

**Lesson Plans That Work**  
**Year B – Third Sunday After Epiphany**  
**Gospel Lesson for Younger Children**

**Scripture: Mark 1:14-20**

In the season of Epiphany, we follow Jesus' early ministry and calling of his disciples. In today's Gospel reading, Jesus says, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

*Note: This is the third in a four-part series on The Episcopal Church's refugee resettlement program, Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM). Today's lesson asks us to reflect on the many ways we are called go out into the world to be "fishers of people."*

**Theme: Fishers of People**

**Before:**

Prior to the lesson, prepare cut-outs of fish for each child to use in the activity. Here is a fish stencil ([http://www.craftideas.info/assets/images/Fish\\_Template\\_200.jpg](http://www.craftideas.info/assets/images/Fish_Template_200.jpg)).

If possible, review and queue up this video for use in your discussion:

- Refugee Community Allies (<http://vimeo.com/39648553>)

If you haven't yet explained who refugees are to the children, you may want to take a moment at the beginning of the fish activity to introduce them to the idea of human migration and why some people might move. Some people move in search of jobs and a better life for their families. Some people are forced to move for their own safety. Refugees are people who are forced to move for their safety; if they stayed in their homeland, they may be hurt very badly by people who do not want them there. Some refugees are able to return to their homes after some time, but many are never able to return home. A small number of those refugees are able to resettle in the United States. The Episcopal Church helps refugees to resettle in the United States through Episcopal Migration Ministries. Episcopal Migration Ministries resettles over 5,000 refugees annually from places like Nepal, Burma, Afghanistan, Iraq, Congo, and many other countries that are not safe for them.

If you would like to teach the children a little bit more about particular groups of people The Episcopal Church and other resettlement agencies resettle, you can find up to date statistics on the status of refugees in the world using this link: <http://www.unrefugees.org/>. Finally, if you have time, research the status of refugees in your community. Use the EMM network affiliate map to identify a resource in your area: <http://bit.ly/1swkPif>.

If you have questions, feel free to email or call Allison Duvall, EMM's program manager for church relations and engagement, at (212) 716-6027 or [aduvall@episcopalchurch.org](mailto:aduvall@episcopalchurch.org). She will be happy to assist you in enriching your lesson plan with information about Episcopal Migration Ministries and refugee resettlement.

**Beginning:** Welcome the children as they arrive, asking them about their week. Ask them if they have ever been fishing, or know someone who likes to go fishing. “What is fishing like? What do you have to do while you’re fishing?”

**Opening Prayer:** This prayer may be said responsively, with children repeating each line after the leader:

Heavenly Father,  
Today we are going to learn about fishing  
And what it means to be fishers of people.  
Be with us as we play and learn  
How we can be fishers, too.  
Amen.

**The Story: Mark 1:14-20**

Today we hear another story about how Jesus called his disciples. Read Mark 1:14-20.

**Reflection Questions:**

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “Follow me and become fishers of men?”
- We are Jesus’ followers, his disciples, today. What does it mean for us to “fishers of people?”
- Have you heard this saying: “Preach the Gospel; if necessary, use words”? What do you think that means? What is the Gospel? How do we preach the Gospel without words?

**Activity:**

Explain that one of the ways that we preach the Gospel without words is by sharing God’s love with people we meet – treating them with kindness, respect, compassion, and love. We do this in many ways in our Church, including by welcoming refugees to our country and letting them know we care about them.

Now, we are going to decorate our own fish. You can color your fish, write your name, and write some words or draw some pictures that shows how we preach the Gospel, how we are fishers of people.

**Activity:**

Have the children watch the following video:

- Refugee Community Allies (<http://vimeo.com/39648553>)

**Reflection Questions:**

- Who in the video was a fisher of people? Who shared God’s love?
- How did they share God’s love?

**Closing:** Ask the children to sit in a circle and to bring their fish with them. Ask each child to share their fish with the group, one at a time. If a child wants to and is capable, he/she can say a few words about what he/she decided to do with their fish.

Close the lesson with prayer. This may be repeated line by line.

*Loving God,  
Thank for being with us.  
Help us listen for your voice  
So we may share your love  
With everyone we meet.  
Amen.*

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### **Mark 1:14-20**

Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea-- for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

*Written by Allison Duvall*

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*Episcopal Migration Ministries (EMM), the refugee resettlement agency of The Episcopal Church, welcomes thousands of refugees each year from conflict zones across the globe. Working in partnership with offices and groups within the church as well as with governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and a network of 30 affiliate offices in 26 dioceses, Episcopal Migration Ministries provides vital services for thousands of refugee families upon their arrival in the United States.*

*In 2015, Episcopal Migration Ministries is celebrating 75 years of refugee resettlement in The Episcopal Church through the year-long #ShareTheJourney campaign. #ShareTheJourney is a multi-media effort to educate, form, and equip Episcopalians to engage in loving service with resettled refugees and to become prophetic witnesses and advocates on behalf of refugees, asylees, migrants, and displaced persons the world over.*