

**Scripture**

Luke 5:1-11

# An Invitation to Follow

session essentials

**We follow Jesus, our Teacher.**

- ◆ Three ordinary fishermen leave everything to follow Jesus.
- ◆ We will present Jesus as a teacher and leader from whom we learn and follow.
- ◆ In today's core session, we explore with children the story of the call of Jesus' disciples.

**Question of the Week**

What "unlikely heroes" do you know or admire?

**Core Session**

- ◆ Getting Started (*blue chalk, long strip of paper, onion bags, cheesecloth, optional: sand, rocks, shells*)
- ◆ Gospel Story: The Big Catch
- ◆ Completing the Collage (*optional: old magazines*)
- ◆ Praying Together

**Enrichment**

- ◆ Welcome the Good News
- ◆ Singing Together
- ◆ Story-Review Game (*onion bag or cheesecloth*)
- ◆ Bible Skills for Third Graders
- ◆ Children and the Gospel
- ◆ Dyani's Sikhulule
- ◆ Info: Where You'll Find Everything Else

**Helps for Catechists**

- ◆ More about Today's Scriptures
- ◆ Reflection
- ◆ The Scriptures and the Catechism
- ◆ The World of the Bible: Holy, Holy, Holy

## ✓ Getting Started (5-10 minutes)

Ask children to create a backdrop for today's story by first making a "sea" on a large sheet of poster board or long strip of paper. Children can use blue chalk to draw water on the poster or paper.

Children can tape or staple "fish nets" (onion bags or cheesecloth) to the collage. They can also use glue to add sand, rocks and shells to their "sea."

## ✓ Gospel Story (5-10 minutes)

### The Big Catch

"Teach us more, Jesus!" people cried. "We want to hear you!" Wherever Jesus went, crowds of people followed. One day, there were so many people, and they followed so closely, that Jesus thought they were going to push him right into the water behind him.

Jesus looked around. Simon, James and John sat in two boats. The three men were tired from a long night of fishing. Jesus called to Simon. "Let me come into your boat. The people will be able to see me and hear me—and I won't land in the sea!"

Simon laughed and made room for Jesus. He listened to Jesus teach. He liked what Jesus had to say. When Jesus was finished, he turned to Simon with a smile. "Thank you! Now let me do something for you. Row out to the deep water and let down your fish net."

Simon groaned. "Lord, I've been fishing all night. There's just no fish around for me to catch. But if you say so, I'll give it a try." Simon rowed into the deep water and let down his net over the side. And the net filled with fish—so many fish that Simon thought his nets would break!

"James! John!" he yelled. "Help me!"

James and John cast their own nets over the side, and the three fishers pulled and tugged until they had hauled in enough fish to fill both boats.

They were amazed. Simon looked at Jesus and his eyes filled with tears.

"Oh, Jesus," he said. "you shouldn't be in this boat with me. I can tell that you come from God, and I'm just a sinner. I'm not good enough to be your friend. I'm not good enough even be around you."

But Jesus smiled and put his arm around Simon's shoulder. "Simon, you *are* my friend. Don't worry. Just come with me. And you won't catch only fish: you'll catch men and women and girls and boys for God."

So Simon, James and John left their boats. They left their fish. They left everything and followed Jesus to catch many people for God.

## ✓ Completing the Collage

(10-15 minutes)

Children finish the collage begun in today's Getting Started activity. Begin by asking:

- ◆ What are ways we can catch people for Jesus?
- ◆ What are ways we can bring people to Jesus?

Accept the children's answers and be willing to share your own ideas, too, for example, by being a friend, by telling the story of Jesus, and by praying for people. Invite the children to finish their collages with pictures of people Jesus loves and wants for friends.

Ask each child to cut a fish from construction paper. Children draw pictures of people or write their names on the fish. They can also cut pictures of people from magazines to glue onto the fish. Encourage the children to use construction paper scraps or felt pens to decorate the fish with colorful fins, tails and features.

Children complete the project by taping or stapling finished fish to the fish nets. Invite the children to invent a title for their collage, for example, *Catching Friends for Jesus*. Write the title across the top of the collage. Save the finished collage to use in today's closing prayer.

## ✓ Praying Together (5 minutes)

Gather the children around the collage made in today's session. Invite the children to take turns using the collage to thank God for each person shown in the poster. Close by praying:

- ◆ Jesus, thank you for making us your friends. Help each of us catch many new friends for you. *Amen*.

**Note:** If you use *At Home with the Good News*, either distribute this week's papers to the children before they leave or e-mail the papers to their families.

## □ Welcome the Good News

(10-15 minutes)

On page 1 of today's *Welcome the Good News* you'll find the Japanese print *The Great Wave* together with two story-review questions.

In Welcome God's Word on page 2, children can work together to solve a scripture puzzle. Children will also find an activity called With Your Family that they can lead at home.

## □ Singing Together (5-10 minutes)

From *Singing the Good News* you and the children can sing together:

- ◆ "Give a Little" (p. 36 of the songbook; also available as an MP3)

**Note:** To access both the songbook and its attached MP3 files, open your *Winter-C Seasonal Resources* folder, then click on *Singing the Good News*.

You may also like to teach children to sing the following words to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat:"

*Simon, James and John,  
Fishing in the sea.  
No fish, no minnows, no flounders, no eels, they're as  
Sad as they can be.*

*Jesus says to them,  
"Help me teach this crowd!  
Inside your boat, I can sit, I can preach." Simon  
Feels so very proud.*

*Jesus says to them,  
"Drop your nets again."  
Nets fill with minnows, with flounders, with fish, and the  
Boats fill to the brim.*

## □ Story-Review Game (10-15 minutes)

*Activity Soundtrack:* Play "Sikhulule." (Open your *Winter-C Seasonal Resources* folder, then click on *Companion Music* for options on obtaining this music.)

Children fill "fishnets" by answering story-review questions.

Ask each child to cut one or two fish shapes from construction paper. Tack up an onion bag or cheese cloth "fishnet" or simply draw one onto a poster.

Ask the children to help you brainstorm questions about today's story, such as:

- ◆ Who is teaching people in today's story? (*Jesus*)
- ◆ Can you name at least two of the three fishers in today's story? (*Simon, James, John*)
- ◆ How many boats do the fishers have? (*two*)
- ◆ Whose boat does Jesus sit in to teach? (*Simon's boat*)
- ◆ How long has Simon been fishing without catching any fish? (*all night*)
- ◆ When Jesus is finished teaching, what does he tell Simon to do? (*row out to deep water or let down his net*)
- ◆ What fills Simon's net? (*many fish*)
- ◆ Who does Simon call to help him? (*James and John*)
- ◆ Why does Simon tell Jesus to leave him? (*Simon thinks he is not good enough to be Jesus' friend.*)
- ◆ What does Jesus tell Simon that he will catch instead of fish? (*people or men, women, girls and boys*)

Children will call out answers, too, as they work, but don't write the answers on the fish. Gather the fish with their questions into a pile.

Invite volunteers to draw a fish from the pile and read aloud the question. If the child gives the correct answer, that child "catches" the fish to put in the net.

Encourage children to help one another answer the questions, but don't let one or two children dominate the talk. Continue until all the questions have been correctly answered and all the fish have been "caught."

You can find another story-review game attached to this document.

## □ Bible Skills for Third Graders

(10-15 minutes)

Help the children use the Table of Contents, chapter and verse numbers to find **Luke 5:9-11** in their Bibles. Ask the children to follow along as you read the passage aloud. Divide the group into teams of three to four children each. Ask each group to choose a short verse from Luke 5:9-11 to write out as a puzzle.

Children cut fish shapes from construction paper, putting each word of the verse on a separate fish. Ask the teams to swap their finished fish puzzles. Challenge the teams to unscramble and read aloud their verses. Encourage the children to use their Bibles for clues.

## INFO Children and the Gospel

Today's gospel presents Jesus as a teacher whose call compels three simple fishermen to leave everything and follow him. We present this story to children as a call to them and to us: follow Jesus.

Can Jesus' call to follow have any meaning for children? Some Christian denominations feel so strongly that Jesus' call is a call to adult discipleship only that they won't even baptize children until they are older.

In most Christian denominations, we baptize even infants, thereby accepting them as full members of Christ's Church, with all the privileges, responsibilities and calls to growth that membership implies. There are intriguing hints in the New Testament that such an understanding of discipleship echoes the mind of Christ and his first disciples. The gospels record that Jesus warns his disciples not "to prevent" the children from coming to him.

This same verb (in Greek, *koluein*) is used in the book of Acts to emphasize the inclusive nature of baptism. There is "nothing to prevent" the eunuch Ethiopian (Acts 8:36) or the gentile Cornelius (Acts 10:47) from being baptized.

When we see children as full members of the Church, we see faith formation work in its proper perspective, too. We are co-workers with the children and co-workers with Christ in seeking to come together to Christ's work in the world.

## INFO Dyani's Sikhulule

"Sikhulule" was written by Thozama Dyani, a South-African woman (from the Xhosa tribe) whose brother was murdered by the police during South Africa's dark days of apartheid.

"Sikhulule" is part of Dyani's "Liberation Mass," written to remember the events of Soweto Day (now called "Youth Day"), a student-led day of protest and violence that set in motion the fight to end apartheid.

Reflect on this song and its writing. What words or music give you strength to seek the full justice and freedom of God's kingdom for all?

*Sikhulule,  
Sikhulule,  
Ngenceba yakho  
Sikhulule.*

*Liberate us, Lord.  
Liberate us, Lord.  
In your love and mercy  
Set us free.*

## INFO Where You'll Find Everything Else

- ◆ Attached to this Session Plan you will find:
  - Backgrounds and reflections for today's readings, titled *More about Today's Scriptures*.
  - A copy of today's *Gospel Story* to hand out to children or e-mail to their families.
  - A *Fish Game* activity that you can use to review the story found in today's session.
- ◆ Open your *Winter-C Seasonal Resources* folder, then click on *Seasonal Articles* to find:
  - Information on *Winter-C's Models of the Faith*.
  - An article for catechists and/or families exploring Jesus' role as *The Messiah*.
  - An article for catechists and/or families exploring the role of *Prophets and Prophecy*.
  - The *Introduction for Primary* for **Living the Good News**.

## More about Today's Scriptures

The readings for today explore several persons of faith who have answered God's call to them. The Old Testament readings from Judges and Isaiah recount the calls of Gideon and Isaiah and their responses. Paul summarizes the gospel and reminds the Corinthians of their calling through the resurrected Christ. In the gospel, we read how Jesus calls Peter, above all, to be his disciple.

### Isaiah 6:1-2a, 3-8

Isaiah experienced his call to be a prophet in the temple at Jerusalem. He saw a vision of the Lord enthroned amidst the divine council.

God's "throne" is the ark of the covenant. Above the Lord are the *seraphim*, literally burning ones, who represent the heavenly creatures who worship God.

The triple repetition of *holy* emphasizes the mysterious, awesome, unapproachable quality of the divine.

Isaiah responds to the experience of God's holiness with a sense of profound sinfulness, not only his own but that of all the people.

He is granted cleansing and healing grace through the coal from the altar, so that he may proclaim God's word to the people.

### 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

In preparation for the next topic of discussion, the resurrection of the dead (15:12), Paul reminds the Corinthians of their common ground of belief. By quoting a traditional formulation of the essential proclamation about Christ (15:3-5), he recalls the basic creedal statements he taught them.

What "scriptures" (that is, of the Old Testament) Paul means in verses 3 and 4 is not explicit. In general, the statement "in accordance with the scriptures" expresses the conviction that these events took place according to God's purpose. It was, however, the lived experience of the early Christians, not merely the evidence of the Old Testament, that shaped their belief.

Paul's list of resurrection appearances does not match exactly those in the gospel accounts. Paul includes the Lord's appearance to him, "as to one untimely born," perhaps referring to Paul's belated revelation, or perhaps taking up a term of abuse applied to him by others. But whatever Paul's defects or his gifts, he preaches the same gospel as the other apostles, the same gospel that the Corinthians accepted.

### Luke 5:1-11

Today's story of the wondrous catch of fish is focused on Peter, whose enormous catch prefigures his missionary success. It is also an epiphany of Jesus; Peter's reaction to the divine manifestation is to realize his own sinfulness. His cry, "O Lord," has implicit within it his later confession of Jesus as Messiah (9:20).

Peter leaves everything to follow Jesus (5:11). His response to Jesus contains all of the elements that Luke's community would need as a model for their own acceptance and following of Jesus.

## Reflection

The religious authorities of Israel would've sniffed something fishy in this scene. If someone wanted to be a spiritual leader, inspiring reform and conversion, wouldn't he recruit followers from the seminaries, or at least, the synagogues? Instead this Jesus calls fisherfolk.

It shouldn't seem so odd to viewers of contemporary films, where the greatest victories are achieved by the least likely heroes. In both "Erin Brockovich" and "North Country," well-dressed, wealthy, educated attorneys meet their come-uppance through uneducated, powerless women popularly considered "floozies." Unexpectedly, these women inspire others to speak truth to power simply because it's the right thing to do.

Jesus must've relished Peter's willingness to follow Jesus' suggestion, and his stupefaction at the huge catch. Peter has the grace to cooperate and be amazed: what more could Jesus want, even if this unlikely leader does open mouth/insert foot and smell fishy?

We too worry about being unfit for ministry, uneducated in theology, or ill equipped for challenge. We might remember the willingness of these models to answer the plaintive call, "Whom shall I send?" We too can respond to Jesus with the words of Isaiah, "Here I am; send me."

## The Scriptures and the Catechism

God's holiness calls us to holiness as Christians. For the Israelites, holiness was the distinctive characteristic of God (*CCC*, #2807–15), which made God divine and completely different from us. Holiness was transmitted to our world through contact with God. So whatever God touched became holy. As Christians, our call into relationship with God is also our call to holiness (*CCC*, #1716–28). God has touched our deepest selves with healing love and we have been transformed.

## The World of the Bible

### Holy, Holy, Holy

Holiness describes the unique quality that makes God to be divine and thus wholly other or separate from all created realities.

Strictly speaking, human persons like priests or the community of Israel and created objects like the Jerusalem Temple or altars or sacrificial offerings only become holy through contact with God. God's presence transforms the person or place or thing into something sacred.

As Isaiah demonstrates, this quality of holiness demands reverent fear, for to come into contact with God is supremely dangerous because it changes whatever is touched. The triple repetition of *holy* emphasizes the mysterious, awesome, unapproachable quality of the divine.