listened to him, everything fell into place. Nothing is impossible for the Lord!

Ask kids: In what area of life might Jesus be leading you to trust him more fully?

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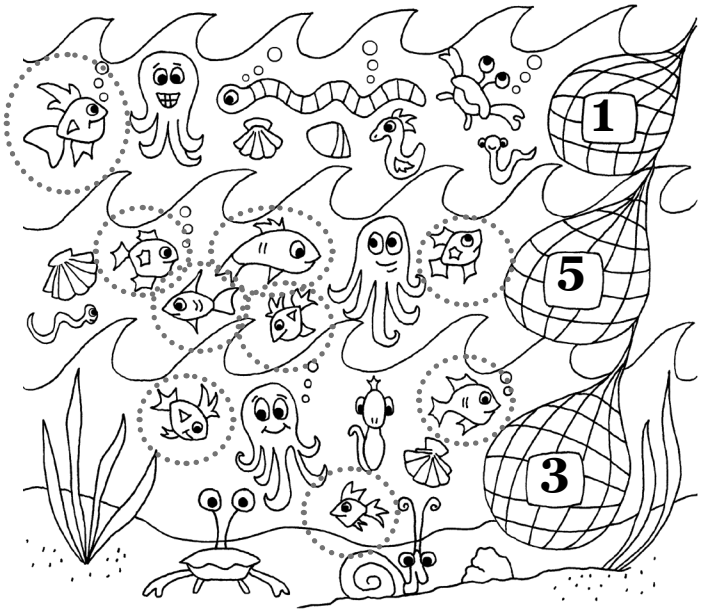
Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Final Count: "With Jesus' help, the disciples gathered **153** fish into their net!"

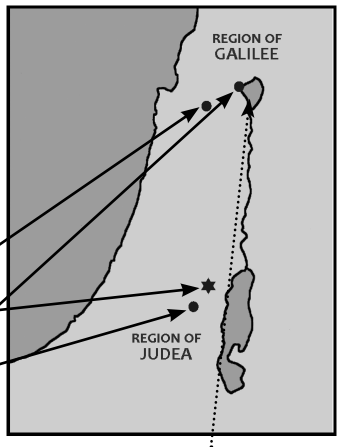
Other Creatures:
Crab, Eel, Sea Horse, Clam, Snail, Octopus

Timeline Answer

After his resurrection, Jesus appeared to his disciples over the course of 40 days.

Map Answer Key

a) Town Names
- Jerusalem
- Nazareth
- Bethlehem
- Capernaum



b) Which two of these towns are in the region of Galilee and which two are in the region of Judea?

Galilee: Nazareth and Capernaum
Judea: Jerusalem and Bethlehem

c) The **Sea of Tiberias** was re-named for the Roman emperor Tiberius Caesar.

Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Sending

encouraging or telling someone to go forward

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." Jesus wanted his followers to go out into the world, sharing the good news of God's love with all.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

When you think of being sent somewhere, what comes to mind? A piece of mail that is addressed to a certain location? An errand that has to be run, whether you like it or not? Or does being sent somewhere sound like it might be a good thing? Possibly even an exciting or faithful thing?



In today's story, Jesus fed and cared for his disciples. He met their needs for food, faithful encouragement, and rest. Then, after he had tended to them in this way, he sent them out into the world to care for others.

Talk to one another about these questions:

Jesus told his disciples to "tend my sheep" and "feed my lambs." What do you think he meant by this?

What are some ways that you can care for those around you? Might this involve sharing your faith with them too? How?

The disciples traveled all over the world, telling people about Jesus. If you could go anywhere to share your faith in Christ, where would you most like to be sent?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer asking God to help you find the words to speak his truth. Pray that the Holy Spirit would guide you as you share Jesus with others.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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