

Jesus Calls the Fishermen

Bible Verse

"Come, follow me," he said. (Matthew 4:19)

Did You Know?

Fish, eaten more than any other meat, was eaten fresh, processed, salted, dried, or pickled. Fishing, therefore, was an important industry on the Sea of Galilee. Today's Bible story begins with Jesus walking alongside the Sea of Galilee, where he sees two brothers throwing their fishing nets into the sea.

Jesus calls out to the two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew, and says, "Come, follow me." Matthew does not tell us whether Peter and Andrew had any previous knowledge of Jesus. Yet when Jesus calls them, they drop everything and follow him. As they continue on, Jesus sees another set of brothers, James and John, who are repairing their fishing nets. James and John also follow Jesus immediately, leaving their boat and their father.

There are several important points we can take away from this story. First, Peter, Andrew, James, and John had done nothing special to warrant being called by Jesus. Second, the call to discipleship did not occur in a holy place. This is not to say God doesn't call people in holy places, but it illustrates that God works in all areas of human life. Third, Jesus calls the fishermen for a specific commission. He doesn't simply say, "Follow me," as he does in some other call stories. Jesus tells them he will show them how to "fish for people." Their mission is evangelistic in nature. Having been called, they are now to go out and gather people into God's kingdom.

Like Peter, Andrew, James, and John, we are also called to the task of fishing for people.

For more Bible background information, go to: DeepBlueKids.com.

Exploration Points

- The children will hear about the call story of some of Jesus' disciples.
- The children will learn what it means to follow Jesus' example.



Bible Story


Matthew 4:18-22

Anchor Point

Jesus calls us to follow him.

Your Lesson

- Welcome
- Fishing for People
- Bible Verse Painting
- Unscramble the Message
- Jesus Calls Followers
- Jesus Calls the Fishermen
- Sign the Bible Verse
- Worship
- Younger Elementary Small Group
- Older Elementary Small Group

 Requires preparation.



Jump In!

The following activities are planned to introduce today's theme. Be sure that there is a leader to welcome and direct the kids to the interest groups of their choice.

An adult will be needed at each group to lead the activity with the children.

WELCOME

- Greet each parent and child as they arrive.
- Play music to make your room cheerful.

FISHING FOR PEOPLE (IMAGINATIVE ACTIVITY)

Supplies: "Fishing for People" Handout, crayons, colored pencils

⊗ Photocopy "Fishing for People" for each child.

ASK: Have you ever been fishing? Did you catch anything? What did you use for bait? What is the purpose of bait when you are fishing? (*to attract the fish*)

SAY: Imagine you were going to fish for monkeys instead of fish. You would need to use different bait. You might use a banana. Now imagine that you wanted to fish for people.

- Give each child a copy of "Fishing for People."
- Invite each child to complete the picture by drawing something that might be used for bait to fish for people.
- Encourage the children to share their drawings with each other.

SAY: Today's Bible story talks about fishing for people.

BIBLE VERSE PAINTING (ART ACTIVITY)

Supplies: white paper, white crayons, dark-colored crayons, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, plastic containers for water, plastic or paper table coverings, smocks, table

⊗ Protect the work area with plastic table coverings or newspaper. Fill plastic containers one-third full with water and place them in the center of the table with the watercolor paints.

- Give each child a piece of paper and a white crayon, and have each child wear a smock.
- Have each child use a white crayon to draw a fishing net on his or her paper. This can be done by drawing diagonal lines across the page in one direction and then crossing those lines with diagonal lines going in the other direction.
- Encourage each child to use a dark-colored crayon to write the words, "Come, follow me," on her or his paper. It is okay if the words are on top of the fishing net lines.
- Show the children how to use the watercolor paints by dipping a paintbrush in

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water, mixing it with the paint, and then painting on the paper.

- Invite each child to paint over his or her entire page.

SAY: In today's Bible story, Jesus says the words, "Come, follow me," to some fishermen.

UNSCRAMBLE THE MESSAGE (LOGICAL ACTIVITY)

Supplies: "A Fishy Message" Handout, pencils

 Photocopy "A Fishy Message" for each child.

- Give each child a copy of "A Fishy Message" and a pencil.
- Encourage each child to unscramble the message.

SAY: The message from the fish is this month's Anchor Point, "Jesus calls us to follow him."

JESUS CALLS FOLLOWERS (MOVEMENT ACTIVITY)

Supplies: chairs

- Form a circle of chairs facing inward, using one less chair than the number of children in your class.

SAY: This month we are talking about Jesus calling followers. Jesus calls each of us to follow him.

- Choose one child to stand in the center of the circle of chairs, and have the rest of the children sit in the chairs.
- Explain the following rules to the children.
- The person in the center will say, "Jesus calls followers who..." and then tell us something about himself or herself, such as, "Jesus calls followers who have an older sister" or "Jesus calls followers who play soccer."
- Every person in the circle for whom that statement is true must get up and find a new seat while the person in the middle tries to get a seat also.
- You may not choose a seat that is right next to your previous seat.
- If the person in the middle says, "Jesus calls everyone!" everyone must find a new seat.
- The person left standing becomes the next person to tell us who Jesus calls to follow.
- Encourage the children to play the game.

Dive Deeper

Bring the children together to experience the Bible story and worship. Use a bell to alert the children it is Large Group Time.

JESUS CALLS THE FISHERMEN

Supplies: "Jesus Calls the Fisherman" Handout

 Photocopy "Jesus Calls the Fishermen" for each child to take home.

SAY: Today we are going to be hearing stories about Jesus calling people to follow him.

ASK: Will our Bible stories this month be found in the New Testament or the Old Testament? (*New Testament*) How do you know that? (*The New Testament contains stories of Jesus' life and ministry.*)

SAY: Today's story is found in the Gospel of Matthew.


- Read the story from "Jesus Calls the Fishermen," pausing to ask the questions in italics and inviting the children to answer. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. They are designed to encourage the children to think about what a life-changing decision Peter, Andrew, James, and John made when they chose to follow Jesus.

ASK: What did Jesus mean when he told Peter, Andrew, James, and John they would fish for people?

SAY: Peter, Andrew, James, and John became Jesus' disciples. They told many people about Jesus.

SIGN THE BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: Matthew 4:19 Bible Verse Poster; Matthew 4:19 Sign Language Handout

 Familiarize yourself with the sign language for the Bible verse so you can teach it to the children.

- Show the Bible verse poster.
- Encourage the children to read the verse together with you.

ASK: Who is speaking in this verse? (*Jesus*)

- Show the children the signs for the Bible verse from American Sign Language.
- Encourage the children to sign and say the Bible verse with you several times.

WORSHIP

Supplies: posterboard, markers

✪ Write “Jesus Calls Followers” at the top of the posterboard. Place the posterboard and markers on your worship center.

- Play familiar worship music and encourage the children to sing and move along with the music.
- Show the children the posterboard.

ASK: Who did Jesus call to follow him in today’s Bible story? (*Peter, Andrew, James, and John*)

- As each fisherman is named, write his name on the poster.

ASK: Jesus calls us to follow him too. What does it mean to follow Jesus? (*to follow his example, to live as he taught*) Jesus calls us to fish for people. We can invite people to follow Jesus. What are some ways we might fish for people?

- Allow the children an opportunity to share their ideas.

SAY: You have great ideas. There are many ways to fish for people. As you go to your small groups today, I invite each of you to add your name to our poster to show that you are a follower of Jesus.

PRAY: God, thank you for stories about your Son, Jesus, calling followers. We want to follow Jesus too.

- Invite the children to add their names to the poster as you dismiss them to their small groups.
- Hang the poster in your worship area. It will be used for the next few weeks/



≈ TIP ≈

If you have a large class, use more than one piece of posterboard.

Grow Stronger

Divide the children into small groups based on age levels. Keep the groups small, with a maximum of ten children in each group. You may need to have more than one of each group.

YOUNGER ELEMENTARY SMALL GROUP

Supplies: crayons; colored pencils; a variety of items useful in ministry, such as a Bible, soup pot, telephone, shovel, coat, offering plate, musical instrument, bandages, coffee cup, envelope, crayons, and so forth

- Have the children sit in a circle.
- Place the objects you have collected in the middle of the circle.

ASK: What did Jesus mean when he told Peter, Andrew, James, and John they would fish for people? (*They would invite people to follow Jesus.*) What does it mean for us to be fishers of people? (*We can invite people to follow Jesus and tell people about God's love.*)

SAY: Like the disciples, we can invite people to learn more about Jesus. That makes us fishers of people. Anytime we are following Jesus' example about how to live, we are fishing for people.

- Invite a child to choose one of the objects.

ASK: How could we use this object to fish for people?

- Allow the children an opportunity to share their ideas.
- Continue inviting children to choose objects and brainstorm about how they could be used to fish for people until each child has had an opportunity to choose something.

SAY: Of course, we don't really need any special equipment to fish for people.

ASK: What are some ways we can fish for people that don't require any additional equipment? (*There are many examples, such as smiling at someone, offering a hug, sharing a laugh, listening, and so forth.*)

- Allow the children an opportunity to share their ideas.

SAY: This week look for ways to fish for people.

PRAY: God, help us to look for ways we can share your love with other people. Thank you for loving us. Amen.

OLDER ELEMENTARY SMALL GROUP

Supplies: paper, colored pencils

ASK: What did Jesus mean when he told Peter, Andrew, James, and John they would fish for people? (*They would invite people to follow Jesus.*) What does it mean for us to be fishers of people? (*We can invite people to follow Jesus and tell people about God's love.*)

SAY: Like the disciples, we can invite people to learn more about Jesus. That makes us fishers of people.

ASK: Have you ever heard the expression, "Actions speak louder than words"? What does that expression mean?

SAY: We can tell people about God's love and invite them to follow Jesus, but if we are not living as Jesus taught us to live, our words are not going to have much effect.

ASK: How would we fish for people with our actions?

- Allow the children an opportunity to share their ideas.

SAY: Anytime we are following Jesus' example about how to live, we are fishing for people with our actions.

ASK: Do any of you have a tackle box that you use to go fishing? Or do you know someone who has a tackle box? What kind of things would you find in a tackle box?

SAY: People who like to fish often have a special box that they use to keep bait and other things needed while fishing.

- Give each child a piece of paper.

SAY: We have talked about the kinds of actions that help us fish for people. Imagine you are putting together a tackle box of actions that are useful for fishing for people. Write or draw some things you can do to fish for people.

- Encourage each child to write or draw things he or she can do on his or her paper.

SAY: Remember to look for opportunities to fish for people this week.

PRAY: God, we want to follow Jesus and fish for people. Help us to live as Jesus teaches us to live and look for ways to do your work. Thank you for being with us wherever we go. Amen.

Jesus Calls the Fishermen

One day Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee. He saw two fishermen throwing fishing nets into the sea. The two men were brothers named Peter and Andrew. Jesus called out to them, "Come, follow me! I'll show you how to fish for people."

What do you think Peter and Andrew thought when Jesus called out to them? What do you think they might have said to each other?

Right away, they left their nets and followed him.

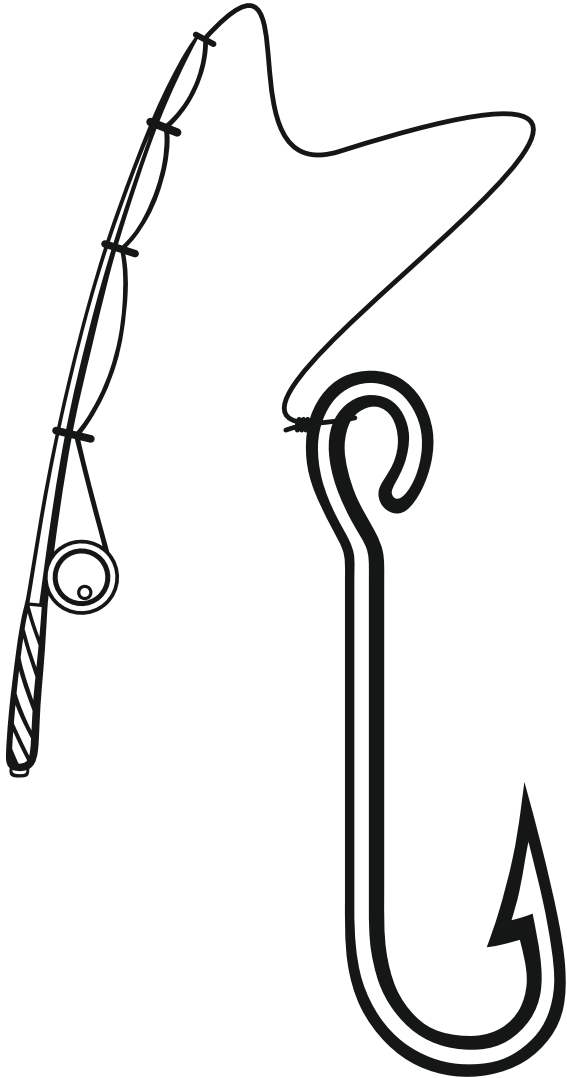
Is it surprising to you that Peter and Andrew dropped everything and followed Jesus? What do you think made them do that?

Continuing along the shore, Jesus saw another set of brothers, James and John. They were in a boat with their father, Zebedee, repairing their fishing nets. Jesus called them and, immediately they left the boat and their father and followed Jesus.

How do you think Zebedee felt about his sons leaving? What do you think Zebedee might have said?

(Based on Matthew 4:18-22.)

Fishing for People



A Fishy Message

The fish are trying to tell you something, but they are mixed up. Each kind of fish is carrying a letter from the same word. Unscramble the letters from each kind of fish and write the words on the blanks at the bottom of the page.

A collection of 20 cartoon fish of various species, each carrying a letter. The letters are: T, L, S, O, H, L, L, T, G, L, E, S, U, W, A, U, F, O, J, M, S, S.

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Matthew 4:19

“Come, follow me,” he said.



COME
Hand extended, palm up, index finger extended.
Come

Come

Hold out your hand with index finger extended, palm up. Move your hand toward yourself.



FOLLOW
Make a fist with both hands, thumbs out. Hold the right fist behind the left fist. Move both fists forward.
Follow

Follow

Make a fist with both hands, thumbs out. Hold the right fist behind the left fist. Move both fists forward.



ME
Hand extended, palm up, index finger extended.
Me

Me

Point to yourself.

"Come, follow me," he said.

Matthew 4:19

