



# THE BIG CATCH

Young Preschool • #NT23 • May 3, 2026

## Concept

Jesus is alive!

## Goal

Children will learn that the risen Christ appeared to the disciples to give evidence that He is alive. They believed and their faith was strengthened.

## Passage

John 21:1-14

Key Verse: "... It is the Lord." John 21:7

## Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p><b>Lesson:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Enough Velcro or Gaffer's tape to form the outline of a boat to hold all the children</i></li><li>• <i>One fishing line for teacher: 18" string tied to chop sticks with horseshoe magnet tied to the other end of string</i></li><li>• <i>Five laminated fish with attached paper clips for teacher</i></li><li>• Goldfish crackers, 1 small package/CT class</li><li>• Jesus costume from storage room</li></ul> <p><b>Learning Activity #2:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Twenty laminated fish (different shapes/colors)</i></li><li>• <i>Plastic basket</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Learning Activity #1:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• "The BIG Catch" printed page, 1/child</li><li>• Markers</li><li>• Fish stickers, 10/child</li></ul>

### \*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

# Background Information/Teacher Helps

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"The manifestation of Jesus was, then, a call to a new reality. Just as He had once before given them a large catch of fish when He summoned them to become His disciples (Luke 5:1-11), so He repeated the miracle under similar circumstances. At dawn, after a night of fruitless toil, a voice hailed them from the shore: 'Boys, you haven't anything to eat, have you?' The question implied a knowledge that they had no results, and that the questioner was interested. Perhaps they thought that he was a buyer from one of the nearby cities who had come to view their catch, and they replied, 'No.' Then the voice came again: 'Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find' (John 21:6). Such procedure was unorthodox in fishing, but the men were desperate enough to try anything. When they cast the net, they were rewarded with a catch so great that they could not put it in to the boat. Instantly John grasped what had happened, as he had done when he saw the grave clothes. 'It is the Lord,' he said. This time the manifestation had not occurred in the strange surroundings of Jerusalem, under circumstances so unusual as to make them wonder whether it were all a dream or not. The risen Lord demonstrated His power in their own familiar Galilee, while they were engaged in their own occupation. There could be no doubt about the voice, nor about the fish, nor about His presence. The resurrection reality fitted into the pattern of their everyday experience.

"... The invitation of Jesus to eat was a call to the resumption of that fellowship which His death had broken. If they had previously doubted their own senses or His identity on the occasions when He appeared to them as a group, they could do so no longer, 'knowing that it was the Lord' (Jn. 21:12). Doubtless they had eaten in this fashion many times beside the lake. His return to them would renew the continuity of their life with Him; and the fact that He ate with them would strengthen the conviction that He was really before them. Peter must have been especially impressed by this, for he referred to it later in his preaching (Acts 10:41). The invitation of Jesus was designed to show that personal contact with Him was possible after the resurrection." [1]

Although this was the third appearance to the disciples, they were still in need of evidence that Jesus was alive and His promises were true. The large catch of fish reveals that it is a victorious Jesus that lives. He still is as powerful as before the crucifixion and He is still loving and concerned about meeting their needs. As the risen Lord, He is still personal.

[1] Merrill C. Tenney, *John the Gospel of Belief*, 1976, Eerdmans Publishing Co., pp. 289-290.

## Set Up

- **The week before class:**
  - Determine which teacher will tell the story (Lesson) and which teacher will be Jesus. Everyone should always read and know the lesson.
- **The day of class:**
  - Cut fish stickers apart
  - On the carpet use the Velcro to form an outline of a boat that will hold all the children. Get a tunic and head covering from the storage room for "Jesus" to wear.

## Incorporation Lg. Group

### Activity Stations:

- **Hand Activity – Little Fish [1]**
  - **Instructions:** Recite this poem with the palms of your hands pressed together to make a fish. Move your hands back and forth like a swimming fish, beginning on the second line. Open and close your hands like a mouth when the fish takes a bite. On the last line, rub your stomach.

*Little fish, little fish,  
Goes out to play,  
Wiggles his fins and swims away.  
He swims and swims in the water bright.  
Opens his mouth and takes a bite.  
Mmm, mmm, tastes good!*

[1] Jackie Silberg, Games to Play with Toddlers, © 1993 Jackie Silberg, Gryphon House, Inc., "Little Fish," p. 161.

## Introduction Lg. Group

Let's all sit down and listen so we learn something more about Jesus from the Bible. The Bible tells us that Jesus died on the cross for our bad choices and that's sad (teacher makes a sad face). Let's see your sad faces. Oh my, you can really make good sad faces! But I have good news! (The teacher makes an excited face.) Let's see your excited faces. Those are very good happy faces. Do you want to know what my exciting news is? Jesus is alive! He has risen from the dead! We know that He is alive because the Bible tells us that His friends saw Him.

## Transition

Everybody come get in this boat so I can tell you how Jesus showed His friends that He is alive.

## Lesson Lg. Group

**Instructions:** "Jesus" should dress in the tunic and head covering and stand across the room from the "boat."

Let's pretend you are with Peter in this boat. Peter and his friends were fishing and they were very sad. (Make a sad face.) They were sad because their friend Jesus was dead. As they sat there feeling sad, they didn't catch any fish.

## Lesson Continued

Suddenly, from the land they heard someone yell ("Jesus" yells from across the room), "Hey, friends do you have anything to eat?" All the friends yelled, "No." (Have the children yell.) The friends still hadn't caught many fish. The friend on the land said, "Put your poles on the right side of the boat." (Teacher should hook a fish or two from the right side of the boat.) Then all of a sudden Peter and his friends caught a lot of fish. Now all of you pretend you are fishing. Cast out your line and reel in all those fish. Oh my goodness, there are so many fish we can't get them in the boat!

Suddenly, John said to Peter and his friends. "It is the Lord!" He knew that the friend on the shore was Jesus. They got very excited and begin to row quickly to shore. Okay, children, let's pretend to row quickly. Say "row, row, row" with me so we can get to shore. This is really hard work. Whew! Here we are at shore. Let's get out of the boat to join Jesus. (Lead children over to "Jesus.")

Jesus invited His friends to sit down with Him. The friends now knew that Jesus is alive and they were very happy. Let's make a happy face.

Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment we should get for our bad choices. Jesus never made any bad choices but He was punished by God and then died for you and me. It was awful! But God made Him alive again and He showed Himself to His disciples so they would know He was alive. When John knew it was Jesus on the shore he said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Jesus helped His friends catch the fish they needed. He talked to His friends and ate with His friends. He showed His friends that He was not dead anymore, but He was alive. Then they knew that Jesus' death had paid for their bad choices and that God would never punish them. They knew that they could be friends with God and that they would live in heaven with Him after they died. The Bible says that if we tell God we believe that Jesus died for our bad choices, that He is now alive and we want His death to pay for our sins, we will be God's friends and we will live forever in heaven with Him after we die.

Let's pray. We can thank God that Jesus is alive, not dead. Let's thank Him that He took the punishment we should get.

Let's sit down and pretend we are eating with Jesus. (Sit down and pass out crackers for children to eat.) Let's make a craft to remind us that He showed His friends that Jesus is alive.

### **Craft – The Large Catch**

**Instructions:** Give each child "The BIG Catch" printed page and some fish stickers. Have them stick the fish stickers on the printed net and color the picture.

## Transition

## Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

## Transition

### Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

Now you can play a game or if you want to fish some more, you can get in the boat and see how many fish you can catch.

#### Game – Fishing [1]

**Instructions:** Put some of the colored fish shapes in the container. Allow one child at a time to pick a fish. The child will show the fish and the teacher will pretend there is a connection between the chosen fish and the instructions. Teacher will say, “Oh, you have a yellow fish/blue fish/gray whale/blue whale/happy fish.” Then give one of the following instructions for the child to perform. If you run out of instructions, make up some more.

[1] Trish Kuffner, The Preschooler’s Busy Book, © 1998 by Patricia Kuffner, Meadowbrook Press, Minnetonka, Minnesota, p. 45.

- Hop 3 times on one foot and 3 times on the other foot
- Turn around 3 times and turn the other way 3 times
- Walk backward 4 steps
- Touch your toes and then your nose
- March around 2 chairs
- Touch your knee to your nose
- Clap your hands 4 times
- Jump up and down 2 times
- Say, “Jesus is alive!,” “Jesus is alive!,” “Jesus is alive!”
- Sing “B I B L E”