



Gone Fishing

Goal: To join the disciples in celebrating the risen Jesus.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In John 21:1-14

John's Gospel begins and ends with a miracle story. In chapter 1, at the wedding at Cana, Jesus turned water into wine and provided abundantly for the wedding guests. In chapter 21, he provides abundantly for the disciples who have returned to their fishing boats. They've gone back to fishing, perhaps because they needed to eat, perhaps because it was their default activity. Whatever the case, they'd fished all night and caught nothing. When Jesus appears on the lakeshore, the reader knows it is him, but the seven disciples do not. As it dawns on them (the daybreak event may tell us something about Jesus' impact on the world) that it is the Lord, they haul in the nets and bring in 153 fish. Since the verb for *haul* is the same one used when people are drawn to Jesus, we can assume there is something about fishing for people in the subtext of this story. There is no going back to the old ways. Jesus is alive and with them, to nourish them and teach them, as he has so many times before.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Nothing in our experience tells us that people who are dead and buried come back to life. But for young children, the permanence of death may not yet be in their awareness. For all children, the amazing story of Jesus can be taken at face value—God can do what is impossible. Children know what it is like when someone they love goes away, and they understand how happy we are when that person comes back. Hearing about Peter's excitement on seeing Jesus will resonate with them.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you tell these extraordinary stories of Jesus' resurrection, and how he appeared to his disciples, use your voice, volume, and expression to regulate the reactions. When you want the children to listen carefully, speak in a lower tone, leaning forward eagerly. If you are inviting them to join in celebration, use gestures and an excited voice. It has been said that faith is caught, not taught, so let your interest and enthusiasm be contagious.

Gracious God, thank you for the surprising ways in which Jesus appears to us. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 6, 23

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack (see Exploring
choice 2)

Guided Play

choice 1: copies of **Grace Notes** (GN) 1

choice 2: net, objects
for fishing poles such as
yardstick or dowel rod

Exploring

choice 2: blanket or
sheet, several fish from
“Guided Play” choice 1,
fish-shaped crackers,
loaf of bread, juice or
water

choice 3: card-stock
copies of **GN 2**

choice 4: copies of
GN 3

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers you do not know. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about a time after Jesus had risen and he met the disciples by the sea while they were fishing. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

- 1. Coloring Fish**—Provide copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color the fish. Tell them they will hear a story about Jesus’ friends going fishing but not catching a lot of fish. Comment that perhaps they can add some of their fish to the catch! Have the children cut out their fish. Assist with cutting as needed. Set aside for “Hearing the Story” and “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2.
- 2. Fishing**—Invite the children to make a pretend boat using chairs, a rug, or an upside-down table. Provide a net and objects to be used as fishing poles. Invite the children to pretend to fish. Encourage them to talk about the experience of fishing: catching fish; the weather; the water; the sights, sounds, and smells; and so forth.
- 3. Making Breakfast**—Invite the children to play in the kitchen center and make a pretend breakfast. Encourage conversation about what they are making. Wonder what they might make and how they would make it if they made breakfast on a beach.

T Use transition cues to give plenty of warning that a change is coming. Clear, tangible signals that are obvious help alleviate tensions. Consider using countdown numbers on a whiteboard before moving to the next activity.



Transitioning to Story Time

T

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, playing and singing “Behold, I Am with You”—**MM 28; SCM 23**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Jump and Shout

M MS

Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions:

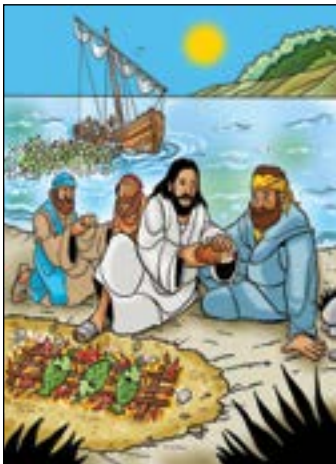
God made me to jump and shout. (*jump*) /
God made me to move about. (*wiggle hips*) /
God made me to wiggle around, (*wave arms and turn in a circle*) /
and God made me to sit right down. (*sit cross-legged on the ground or in a chair and fold hands in lap*) /

We Raise Our Arms

MS M

Invite the children to repeat after you and follow your actions:

We raise our arms (*raise arms*) /
and turn around. (*turn around*) /
We clap our hands (*clap hands*) /
and hit the ground. (*sit down*) /
We hug ourselves, (*hug self*) /
because we’re loved. (*cross hands over heart*) /
We give our thanks (*put hands together in prayer*) /
to God above. (*raise hands in air*) /



Hearing the Story

L T

Open the Bible to John 21 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about a time after Jesus had risen and he met the disciples by the sea while they were fishing.

Read **SCM 6**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

After you have read the story, gather the fish and net, if you have them from “Guided Play” choices 1 and 2, and invite the children to act out the story as you read it again. Toss the fish onto the net at the appropriate time and encourage the children to use a fish or two to “cook” on the beach.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Fishing Together



Teach the children the words to the song below using the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Invite them to add the motions suggested.

Row, row, row the boat, out upon the sea. (*pretend to row a boat*)

We hope we can catch some fish, here in Galilee. (*pretend to toss a net over the boat*)

Where, where, where's the fish, out upon the sea? (*pull up an empty net*)

Where is Jesus when you need him, here in Galilee? (*put hand over eyes and look around*)

Look, look, look out there, back upon the land. (*point off in the distance*)

There is Jesus calling for us, waving with his hand. (*wave hand*)

What, what, what is this? We have lots of fish! (*pretend to pull up a heavy net of fish*)

Jesus calls us, "Come and eat. Have some bread and fish!" (*pretend to eat*)



2. Breakfast on the Beach



Remind the children that Jesus made breakfast for his friends on the beach. Have the children help you prepare your snack together and share it like a picnic, or breakfast on the beach. If you can be outdoors, do so. Invite them to help you spread out a blanket or sheet on the ground. Have the children create a small "campfire" with sticks and red and yellow paper. Place several of the fish from "Guided Play" choice 1 on the "fire." Have children hand out napkins and cups. Invite the children to sit around the "fire."

Tell the children that, before Jesus and his friends ate together, Jesus blessed the food and gave God thanks for it. Invite the children to say a prayer with you by repeating after you as you pray:

Thank you, God, /
for the food we eat. /
Thank you, God, /
for family and friends. /



Thank you, God, /
for all the good things you give us. /
Thank you, God, /
for loving us. /
Amen. /

Break the bread and hand each child a piece to put on their napkin. Take the fish off the “fire” and pretend to cut it into pieces. Give each child some fish-shaped crackers. Pour juice or water into cups. Enjoy breakfast on your beach!

3. Watercolor Sea, Boat, and Fish

A L T FM

Remind the children that Jesus’ friends who were fishermen went back to fishing after Jesus died. While they were fishing, Jesus called to them, told them where to fish, and fed them.

Provide children with card-stock copies of **GN 2** and watercolor paint supplies. Invite them to paint the sea beneath the boat in colors of blue and green. As the sea colors are drying, have the children paint their boat, using whatever color they imagine. If their sea was particularly wet, use a hair dryer to quicken the drying time. Give the children cotton swabs and invite them to make fish in the sea with the cotton swab with little dabs of color.

Encourage the children to take home their pictures of the boat on the sea and tell the story to their families.

T *Washing hands and cleaning up can take time! Waiting in line for the sink may make some children anxious. Devise a routine for your group so they know what to expect. Use a song, movement poem, or physical activity to match the time required.*

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

4. Coloring Page

C

Hand out copies of **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did the fishermen feel after a long night of fishing with no fish to catch?”
- ▼ I wonder, “Why did Jesus make breakfast for his friends?”
- ▼ I wonder, “What were other times Jesus gave his friends food?”



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, playing and singing “Behold, I Am with You”—**MM 28; SCM 23**. Encourage the children to join in singing. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate. Ask the children to remember Jesus when they share a meal with family and friends.

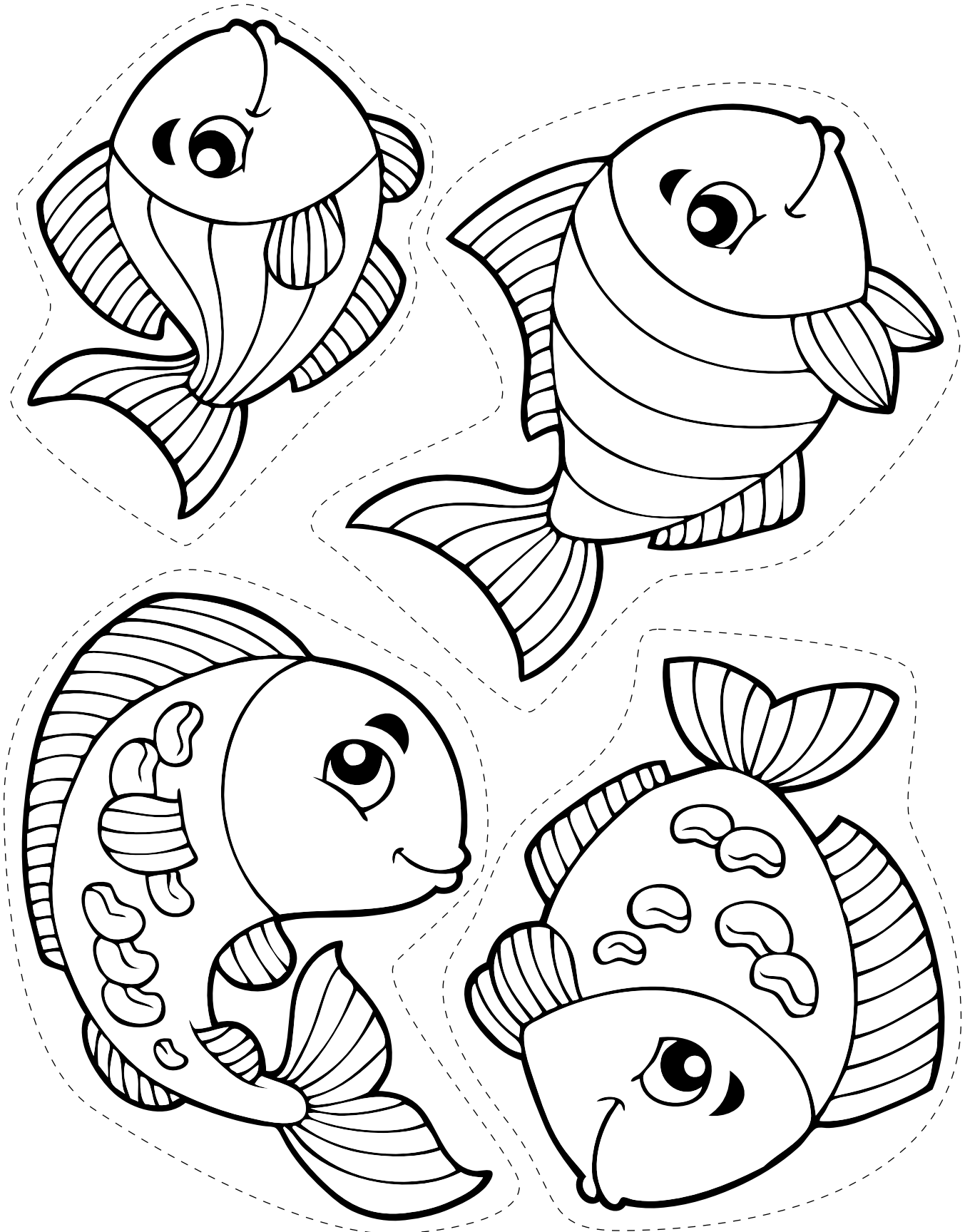
If you did not share a snack in “Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2, now would be a good time. Pray, inviting the children to repeat after you:

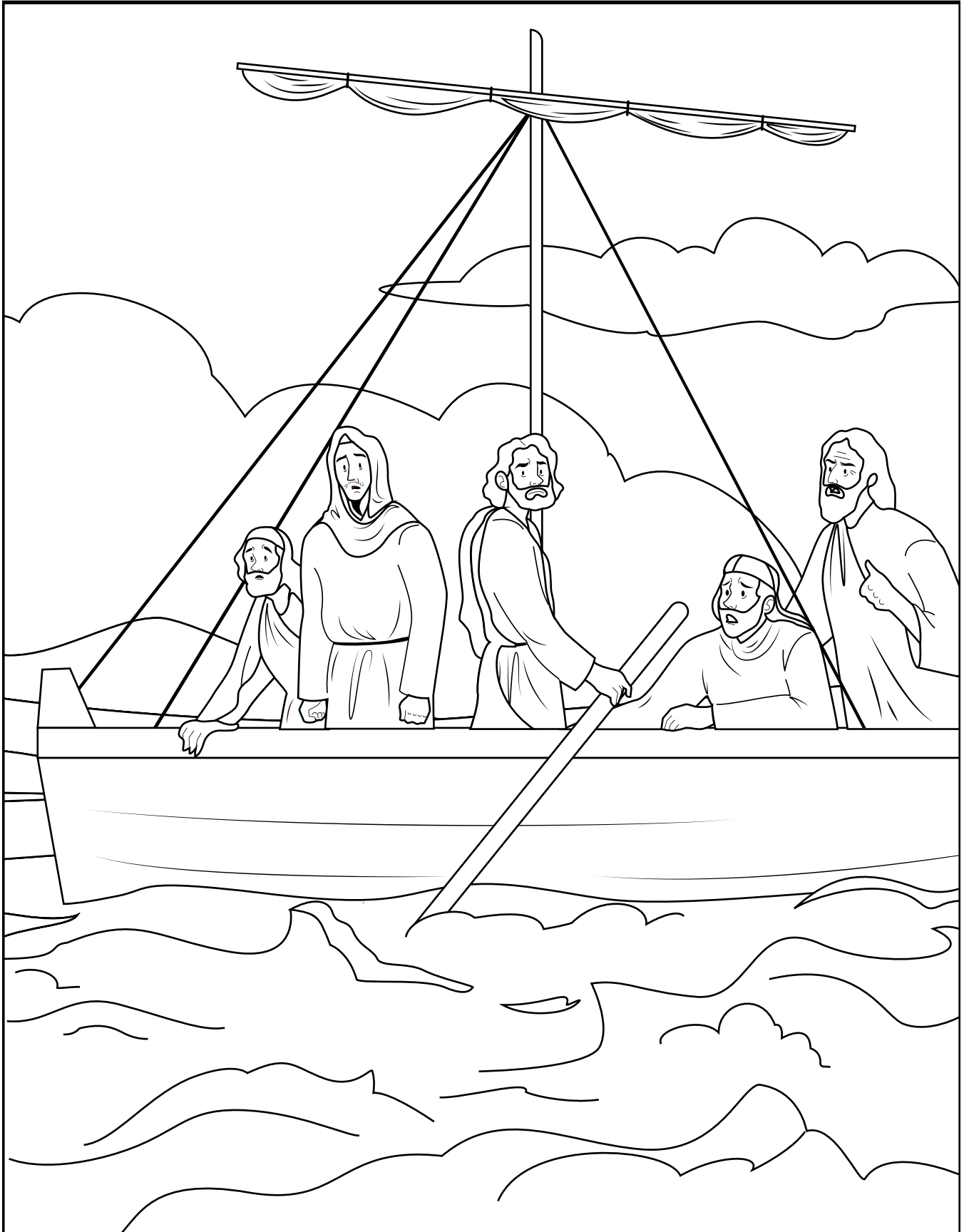


Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

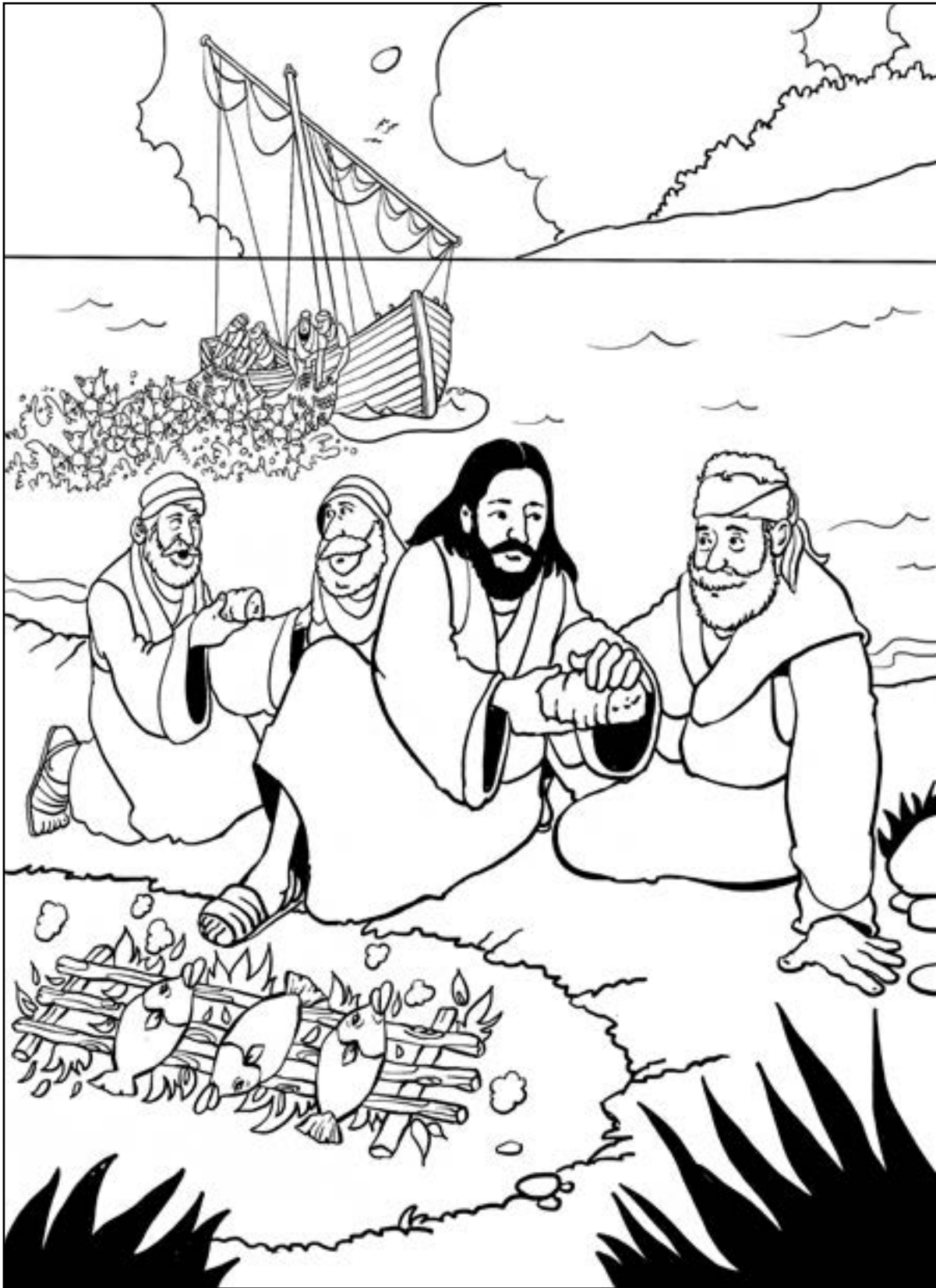
Thank you, God, /
for the food we eat. /
Thank you, God, /
for family and friends. /
Thank you, God, /
for all the good things you give us. /
Thank you, God, /
for loving us. /
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless each one by saying, “(Name), Jesus is alive and is with you always.”





Gone Fishing



**Jesus called to his friends and made them breakfast.
The disciples were happy to see Jesus alive again!**

