



Gone Fishing

(based on John 21:1–14)

After Jesus died, some of the women who were his friends went to the tomb and found it was empty! Jesus was alive! He spoke with Mary and then with the disciples. There were other stories too about people who had seen him and talked to him. This is one of those stories when Jesus appeared to his friends, not dead, but alive!

Some of the disciples—those who had been fishermen like Peter and Andrew, James and John, and some others—didn't quite know what to do with themselves. They had seen Jesus alive, but he wasn't leading them from place to place teaching and healing. They weren't quite sure what to do. They didn't have a plan for Jesus dying and then being alive. So they did what they knew how to do—they went fishing.

They fished all night long but didn't catch a thing. Not one little fish.

Just as the sun rose, Jesus was standing on the beach but the disciples didn't know it was him. Maybe the sun was in their eyes or the early morning fog made it difficult to see. Then Jesus asked them what they were doing, pointing out that they didn't have any fish. They agreed. No fish.

Then Jesus told them to cast their nets over the right side of the boat and they would find some fish. The disciples thought this was pretty odd. They had been there all night with no fish. How could a guy on the beach know where the fish were? But they threw their nets over the right side of the boat, and immediately there were so many fish in their nets they could hardly hold onto the nets.

Then John knew. He said to Peter, "It is the Lord!"

Peter jumped into the sea and swam to shore. He was so excited to see Jesus. The others rowed the boat, dragging their nets full of fish. There were 153 large fish!

By the time they got to the beach, Jesus had a fire going, roasting some fish, and he had some bread. Jesus called to them to bring some of the fish they had caught too. He said, "Come! I've made you breakfast."

Fish and bread. This all seemed familiar. They didn't need to ask who this was right in front of them. They knew it was Jesus, breaking bread and feeding them, just like he always had.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Act out the story. Use stuffed animals or toys for the other disciples and the fish, if you need more actors. Fashion a boat out of furniture. Use a sheet or blanket for a net. Find a place for your beach breakfast.
- Explore God's grace in this story. Was it when Jesus told them to cast their nets on the other side and they were successful? How about when Peter knew it was Jesus and responded with such excitement? Or was it when Jesus fed the disciples? There are many ways we can find grace in this story and in our lives.



Responding to God's Grace

- John knew it was Jesus. Peter realized it was Jesus when John told him so. The other disciples recognized Jesus when he broke bread and fed them. Where and when do you recognize Jesus?
- Watch the YouTube video “Breakfast by the Sea—Beginner’s Sabbath School” (bit.ly/BreakfastByTheSea, 5:18) to see the story told in a different way. What do you see or hear in this way of telling the story that you didn’t notice before?

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Make a meal with bread and fish this week.
- Count out 153 fish-shaped crackers and share them with others.
- A *tessellation* is a repeated pattern that fits together with no spaces or gaps. The fish in the net could have seemed like a tessellation! Do an internet search for “fish tessellation” and make a pattern of your own to color or paint. Can you make 153 fish?
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Gracious God, thank you for Jesus in our lives. He always is looking out for the best for us and takes care of us daily. May we be like Peter and run to him each day. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.