

Adult Teaching Resources

February 10, 2019



Epiphany (January 6-March 3) What Are We Praying For?

Psalms 71:1-24 – “A Prayer for Deliverance”

Not Your Typical Teacher

Luke 5:1-11 – “Going Deep”

Luke 6:17-26 – “Finding Joy”

Luke 6:27-38 – “Being Kind”

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FIT Teaching Guide

by David Woody

This adult teaching outline is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.

Bible Background

“When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.” Luke 5:4

Life is full of decisions. Some are easy, like deciding what to eat for lunch. Others aren't so easy, like deciding if this job offer is the right one. Maybe the most important decision we have is whether or not to follow Jesus. Fortunately, we have made that decision, and we have our own story to tell.

Today, we explore the story of the first disciples and the decision they make to follow Jesus.

Opening

To begin the lesson, ask everyone to find someone in the group they feel comfortable talking to. Once everyone is settled, ask each person to share their story of deciding to follow Jesus.

How old were you?

Who helped you along the way?

What, if anything, did you struggle with?

What specifically do you remember about the moment you decided?

Reading the Bible

Where was Jesus? (beside the lake of Gennesaret)

What did the crowd want? (to hear the word of God)

Whose boat did Jesus get in? (the one belonging to Simon)

What did Jesus do in the boat? (he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat)

What did he tell Simon? (Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch)

How did Simon respond? (Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.)

How many fish did they catch? (so many fish that their nets were beginning to break)

Reading the Bible *continued*

How did Simon Peter respond to Jesus and the catch? (he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!")

Who else was amazed at the catch of fish? (James and John, sons of Zebedee)

What did Jesus say to Simon? (Don't be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.)

Making Connections

When have you been around someone, or aware of someone, who drew a crowd wherever he or she went? Who was it? Why were others drawn to that person? How did you react around that person?

To what lengths are you willing to go to hear someone preach or teach the word of God?

Where is the most "non-traditional" location you have heard a sermon or worshipped? How does that experience compare to "traditional" worship for you?

Our Lesson Writer says, "Surprisingly, after setting up Jesus' sermon-on-the-sea, Luke tells us nothing about what he had to say, only that 'he taught the crowds from the boat.'" What do you think Jesus said to the crowd? What message do you think he needed to share? What do you think they needed to hear?

Why do you think Jesus told Peter to "launch out into the deep" and go fishing again?

Our Lesson Writer says, "the story was not about evangelism, but a challenge to faith and obedience." What is our struggle with faith and obedience? What do you need in order to be more confident with your faith? What do you need in order to be more confident with your obedience?

Share a time when you have been obedient to Jesus even when you weren't confident of the outcome. What was the situation? What ultimately happened? What did you learn about Jesus? What did you learn about yourself?

Have you ever experienced a visual sign of Jesus' actions in your life or around you? What was it? How has that experience affected you?

So What?

Ask everyone to find their partner from the beginning of the lesson. Once everyone is ready, share the words of our Lesson Writer:

“The new disciples did not respond with words, but with actions: “When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him” (v. 11). One assumes that there were other family members or hired crew who stayed behind to look after the boats, nets, and fish. For Peter and Andrew, James and John, however, their lives as fishermen were over. They left it all to enroll in Jesus’ traveling school of faith and ministry.”

Have each couple consider these questions as they share with each other.

What actions can you take to show others your obedience to Jesus?

What needs to change in your life for you to be more faithful and obedient?

How is your life a witness for Jesus?

How are you doing with your witness?

In what ways can you share your story with others so they might hear it and come to believe, like you?

The Challenge

The week, focus on one of the areas in your life of obedience and faithfulness that needs fixing, tweaking, or a total change so that your life is a witness for Christ.

Prayer

Loving God, thank you for coming into our lives and for leading us on this journey. Help us to be more faithful and obedient everyday. As the disciples followed you, step-by-step give us what we need so that we can do the same. Not for our sake, but that others might see our witness and follow, too. Amen.

Digging Deeper

by Tony Cartlege

Digging Deeper is designed to support THE BIBLE LESSON by Tony Cartlege, printed in *Nurturing Faith Journal*. Watch for the “shovel” icon in the THE BIBLE LESSON, and then reference that item in this Digging Deeper resource. You can subscribe to either the digital or print edition of *Nurturing Faith Journal* to access the lessons. Please also ensure that each person in your class has a copy of *Nurturing Faith Journal* so they can prepare before the lesson.



Not your ordinary teacher—This lesson and the three that follow are taken from the lectionary readings from gospel of Luke. In each text, Jesus’ teachings come in surprising ways, or put a new twist on traditional ideas.

Mount Precipice—Mount Precipice, a steep hill outside of Nazareth that overlooks the Jezreel Valley, is traditionally acclaimed as the place where villagers tried to throw Jesus off of a cliff. It’s not a likely location, as steep drops are also common much closer to town, but remains an impressive site.

Lake Gennesaret—The place name “Gennesaret” described an area south of Capernaum (see Matt. 14:34; Mark 6:53), and was also an alternate name for the Sea of Galilee. The Hebrew word for the sea was *Kinneret*, which means “harp,” because the shape of the lake, when seen from surrounding hills, roughly resembles an ancient harp.

The Hebrew *Kinneret* gradually morphed into the Grecized pronunciation “Gennesaret.” Luke 5:1 is the only place the term appears in the New Testament (a parallel story in Matt. 4:18 calls it the Sea of Galilee), but other ancient writers used it. The Romans knew it more commonly as the Sea of Tiberius, after the city of Tiberius (named for the Roman emperor) on its southwest coast (John 6:1).

To the right, a small boat in the northern reaches of the Sea of Galilee, near Capernaum.



Consider this—Consider using the following guide as an exercise in meditative prayer.

Close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on the grass just above the rocky shoreline of Galilee, with a breeze in your face and your eyes fastened firmly on Simon Peter’s boat. There on the bow sits Jesus, his voice rising and falling with the gentle swells that rock the boat. What word do you need to hear from Jesus today? What can you imagine him saying?

Digging Deeper *continued*



An ancient boat—In 1986, when drought caused the level of the Sea of Galilee to fall, two brothers found the hull of a first century fishing boat encased in a thick layer of mud. After years of painstaking preservation, it is now displayed in a museum built for it at Ginosar, on the northwest coast of the sea. The original hull would have been about 26 ½ feet long, 7 ½ feet wide, and about 4 ½ feet deep. Its construction reveals that it could be rowed or sailed.

The Hardest Question

by Tony Cartlege

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What kind of fish were the disciples after?

In first century Palestine, fish was more commonly eaten than any other meat, and the Sea of Galilee supported a flourishing fishing industry. Mendel Nun, who spent 60 years living in Kibbutz Ein Gev and fishing in the Sea of Galilee, wrote in *Biblical Archaeology Review* that the sea supported 18 indigenous species of fish, of which 10 were commercially useful.

The largest fish are a variety of African catfish, which can grow up to four feet in length and weigh 25 pounds. Catfish cannot be eaten by Jews, however, because they do not have scales,



violating the *kosher* rules found in Lev. 11:9-12 and Deut. 14:9-10.

One of the most common fish is known as the Kinneret sardine. Hundreds of tons of the small fish, usually four to six inches long, can be caught in a single year. In antiquity, sardines were commonly pickled or salted. The village of Migdal, the home of Mary Magdalene, was a center of the fishing industry. Archaeological excavations there have uncovered large shallow pools used for pickling the fish. Once preserved, the fish could be stored for long periods, and wouldn't spoil when packed for export.

When Jesus fed multitudes with a boy's lunch of "five loaves and two fish," the fish were likely pickled sardines.

Kinneret Sardines

On the other end of the scale, three varieties of large fish called barbels can also be caught, usually on hooks baited with sardines. Barbels, named for barbs at the corners of the mouth, belong to the carp family, and can weigh up to 15 pounds. Two of the varieties, both of which eat living prey, are popular centerpieces for Sabbath meals and other feasts.

A story in Matthew 17:24-27 says that when priests came to Capernaum to collect a temple tax (two drachmas per person), Jesus told Peter to cast a line into the sea and pull up a fish, which would have a four-drachma coin in its mouth – enough to pay the tax for Jesus and Peter. That fish would have been a barbel, because that is the only type taken with a hook.

The third primary commercial fish, and the one most pertinent to today's text, is a hand-sized panfish, the *Tilapia Galilea*, known in Hebrew as *musht* ("comb") because of its comb-like fin. Tilapia are the only large fish that run in schools in the Sea of Galilee. They are typically caught with three-layer trammel nets that are tied together and used to surround the fish and entangle them. Because the nets used in ancient times were highly visible

The Hardest Question *continued*

(unlike the nearly invisible monofilament nets used today), most fishing was done at night, when the fish could not see the net.

It was almost certainly this type of fish the disciples had been after in Luke 5: they had been fishing at night, using multiple nets. This is one of the reasons Peter was surprised by Jesus' suggestion that they go fishing again during the daytime, when the nets were visible – and another reason the catch was deemed miraculous.

Today, most commercial tilapia are raised in ponds. They are heavily marketed to tourists, fried whole and known as “St. Peter’s Fish.” The name probably came from the story about Peter catching a fish with a coin in its mouth. As noted above, that would almost certainly have been a barbel and not a tilapia, but Peter did in fact catch many tilapia in his life, and the marketing gimmick has been successful.

St. Peter’s Fish, classically served.

For more, if you have access to back issues of *Biblical Archaeology Review*, see Mendel Nun’s article, “Cast Your Net Upon the Waters: Fish and Fishermen in Jesus’ Time,” BAR 19:6 (November-December) 1993.

