

THE CALLING OF THE FIRST DISCIPLES

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 5:1-16



Jesus called the disciples with power, they responded in faith.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

The amazing catch – We learn from John 1:35-42 that Jesus had already met Simon and renamed him Peter. Jesus got into Peter's boat and asked him to put out from shore so He could teach the crowds. He had already healed many, and the crowds followed Him. Putting away from the shore allowed people to gather along the shoreline, making it easier for them to see and hear Jesus. After Jesus finished speaking, He asked Peter to go out into the deep waters and put down his nets. They caught so many fish that two boats almost sank under the weight. Peter, suddenly aware that Jesus was Lord, fell down to his knees in fear, and in awareness of his sinfulness.

Fishers of men – Jesus did more than forgive Peter; He called Peter into His service. Between Peter's call and Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven, He would train Peter. It would be Peter, on the day of Pentecost, who would preach to the multitude and see 3,000 people repent and believe in Jesus. That catch of people would match this catch of fish and validate Jesus' words (see Acts 2:41).

The disciples left everything – After Jesus and the disciples brought their boats to shore, Peter, James and John left everything to follow Jesus. Imagine leaving the biggest catch you have ever seen in your life to follow a wandering teacher? Of course, Jesus was more than a wandering teacher; He was King! They would see Jesus multiply fishes and loaves, heal the sick, and walk on water. They made the right choice.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Luke 19:10 says that Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. In this story we see the calling of the first disciples. They were to be more than Jesus' companions; they were to join Him in the mission to "catch men" (see Luke 5:10). This catching of men would only be possible through the grace of God available through the Cross and the Resurrection.

Right from the beginning Jesus demonstrated His power to the disciples, and they responded with statements of faith and truth. When Jesus told Nathanael that He knew him before they actually met, and went on to describe the setting, Nathanael was amazed. He instantly believed and praised Jesus, saying, "You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" (see John 1:49). In Luke 5:8, after the miraculous catch of fish, Peter responded, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man."

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 35:8

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Isaiah described a highway called the "Way of Holiness" that the unclean will not journey on. In John 14:6 Jesus said "I am the way..." Early Christians and Paul even were called followers of the Way (see Acts 24:14).

Questions for reflection:

- Why is it appropriate to think of Jesus as our highway to holiness? (Apart from trusting Jesus, we can not be holy by ourselves.)
- Are there additional ways to travel other than Jesus? (No-- according to Acts 4:12, Jesus is the only way.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

FISHER OF MEN

Supplies:

- candy bars
- tape
- fishing rod and lures (Cut off the hooks to make the lures less dangerous.)

This is designed as a silly ad-lib skit between two teachers.

After reading Luke 5:1-16, the first teacher is interrupted by another teacher barging into the room with a fishing rod and tackle. The fisherman opens a window and casts his lure out the window and waits patiently.

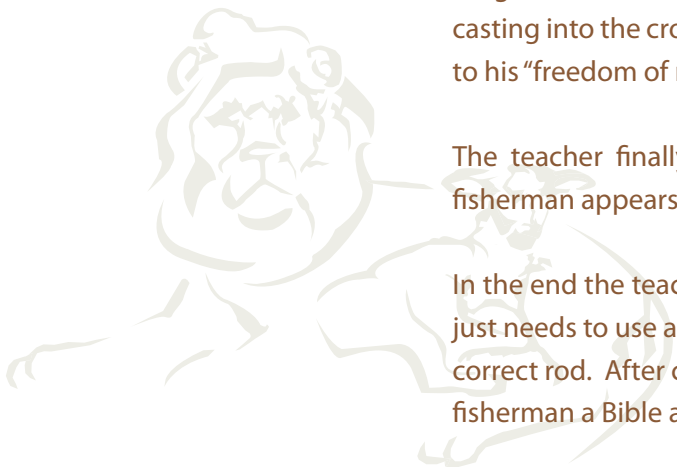
The teacher inquires what the fisherman is doing. After hearing the response "fishing," the teacher acknowledges that the fisherman is fishing but points out there is no water.

After some ad-lib playing out of this scene have the fisherman explain that he is fishing for men and is going to use his secret weapon. At that point he tapes a candy bar on the lure and says "This always works," and then recasts the lure.

He goes on to tell a story of how he caught seventy-five men like this at the mall, casting into the crowd. He shares that security kicked him out and would not listen to his "freedom of religion" defense.

The teacher finally explains what "fisher of men" means in the Bible and the fisherman appears depressed.

In the end the teacher explains that the fisherman doesn't have to stop fishing, he just needs to use a different rod. Then the teacher offers to give the fisherman the correct rod. After calming down the fisherman's excitement the teacher hands the fisherman a Bible and explains how to use it to catch men.



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IS GOD CALLING YOU?

Ask the children if God is calling them and draw their testimonies out. Help them understand that being born into a Christian home, or being exposed to the Bible or worship or other Christians are all ways that God may be drawing them. In the end, they should all be able to recognize that God is drawing them.

WHO ARE THE FISH IN YOUR LIFE?

Supplies:

- construction paper
- fish template
- scissors (You may cut out three fish for every student prior to class if you prefer.)

The children are to write the names of people they have contact with who are not Christians. They will put the fish up at home to remind them to pray for those folks and share the Gospel with them.

Take time in class to pray out loud for some or all of the people. Ask the children what are some ways that they can reach out to these folks. (Remember to have the children include their parents and get their support for the ways the children would like to reach out to their family and neighbors.)

PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and Paper

Make the fish for the "who are the fish in your life" exercise.



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FOR THE OLDER GRADES

ACT OUT THE STORY IN MIME

Divide the class up into groups of five and have them create a three minute skit that depicts this story, and also contains the Gospel message. For instance, Jesus might extend His hands prior to lifting Peter up while two people symbolically nail His hands to an imaginary cross. Take time to allow the students to perform their skits.

Then ask them how many of them have been fishers of men. Have the students share any stories they have and then challenge them to live the command to preach the Gospel. Too often we can know the Word but not do the Word. Review James 1:22-25 to help the students gain a conviction for evangelism. They might even perform one of their skits at a local college campus and then follow it up with a Gospel presentation.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Fishing – The disciples were cleaning their nets after laboring all night. Nets would gather all sorts of trash and debris when used. In addition, the best time to catch fish is in the evening or the early morning. Jesus had the disciples throw out their net in the middle of the day, usually a poor time to catch fish. This further emphasized the miraculous nature of the catch.

