



# 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, 17, 22

basic supplies  
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

white cloth

net

blue cloth

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

fish-shaped crackers

bread

## Responding

### Claiming

copies of **GN 2**

### Celebrating

for each team: blanket,  
five sticks or wooden  
blocks, three red  
streamers, three yellow  
streamers, three orange  
streamers

### Praying

die

### Extra

copies of **GN 3**

## GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **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.

“Celebrating God’s Grace” and “Praying God’s Grace” require more prep.

### Welcoming and Preparing

**LG** **C**

Greet the children by name and with the words “Christ is risen!” Prompt the children to respond, “He is risen indeed!”

Invite the children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a Bible, a candle, a white cloth (white is the liturgical [church] color for Eastertide, the fifty days between Easter and Pentecost), a net, and a blue cloth.

Hand out copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color and cut out the fish, adding them to the net and blue cloth in the worship space.

Create a boat with chairs or tape off a “boat size” area on the floor where children can sit during “Hearing the Story.”

As children serve to create the worship space, talk about a time you were really excited to see someone: Who was it? Why were you so excited? How did you react when you saw them? Invite children to share as well.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities, and suggest that one or two children prepare to lead today’s singing. Invite several volunteers to practice reading today’s Scripture passage.

### Singing

Play and sing “It Is Easter”—**MM 18**; **SCM 22**.

### Praying

Turn on the candle. As you pray, invite the children to respond, “Jesus is alive!”

God, your power is great, and we are grateful.

**Jesus is alive!**

Thank you, God, that the old way of doing things is gone.

**Jesus is alive!**

Thank you, God, that you do more good than we can imagine.

**Jesus is alive!**

Thank you, God, for giving us all we could ever need.

**Jesus is alive!**

Amen.

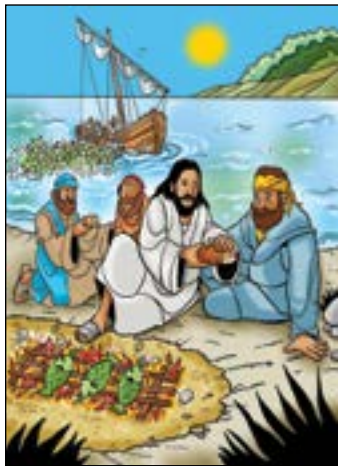


## Preparing to Hear the Story

MS

Gather children to sit in the “boat.” Invite any children who have gone fishing to share about their experience. Talk about the differences in fishing today (rods, reels, hooks, bait, and so on) and the way the disciples would have fished (nets over the side of the boat).

Offer that today’s story includes the disciples fishing together. Invite children to imagine what it would have been like to be with the disciples on a boat, fishing with a net. Ask them what they see, hear, smell, or can touch. Encourage them to hold those thoughts in their imagination as you read today’s story.



## Hearing the Story

L A B C

Invite a child to find John 21 in the Bible. Have volunteers read John 21:1–14. Place the open Bible on the worship center. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.”

Read the story again using **SCM 6** or listen to the story audio. Invite the children to act out the story, encouraging them to add dialogue and action when they feel it is needed. Pause, as necessary, for ad libbed dialogue or action.

## Reflecting on God’s Grace

FA C

Focus on the breakfast on the beach part of the story, about having fish and bread for breakfast. Prompt them to recall it and then hand out the fish-shaped crackers and bread to share as you further discuss the story.

Use the following questions for discussion:

- ▼ What do you wonder about this story?
- ▼ What did you notice about the way Peter reacted when he saw Jesus?
- ▼ When were you as excited to see someone as Peter was?
- ▼ What parts of this story made you think, “Wow!”?
- ▼ How would you have wanted to celebrate the catch of fish and Jesus’ presence?

**FA** *Some children have food allergies. Before serving children food items, check with parents and caregivers about any allergies or foods the children should not eat. Common foods or ingredients to be aware of are wheat, gluten, peanuts/tree nuts, milk/dairy products, eggs, and soy. Provide alternate activities or use options to keep children safe.*



### Singing

SD A

Give God an offering of music. Hand out rhythm instruments. Play and sing together “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”—**MM 13**; **SCM 17**—using the instruments. Turn off the candle.

**A** *Adapt activities to help children of all abilities experience God’s grace. If you think a child may struggle with an activity, ask the question, “How can I help this child be successful?”*

## RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

### Claiming God’s Grace

LD C

Proclaim who Jesus is. Provide each child with a copy of **GN 2** and colored pencils. Ask them to fill their fish with words that describe Jesus, as many words as they can think of! Play “It Is Easter”—**MM 18**—as they fill their fish with words. Then have the children cut out their fish. Ask children to recall how many fish the disciples caught after Jesus arrived on the scene. Count the words on your fish, add them up, and see how close to 153 you got as a group! It’s OK if some words are repeated by several children. Invite children to call out a few of the words they included. Place the fish among the fishing net on the worship table and offer a prayer of thanks for who Jesus is.



### Celebrating God’s Grace

MS A

Play “Breakfast on the Beach” relay game. Form teams. Provide each team with a blanket, five sticks or wooden blocks, three red streamers, three yellow streamers, and three orange streamers.

Tell the children that they will use the items to create a “campfire” on the beach, just as Jesus did when he served breakfast to the disciples. Line up the teams on one side of the room. Use the following instructions:

- ▼ The first person on the team carries one stick or block to the other side of your space to begin their fire, then comes back to high-five the next person in line.
- ▼ The children continue this process until all sticks or blocks are stacked, then streamers are placed on the sticks or blocks to make the “fire,” the blanket is placed to sit on, and a fish has been taken from the haul of fish in the worship space and placed on the fire to cook.
- ▼ When the final element has been placed—the fish—all the children on the team must sit on the blanket and say, “It is Jesus!”



- Once all fires are built and children are sitting on the blankets, invite them to tell about a time they have shared a meal to celebrate with friends or family.

**MS** *Make sure that children with mobility issues are included in all activities. Find ways to adapt activities to ensure that all are able to fully participate. For example, instead of running and moving around the room, suggest that all children form a line and pass the objects quickly down the line. The last person stacks the items. All are equally involved and important to the team's success.*



### Praying God's Grace

**C**

Ask children to recall how many fish the disciples caught once Jesus arrived on the scene. They had 153 reasons to be thankful, 153 fish to remind them of Jesus' power and miraculous presence! Offer that they will have the opportunity themselves to show gratitude and remember Jesus' goodness.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and to take turns rolling one die. Whatever number lands up (1–6) is the number of things they are invited to give thanks for as they celebrate Jesus' goodness. Once each child has had a turn to roll and to give thanks, end with this simple refrain: "Jesus is alive, and we give thanks! Amen."

#### GN 3 Solution:

B, U

### Extra Activity

**A**

Hand out copies of **GN 3** and colored pencils. Have the children imagine seeing, smelling, and feeling the 153 fish in the disciple's net. Tell the children that only two fish in the picture are alike. Challenge them to find the match then color all the fish.

## LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Encourage the children to join you in praying for opportunities to see Jesus' power and goodness wherever they go this week.

Offer this blessing over them before they leave:

Go in grace, and remember to be amazed by the goodness of Jesus who is alive. And when you see that goodness, be grateful.

If children engaged the dice prayer during "Praying God's Grace," encourage them to use a die from their home and pray that way throughout the week.

Be sure to encourage children to join you again next week.



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](http://www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads). Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).



