

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Fifth Sunday After the Epiphany
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

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: Be prepared to bring the length of fabric you bought for the first session. (And if you did not, and choose to, purchase a couple of yards of inexpensive tulle or other gauzy type material. If you buy white, you will be able to use it at least one more time this season.) Also, draw some very simple fish shapes – about two to a page of construction paper – and cut them out. Any color will do. Make at least one per child, more if you have time (the more the better). In class you will need drawing paper, construction paper, scissors, glue sticks, and crayons.

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have ever been fishing. Hear stories if there are any and share your own, if you like to fish. Then tell them that this story is about a different kind of fishing. Fishing with a net.

Praying: God, thank you for sending Jesus to show us how we can be a part of the disciples. Help us to see how we can “catch” as the fishermen caught today. Amen.

The Story: (Have the length of material with you and the cut-out fish as you tell the story.) Lots and lots of people wanted to hear Jesus talk to them. They were crowded around him as he stood by a lake. Jesus got an idea. He asked Simon to let him get into Simon’s boat and go out onto the lake, so everyone could hear and see him. Sure, said Simon.

So Jesus talked to the people from Simon’s boat and they all listened. Then Jesus turned to Simon and told him to toss his nets out onto the lake.

Simon made a very sad face. "Jesus," he said, "we have been tossing these nets out all night long and we have not caught even one teeny fish. But, OK, if you say so, we will try one more time."

And Simon tossed the net (Ask the children to help you toss the net. When the net settles, give each child at least one fish (more if you have them) and let them toss it into the net, and then ask them to help you drag the net in.)

There were so many fish that they filled Simon's boat and the boat next to his.

Simon got down on his knees and said to Jesus: "I am not a very good man. I do not deserve all this." But Jesus just said to him: Do not be afraid; from now on you will be helping me catch people.

Activity: Continue to "go fishing" inviting the children to take turns being Simon and being Jesus, until they have made the story into a story that belongs to them.

Activity: Invite the children to make a picture to take home. Give them the drawing paper and construction paper to make fish. (Or you can give them some of the fish you have used for the story.) Cut a piece the width of the material and then cut the piece into lengths to make "nets" for the children to glue on their pictures.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to share their pictures. Then ask them what they think Jesus meant when he said the fishermen were now going to "catch" people? I wonder how can we help Jesus "catch" people?

Closing Prayer: Thank you Jesus for showing us how to 'catch' people by loving them and sharing your story with them. Amen.

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