

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany**  
**Gospel Lesson for Adults**

**Scripture: Luke 5:1-11**

Epiphany: Shimmering glimpses of the abundance of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps we, too, noticed a star and followed it. Or maybe someone led us to the gift of faith. Now we take the Light — the Good News — out into the world. Will others see the light shimmering in us? Will they risk taking a journey into faith with us?

**A notation for this week's Gospel**

This week, Jesus has a boat as a pulpit. Amid the crowd are two exhausted fishermen who had worked all night long without catching anything. Casting nets, pulling in empty nets, all night long. Jesus uses these two men as his "sermon illustration." Jesus tells them to let down their nets for a catch. They muster up the courage to try yet again. They take the risk and find abundance.

**Theme: Risk seeking abundance**

**Before Class:** You will need Bibles or copies of the scripture from below, the participants plastic bags, extra plastic bags for newcomers, and additional 3 x 5 cards.

**Beginning:** Tell the group you are going to make a very brief statement, you want them to think about it for just a minute, and then call out words that come to mind in response. The statement: "Goin' Fishin." Make some notes, on newsprint if you have it, so your group does not lose all these impressions of fishing. The words may help after reading the scripture. (Pass out the plastic bags and a fresh card for each person.)

**Opening Prayer:** God of Love, you call us to be with you. Help us to see ourselves in this story we have today and to notice how we, too, might be fishers of people. Amen.

**The Scripture: Luke 5:1-11.** Several voices will help track who is saying what. Ask for a reader for the narrator, Simon, and Jesus. As you are reading, ask the group to mark words or phrases that stand out for them as the scripture is being read.

Once you are done reading, invite them to share what stood out for them and then go into the questions.

**Questions:**

Most of us will have had an experience of trying and trying and failing and failing as Simon has here. I wonder what experiences you have had at trying and failing that you might want to share with the group?

I wonder if anyone wants to share an experience of taking a huge risk and receiving unexpected abundance?

I wonder why Jesus does not address Simon's confession? (Perhaps "worthy" is not an important criteria to Jesus.)

I wonder in what ways are we also called to "catch" people?

**Getting Closure:** Make some comparisons between our experiences of fishing and Jesus calling us to catch people.

What is the difference between fly fishing and throwing out a net?

When might one "technique" be more appropriate and in what circumstances might the other be better?

What about the difference between fishing with a baited hook and tending a net? (Collect the plastic bags.)

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you God, for the fishing tackle boxes you give to each of us. Help us to discern wisely how and when to use each of the gifts in the boxes. Amen.

## **Luke 5:1-11**

**Narrator:** Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon,

**Jesus:** ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’

**Simon:** <sup>5</sup>‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’

**Narrator:** <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying,

**Simon:** ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’

**Narrator:** <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon,

**Jesus:** ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’

**Narrator:** <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

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