

Third Sunday after Epiphany – year A

Preparation

Read [Matthew 4:12-23](#). Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump at you. Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

<http://www.textweek.com/yeara/epipha3.htm>

http://www.episcopalchurch.org/109452_115820_ENG_HTML.htm:

scroll down the page to find the one for this week

http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?id=162

<http://www.sermons4kids.com/fishing4people.htm>

<http://www.msscrafter.com/newtestament/fishermen.htm>

<http://www.ebibleteacher.com/children/lessons/disciple.htm>

<http://www.sundayschoollessons.com/epi5les.htm>

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/a/3-a/A-3-a.html>

<http://www.efree.mb.ca/lectionarypuzzles/in-awjj.htm#ep03>: word puzzles

Gathering

Materials needed

- Small table or end of one table
- Candle and candle lighter
- Bible and bookmark
- Green cloth
- Newsprint and markers

Print up the prayer on the newsprint so that the readers can say the prayer with you. Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. With the children place the cloth on the table. Have them help you place the candle and the Bible on the cloth. Light the candle. Pray the following prayer together:

**Learning new things, we walk with God;
Loving new ways, we walk with Jesus;
Looking for hope, we walk with the Spirit. Amen.**

Blow out the candle. Ask the children if any of them have ever moved house. *Wait for their responses.* Ask them what they think is needed to move house.

If you have moved you know that it takes lots of planning, packing and time. Ask the children they can think of any other kind of adventure that takes lots of planning. *Wait for their responses.* Explain that in today's story they are going to learn about some people who decide to go an exciting adventure with Jesus.

Story Time

Materials

- poster from previous weeks
- fishing boat image at the end of the lesson
- scissors
- wall tack or tape
- construction paper, paper clips, dowel, yarn and magnet

Instructions

- Copy the fishing boat image at the end of the lesson and cut it out. Place it near the poster with the wall tack or tape. Trace a simple fish shape on the construction paper ([go here](#) to find one). Clip a paper clip on the tail of the fish. Tie the magnet to one end of the yarn and then tie the other end to one end of dowel. Put the fish in front of the children and have your fishing pole handy. With the children get comfortable to hear the story.

*Take the fishing pole and fish with the children for **fish #1**.
Have one of the children hold it for you.*

Jesus had grown up in the town of Nazareth with his family. After he had been baptized by John the Baptist Jesus knew that it was time for him to start the work God had for him to do. Jesus moved to the town of Capernaum right down on the Sea of Galilee.

From the time that Jesus moved there he began to tell everyone, “Say you are sorry to God! The kingdom of heaven has come near!”

*Take the fishing pole and fish with the children for **fish #2**.
Have one of the children hold it for you.*

One day Jesus was walking by the Sea of the Galilee. He was looking out at the water. Jesus noticed all the boats out on the water with people fishing from them. Jesus saw Andrew and his brother Peter in their boat. He saw them casting a net into the sea for they were fishermen. Jesus called out to the two brothers and said, “Come with me and you will fish for people.”

Right away the two brothers left their nets and followed Jesus.

*Take the fishing pole and fish with the children for **fish #3**.
Have one of the children hold it for you.*

Jesus continued on his walk and saw two other brothers, John and James. They fished with their father Zebedee. All three of them were working in their boat mending their nets. Jesus called to them. Right away they left their father and their boat and followed Jesus.

*Take the fishing pole and fish with the children for **fish #4**.
Have one of the children hold it for you.*

Jesus and his friends, Andrew, Peter, John and James, began to go from community to community in Galilee. Jesus taught in the synagogues (places of worship and learning) about God’s love. Jesus began telling everyone about the kingdom of God. Jesus healed the sick and prayed with many people. Jesus taught his friends what it means to be followers of God’s loving way.

Point out the poster to the children. Explain that each week that they are going to add a symbol (an object that reminds us of something) to the poster. Bring out the fishing boat. Ask the children why we put a fishing boat on for today? To remind us of being called by Jesus to do God’s work. Have one of the children tape it onto the poster over the water.

Response

Project Idea 1: Fishing Mobile

This mobile will give the children a way to share today's story with their family.

Materials needed

- construction paper
- fishing boat image from end of lesson
- scissors
- hangers
- yarn
- markers
- hole punch

Instructions

Make enough copies of the fishing boat image so that each child has one and then cut one out for each child. Trace fish (using the fish shape from the story) on to the construction paper, so that each child will have four. Give each child the fish and have them cut them out – the younger ones will need help with this. Have them print one of each of the following words on the fish: **'Follow', 'Learn', 'Heal', 'People'**. When they are done that give them a fishing boat and have them colour it with the markers. Punch holes into the fish and the fishing boat and tie different lengths of yarn onto each. Then tie the fish and boat onto the hanger. Encourage the children to find a place at home to hang up their mobile and share today's story with their families.

Project Idea 2: Fish Mosaic

Mosaics were used in ancient times to decorate homes and public spaces. The fish symbol was used by early Christians to identify each other. This mosaic will give the children a way to share today's story with others.

Materials needed

- card stock
- tissue paper of various colours
- glue
- markers

Instructions

Using the fish shape that you used in the story trace a fish shape onto a piece of card stock. Make one for each child. Tear up the tissue paper into small pieces – have as many different colours as you can – then set them aside. Give each child a prepared piece of card stock. Explain that the fish symbol was used by the early followers of Jesus to identify each other and that they are going to make a mosaic to remember Jesus' request to follow him in God's way. Show them how to apply some glue to the fish shape and then glue down a piece of tissue paper. Suggest that they use various colours and overlap them to get interesting colour combinations. When they are done have them print on the card stock **'I will follow Jesus'**. Suggest that they find a place to put up their mosaics at home.

Project Idea 3: Paper Bag Fish

This paper bag fish will be especially good with younger children and will help them to remember today's story of fisher folk becoming followers of Jesus.

Materials needed

- small paper bags (like the ones used for lunches)
- yarn
- scissors
- markers
- glitter
- tissue paper
- tinfoil
- glue
- newspaper

Instructions

Give each child a paper bag and have them scrunch up the newspaper and fill their bag about two-thirds full. Gather the opening and tie it off with a piece of yarn – this will be the tail of the fish. Have the children decorate the fish using the tinfoil (to make scales), tissue paper, glitter and glue. When they are done have everyone show off their fish to each other. Remind the children that Jesus called us to follow him and to learn how to bring other people closer to God. Their fish will help them to remember that.

Closing

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle.
Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for being with us;
Thank you Jesus for loving us;
Thank you Spirit for leading us. Amen.

Image of a fishing boat

