

LESSON PLAN

FISHERMEN LEAVE THEIR NETS

Matthew 4:18-25; Luke 5:1-11

Lesson Memory Verse: Matthew 4:19 - "He said to them, Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men."

Lesson Aim: We need to follow Jesus in what He said and did, so we can become successful fishers of men.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

BEGIN HERE

KEY (for Attention): How many of you have ever been fishing? How many of you have caught at least one fish? Tell me how you caught your fish. In the Bible story today, some men went fishing and caught so many fish that their boats almost sank from the weight of all the fish. But before I tell you that story, our memory verse tells us that Jesus promises to make His followers fishers of MEN, not fish. Now what does that mean? Here is the memory verse (hold up a placard with the verse on it) and I will explain it to you so you will know what it means.

HE (for Authority): (Have the class recite the verse with you and then explain it.) Fishing for fish is exciting when we catch a fish, but fishing for men (people) is even more exciting when we "catch" one and bring that person to Jesus. That is what Jesus wants us to do. He wants us to find men and women, boys and girls, who want to be saved from their sins, and bring them to Him. He will take away their sin and give them eternal life. This is the big difference when we fish for men than when we fish for fish. When we fish for fish, we kill them and then we eat them. That is okay, because that is why God made them. They are food for us. But when we fish for men, we rescue them so they can live forever. That is a big difference, isn't it?

So you may wonder, how do I fish for men, that is, how do I fish for people? Jesus will teach you when you follow Him. He says He will make you a fisher of men when you follow Him. So what does it mean to follow Him? When His disciples followed Him, they lived with Him. They heard what He said, saw what He did and did what He told them to do. Matthew wrote the things that they learned about fishing for men when they followed Him in chapters 5-16 of his gospel. We cannot live with Jesus like His disciples did, but we can read what Matthew recorded in his gospel and learn what they learned. When we do that, Jesus will make us to be fishers of men.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our story today, Luke tells how four of Jesus' disciples learned how important it is to fish for men. They learned it so well that they gave up their job of fishing for fish and started to follow Jesus so they could learn how to fish for men.

I. Invitation of Jesus - Matthew 4:18-25; cf. Mark 1:16ff

Jesus called two fishermen to follow Him and He said that He would make them fishers of men. These two men were Peter and Andrew, who were brothers. Then Jesus called two more fishermen to follow Him, James and John, who also were brothers. These four men had worked together as fishermen, but now they left their boats and nets to follow Jesus to become fishers of men. However, it seems that they did not understand that they were to permanently leave the fishing business and live with Jesus. Luke tells a slightly different story when these four men finally understood that Jesus was asking them to leave their fishing business and live with Him so they could learn how to be fishers of men.

[Teachers, this is: for you information to see why we believe Jesus called these disciples more than once. Notice the differences between Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 5:1-11: Jesus appears to be alone in one (Matthew), but is pressed with crowds in the other (Luke); Peter and Andrew are fishing in one (Matthew), but are washing their nets in the other (Luke); James and John are with their father mending their nets in one (Matthew), but are with Jesus out on the lake in their boat full of fish in the other (Luke). These differences suggest that the disciples left their nets twice to follow the Lord Jesus. Evidently they did not feel that it was wrong to go back to fishing when they were near home as long as it did not hinder them from being with Jesus Christ when He traveled to different parts of the country. So they did leave their nets to follow Jesus whenever He took them away from their hometown to fish for men in other places.]

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After He arose from the dead, He told them that their permanent business was to fish for men (Jn 21; Mt 28:18-20).

WE: Are we willing to be fishers of men, to bring others to Jesus? That is the business of every Christian. But it may be that Jesus will call some of us to make fishing for men our fulltime business. Are you willing to do that?

II. Instruction of Jesus - Luke 5:1-11

A. Jesus Taught the People - 5:1-3

One day a crowd of people followed Jesus while He was by the lake of Gennesaret (Sea of Galilee), and they wanted Him to teach them the Word of God. Peter was washing his fishing nets nearby and Jesus asked him for his help. He wanted to teach from Peter's boat. Peter was happy to help Jesus. He pushed his boat out into the water where Jesus could teach the people lined up on the shore.

WE: Do we like to listen to God's Word like the crowds listened to Jesus? Do we do whatever Jesus asks us to do in order to help Him as Peter did?

B. Jesus Tested Peter - 5:4-7

After Jesus had finished teaching the people He told Peter to move his boat out into the deep water for a good catch of fish. It seems likely that Andrew was with Peter, even though he was not named. Peter doubted the Lord's wisdom about fishing in the deep during the daylight hours because he and Andrew had fished all night without catching any fish. Fish usually go deeper into the water during the daytime when the water near the surface is too warm for them. Peter may have reasoned that the fish would not be near the surface in the deep part of the sea during the daytime. Whatever bothered Peter, he decided to obey his Master to let down the nets in the deep part of the sea. When he obeyed, he was startled with a huge catch of fish. There were so many fish that he called for James and John to come and help. Soon both of their boats were loaded with fish. They had to stop fishing so their boats would not sink. Peter passed the test that Jesus had given him when he obeyed His command.

WE: Do we believe the Lord Jesus knows more than we do? Will we obey His commands in the Bible even when we may think they are wrong? We must obey the words of our Lord Jesus, if we want to pass His tests. He is checking to see if He can count on us or not. Be like Peter and obey.

C. Jesus Trained His Disciples - 5:8-11

When Peter looked at all the fish that they had caught and remembered how he had thought it was a bad time to go fishing, he was convicted about his sin of doubt. He did not feel worthy to be with Jesus and told Jesus what a sinful man he was. The other men were also shocked by the great catch of fish they had just taken. Then Jesus said to Peter, "Fear not; from henceforth you shall catch men."

Through this fishing experience, these men left their fishing business and followed Jesus fulltime. Jesus began to train these four fishermen to trust and obey Him. Now they knew from experience that Jesus' commands had power, and when they would obey Him they would be rewarded by Him. Now they began to understand what Jesus meant when He had said earlier, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Mt 4:19). With this exciting experience of Jesus' power fresh in their lives, they were ready to become fishers of men.

WE: Do we want to be trained by Jesus to be fishers of children? He will train us slowly and by many experiences how He wants us to work for Him. Each time we trust and obey Him, we will be better trained. Will you let Jesus train you?

BE (for Action): Jesus wants to train you to be a fisher of children now. This will give you the training that you need to be a fisher of young people and then a fisher of adults when you become an adult. You may even be used to catch an adult for Jesus when you are a child, but that is unusual. Will you let Him train you to be a fisher? If so, you must obey Him by telling others that Jesus can save them from their sins. Tell them how Jesus saved you from your sins and has given you eternal life. Each time you do this, you will become better trained. Will you be a witness for Jesus this week? That is how you will become a fisher of men.