

# DOUBTING JESUS AND ANOTHER MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 21:1-25



*Those who belong to the Lord are sustained by Him.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**The disciples went back to fishing** – Apart from the early appearances by Jesus, the disciples had not seen the Lord for a while. They seem to be without purpose when Peter suggests they go fishing. He gives no good reason. A fisherman by trade, Peter would have likely enjoyed fishing. They fished all night but caught nothing. In the providence of God, this would set the stage for the miracle about to take place. Early in the morning, as they approached the shore, Jesus called to them. Jesus called them friends. Lest we overlook this greeting, we should take a moment to marvel. The Lord of glory is calling sinful men His friends. The disciples, however, did not recognize Jesus. How often do we forget, in the midst of our difficulty, that the Lord is but a conversation away?

**Jesus revealed himself again** - Knowing the disciples had no clue He was the one speaking to them, Jesus revealed Himself in a humorous way. Surely they would know it was Him when they caught the fish. As soon as they drew in the net, they knew it was the Lord. Jesus demonstrated His authority over the fish and the net. A huge number of fish were caught, and the net did not break. Jesus was ready with bread and a fire to cook the fish. He ate with the disciples.

**Jesus restores Peter** – Three times Peter denied Jesus (see Matthew 26:69-75), and here Jesus asks him three times, “Do you love me?” Jesus appeared once before to Peter in Jerusalem (see Luke 24:34). We are not told what they talked about at that first meeting. Most commentators believe that this passage is Jesus’ restoration of Peter. In any case, Jesus is commissioning Peter to feed and take care of His sheep. Some believe the reference to Peter’s hands being stretched out is a prophetic word regarding Peter’s death. Tradition has it that he was crucified upside down.

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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.*

When Jesus called Peter, James and John to follow Him, He demonstrated His power by a miraculous catch of fish (see Luke 5:1-11). Jesus demonstrated His power again to the disciples through a second miraculous catch of fish. John concluded his Gospel at the end of this story with a declaration that all he wrote was true regarding the ministry of Christ, the death of Christ, the resurrection of Christ, and even the appearing of Jesus on the shores of Galilee, where He cooked the disciples a breakfast of fish.

John 21:25 goes on to say that Jesus did many other things as well, so many that all the books in the world could not contain them! We can look forward to an eternity of days in heaven where we, who are saved by the death and resurrection of Jesus, can sit at His feet and hear them all!

### 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 32:1-4**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

Jesus is the King who will reign in righteousness. Jesus calmed the storm that blew in suddenly on the lake, and He is our refuge in time of trouble. Jesus opened the eyes of the blind and the ears of the deaf, and He also opened the minds of men so they could understand who He is.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- How does this Scripture apply to our relationship with Jesus today? (Jesus is still the one we call upon for physical healing and in times of trouble. Jesus is still opening the minds of men to understand and believe in Him.)
- Has there ever been a king apart from Jesus who has reigned in righteousness? (Though many of Israel's kings did honorable things, they were all sinners. Even their good deeds were corrupted by their sinful motivations. Jesus is the only truly righteous king.)

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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?*

### FEED MY LAMBS

#### Supplies:

a large bag of air popped popcorn (Use air popped popcorn so as to not get grease all over the floor and furniture.)

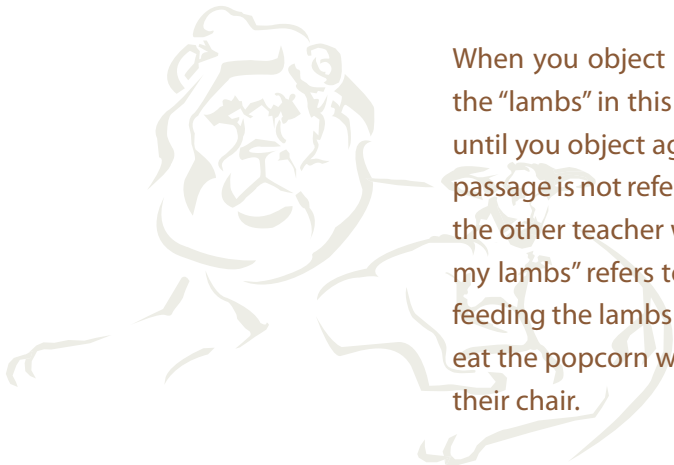
This object lesson is to help the children understand the true meaning of "feed my lambs."

First read through the whole passage for today making sure to get to the section where Jesus talks to Peter. Begin to teach the class. Have another helper barge into your class and start tossing popcorn like he was feeding chickens. He should say with repetition, "Here you go lambs. Little lambs ...time to eat little lambs. Go ahead and eat little lambs."

This of course will cause all kinds of commotion.

Interrupt the helper and ask him to please explain what is going on, to which the individual will reply: "Just following today's Scripture." The helper should go on to explain that in John 21:16 it says "feed my lambs" and he just thought since everyone likes popcorn it would be good to feed them popcorn.

When you object and say he shouldn't be doing that, have him remind you that the "lambs" in this passage is not referring to real lambs. He should then continue until you object again and tell him (or her) to stop. Finally, explain to him that the passage is not referring to real food either. Ask the class to see if they could help out the other teacher with what feed the lambs means. Explain to everyone that "feed my lambs" refers to teaching people the Word of God. And that you already were feeding the lambs until he came in and caused all the confusion. Invite the class to eat the popcorn while you continue. Have each student pick up the popcorn near their chair.



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## ACCEPTABLE TO GOD

### Supplies:

- pack of dominoes
- large bag of M&M chocolate candies
- index cards

The object of this exercise is to demonstrate how, in spite of our failures, we are acceptable to God through Jesus.

Even though Peter denied Christ miserably, his sins were forgiven and Jesus commissioned him to feed His sheep. This is only possible because Peter's sins, including his denial of Christ, were paid for on the cross.

Ask for volunteers from your class. Lay the dominoes out on the table and explain that the challenge is to stack them end on end until all the dominoes are used up. (You will want to make sure you have enough dominoes to make this an impossible task.)

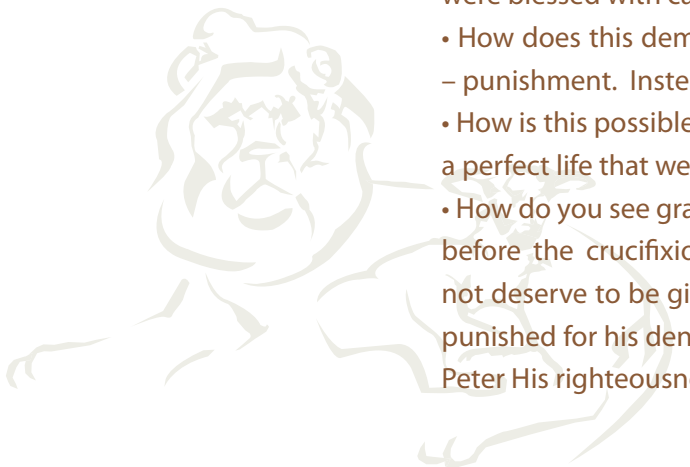
Explain to the person that you will give one candy to him for each domino stacked, but none if the stack falls. If he or she can stack them all they get twenty! (Make this number higher than the number of dominoes you have been able to stack in practice.)

Give several children an opportunity. Write their scores on an index cards and tell them you will "cash out" their cards at the very end. If someone drops even one domino write a "0" on their card. Have the children line up with the highest score first, the lowest score last.

No matter the score, give them twenty candies, even those who got a zero.

Then ask the following questions:

- Did you get the number of candies that you earned? (No, I got more.)
- Did those who knocked dominoes down get the "zero" they deserved? (No, they were blessed with candy as well.)
- How does this demonstrate God's grace? (God does not give us what we deserve – punishment. Instead we receive something we did not earn – everlasting life.)
- How is this possible? (Jesus died to take the punishment for our sin and Jesus lived a perfect life that we might receive His righteousness).
- How do you see grace at work in Peter's life when you consider his denials of Christ before the crucifixion and Christ's commissioning to feed His sheep? (Peter did not deserve to be given a mission in the church for the Lord. Peter deserved to be punished for his denial of Christ. But Jesus paid the penalty for Peter's sin and gave Peter His righteousness.)



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## WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE THE LORD?

**Supplies:**  
white board

Ask the class to tell you what it means to love the Lord. Then review the following Scriptures to help inform them of what the Bible tells us.

John 14:15-26  
1 John 5:3-5

## PRAYER

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

## IN CLASS PROJECT

**Supplies:**  
pencil and paper

Draw a picture of Peter dragging in the net of fish.



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## FOR THE OLDER GRADES

### WHAT DID PETER LEARN?

**Supplies:**

paper and pencil

Read 1 Peter 1:1-25

Ask the class to answer the following question individually and write out a paragraph answer: From reading 1 Peter 1:1-25, what do you think Peter learned after the resurrection? Here are a few examples of passages you can write on the board for them. Only write the reference on the board. Have them connect it to 1 Peter on their own.

Matthew 14:28-31 Peter learned that his faith and hope needed to be in God, not his circumstances – 1 Peter 1:21

Matthew 16:21-23 Peter learned to be self-controlled and to set his hope fully on Jesus – 1 Peter 1:13

Matthew 26:69-75 Peter learned that our trials are given of God to perfect our faith – 1 Peter 1:4-7

Have the students share their answers and discuss as a class what we can learn from this passage and from Peter's mistakes. It is obvious that Peter matured in his faith. He could have used his own advice earlier in life.

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

**The disciple whom Jesus loved** – This description appears five times in John's gospel. (John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7, and 21:20). Most commentators believe this refers to John himself, the writer of the gospel. This does not mean that the Lord only loved one of His disciples. John is simply testifying to the love he uniquely felt from Jesus.

