

Jesus chooses
his first
disciples



Colour me!



Luke 5:1-11

Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret, teaching the people as they crowded around him to hear God's message. Near the shore he saw two boats left there by some fishermen who had gone to wash their nets. Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon and asked him to row it out a little way from the shore. Then Jesus sat down in the boat to teach the crowd.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he told Simon, "Row the boat out into the deep water and let your nets down to catch some fish." "Master," Simon answered, "we have worked hard all night long and have not caught a thing. But if you tell me to, I will let the nets down." They did it and caught so many fish that their nets began ripping apart. Then they signalled for their partners in the other boat to come and help them. The men came, and together they filled the two boats so full that they both began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this happen, he knelt down in front of Jesus and said, "Lord, don't come near me! I am a sinner." Peter and everyone with him were completely surprised at all the fish they had caught. His partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surprised too. Jesus told Simon, "Don't be afraid! From now on you will bring in people instead of fish." The men pulled their boats up on the shore. Then they left everything and went with Jesus.

Commentary

It seems that Jesus was good at noticing things. He noticed the four fishermen mending their nets, even though he was busy telling stories about God to the crowd. He noticed that they were not with the crowd and perhaps not even listening much to him. He noticed that they hadn't caught any fish, and finally he noticed their two fishing boats nearby, beached on the shore. All this gave him an idea. One boat out on the water would make an ideal stage to speak from. He could be easily seen and wouldn't be crushed by the crowd. So one of the fishermen, Simon Peter, agrees to row Jesus out and be a steady hand on the tiller so that Jesus can stand and talk to the people.

Jesus then suggests that they go fishing. Peter knows that the fish just aren't biting that day. The fishermen have tried since before dawn without success. However, out of respect for this "holy man," he agrees to try one more time. To his surprise, the resulting catch is too much for him to cope with, and his partners, James and John, have to come to the rescue. Now Jesus is speaking to Peter in a language he can really understand. If Jesus can arrange such an incredible catch, then he is certainly someone worth honouring, listening to and following. Peter's life, and the lives of his three friends, will never be the same again.

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Questions

- ▶ Have you ever been fishing or seen fishing boats on the shore by the sea? Describe the sights and smells.
- ▶ What sort of mood do you think Peter and his friends were in after their unsuccessful night on the lake?
- ▶ Why do you think Peter was prepared to lend Jesus his boat?
- ▶ What was it about Jesus that persuaded Peter to give fishing one more try that day?
- ▶ Why did Peter feel bad when he saw what happened?



Visual aid

A small model boat and some netting will help you retell the story together.



Activity idea

Research how many different types of fish are caught off the shore of your country. If you can cut out or print off some images, you might like to create your own aquarium collage of the variety of fish God has created. You could look up Psalm 104:24-25 for a good picture caption.



Prayer idea

A good catch of fish was vital for Peter and his friends, and God promises to answer our prayers for the things he knows are vital for us. Find some fish-net type material. Cut out some fish shapes from coloured cards and, on each one, write or draw a prayer to God. Put the cards in the net. Later this week, go back and take out the fish. Talk about how God has answered your family prayers and which things you still need to go on praying about.

Key verse

Simon answered, "... But if you tell me to, I will let the nets down" (Luke 5:5).

New Testament story link

Genesis 12:1-5: Abram is called to follow God and begin a new chapter in his life's story.



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