

Lesson Plans that Work
Year C – Third Sunday of Easter
Lesson Plans for Younger Children

Scripture: John 21:1-19

"Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again." An astounding discovery! The Easter news was spread to all who would listen. The disciples told people, who in turn, told people, and to this day, we hear the message — a message of weeping and then of joy that comes with the morning of a new day. We too like the disciples weep **AND** then delight in the joy bursting forth in us. We too are called to bring this message with our lives, and, if necessary, with words, to those who have not yet heard it.

A Notation for This Week's Gospel

Thinking their ministry days were over, the fishermen went back to what they knew: fishing. But they caught nothing all night. In the depth of their discouragement they hear a call from the shore, "Try the other side." Abundance. And who is that on the shore, standing by the charcoal fire he made in anticipation of the fish?

Theme: Hear what the Spirit is saying to the Church

Before: You will need a "boat" large enough to hold the children (for example, a table turned upside down, or a large cardboard box or a few boxes taped together), a "fishing net" (should you happen to have one lying around, bring it, and if you do not, a large trash bag opened up will work, or some fabric (especially tulle), or a picture of a net to show to the children).

Goldfish crackers would also be fun. Gel pens and dark paper would be good, but crayons, construction paper, and scissors will work.

Beginning: Ask the children if any of them have ever gone fishing. If anyone has, ask about it. Did they go in a boat? Did they use a fishing pole? What did they use for bait? Then ask if anyone has ever gone fishing using a net. (Probably not. If you have the piece of plastic net, show it and tell them that a fish net would be a little like that, only much, much bigger.) Tell them that our story today is about going fishing with a net.

Prayer: If you have created an altar, gather around it, light the candle, if you have one, and then offer this prayer: Thank you, God, for stories we have about Jesus that show us how much you love us. Amen.

The Story: This story needs us to act it out as we go. First, we need a boat. Let's see if we can turn this table over and make it into a boat. All aboard. Now, let's all row this boat out into the lake using our pretend oars. (Show the children how to row.)

Keep on rowing. We are being the disciples, Jesus' friends. Jesus was back, but not the way he was before. Jesus' friends are not sure what they are supposed to be doing, so they decided to go fishing. That was something they knew how to do.

They stopped rowing and tossed their net into the water. (Show the children how to toss the net or trash bag out into the "water.")

And they waited. And they waited. And they waited. Do you see any fish in that net? No fish. All night. No fish.

The next morning, way off on the shore, they saw a person. They listened. The person asked: "Caught any fish?" "No," sighed Jesus' friends. (Let me hear a sad "No!" from all of you together.)

"Try the other side of the boat," the person yelled out to them. Well, they did. Let's toss the net over the OTHER side of this boat.
What do you think happened?

Lots of fish! So many fish that they could hardly drag in the net it was so heavy, so full of fish.

Just then Peter took another look at that person on the shore. "It's Jesus!" he shouted and dived into the water to swim to shore. The others rowed like crazy to get that boat to shore.

There, Jesus was standing beside a campfire he had built so they could cook some fish for breakfast. OK, let's get out of our boat, roll up our net, and have a snack we would like. (Offer the goldfish crackers.)

Activity: Tell the children we need another decoration for our altar that will remind us of this story. Maybe it could be a drawing of some of the fish. Maybe it is Jesus by the campfire. Or it could be the friends rowing the boat. Tell them they can draw what they want to draw. Ask what they think should be in the drawing on the altar. Provide the craft materials you have brought so the children can create.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to sit by the altar and tell you about their pictures. Then we can put the altar decoration we have created on the altar.

Closing Prayer: Thank you, Jesus, for helping all your friends, including us. Amen.

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