

# Answering the Call



**Theme:** Jesus calls us to follow him - 3rd Sunday after Epiphany Yr. B

**Object:** A telephone

**Scripture:** Mark 1:14-20 **Key Verses:** And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. Mark 1:17-19 (NRSV)

What do you do when there is an emergency? Let's say, for example, that someone has a serious injury or illness, and if they don't get help right away, they might die. What would you do? Right! You'd pick up the phone and call 9-1-1! (Substitute the appropriate emergency number for your area.)

When you call 9-1-1 and tell the person who answers that you need help right away, it is their job to see that you get help. That person would never say something like, "I'm sorry, we are really busy right now, maybe some other time." No way! They drop whatever they are doing and make sure that you get the help you need.

In our Bible story today, Jesus was walking along beside the sea of Galilee preaching the good news of God when he made a call for help. He saw Peter and Andrew throwing a net into the water, because they were fishermen. He called out to them, "Come, follow me and I will teach you how to fish for people." You see, Jesus wanted Peter and Andrew to help him teach people about God's love for them. When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, they didn't say, "Not right now, we are busy fishing. Maybe some other time." No way! The Bible tells us that they left their nets and followed Jesus.

Jesus, Peter, and Andrew had gone a little farther when they saw James and John sitting in a boat mending their nets. When Jesus saw them, he called to them, "Follow me." They didn't say, "Not right now, we're busy mending our nets. Perhaps some other time." No, the Bible says that they left their father sitting in the boat with the hired hands and followed Jesus.

Jesus is still calling for help today. He has called you and me to help him to bring others into God's Kingdom. Is it an emergency? It sure is! It's a matter of life and death! The Bible says, "Unless you repent, you will all perish." (Luke 13:3) Jesus has called us, what will we say? What will we do? I hope and pray that we will drop whatever we are doing and answer the call.

Heavenly Father, we want to be faithful in answering the call to discipleship. We want to fish for people — just like Peter, Andrew, James, and John. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**BIG FISH CATCH:** The teacher can have a large net hanging on the wall (any kind of mesh or netting material is fine). Children can be told to run and find some fish around a designated area (on the wall, under chairs, hanging from doors, etc) and after finding a fish, they can quickly run back to the fish NET and clip their fish onto the net with a small clothes pin, or if possible, just stick the fish into the netting and run to find more fish!

**MUSICAL FISH:** The children can form a circle and music will be played as the children quickly pass a FISH (cut out picture or a stuffed toy) around the circle. When the music stops, the child holding the FISH will leave the circle and go into a FISH TANK to the side. Continue to play until only ONE child is left as the winner of the FISH game.

**FOLLOW ME:** Children can take turns following the leader around an area that the teacher has roped

off. The bigger the area, the better for children to spread out more and have a longer line. Children can pretend to swim with their arms, etc, if desired to act like FISH as they follow.

**911 CALLING:** The teacher can tell the children to sit in a circle and one child will be a 9-1-1 caller. This will be played like the old time game of "Duck, Duck, Goose". The "caller" will walk around the circle and gently tap each head and can just say "CALLING", but when the caller says "(9-1-1-CALLING)", that child will jump up quickly and chase the original "caller" around the circle until the "caller" reaches the same place that the new runner had been sitting. If he is caught before he sits back down, then he will be the caller again but if he's able to run fast enough to find the place and sit down before being caught, then the new child will be the next one to walk around the circle. Continue to play as time allows.

**FISH TAGS:** Give children supplies to trace and cut out a large fish from heavy stock paper to decorate with glitter, sequins, markers, etc and tape or hot glue a small clothes pin to the back for children to wear. Children can write FISHING FOR MEN on their fishes to remind them of today's lesson.

**FISH SEWING:** Each child can be given 2 paper fishes to color and decorate. The teacher can have holes punched along the edges of each set of fish so after the children have colored the fish, they can use yarn to sew the two pieces of the fish picture together, using a small amount of cotton to stuff in the middle to make a rounded fish. Encourage children to write words from today's Bible lesson on their sewn fish.

**CROSS FISH:** Children can be given construction paper to tear out a CROSS and also to tear out a different colored construction paper FISH. Then write today's Bible verse or words from our prayer for today on the fish and cross and tape or glue the cross on top of the fish and hang by a string or yarn in the classroom to help children remember to FISH for MEN.

**FISH LINES:** Each child could be given a string as the fish line. Spread fish on the classroom table with a word on each fish from today's Bible verse. Children can take turns attaching one fish to their own fish line and hanging on the wall or a poster board in the correct order of today's Bible verse and let children recite the verse several times together. Then the teacher can turn a fish around so the word cannot be seen and children can recite the verse again. Continue to turn fish words around so the children will have fewer and fewer words showing and see how much of today's verse that they can learn by memory.

## Following the Leader



**Theme:** Following Jesus - 3rd Sunday after the Epiphany (Yr B)

**Object:** A Video of Disney's "Peter Pan"

**Scripture:** As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea--for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." And immediately they left their nets and followed him. Mark 1:16-18 (NRSV)

Recently I was watching the movie, "Peter Pan." Have you ever watched this movie? In the movie, the children sing a song and play a game called "Following the Leader." (Sing a bit of it, if you can.)

Following the leader, the leader, the leader

We're following the leader wherever he may go.

Have any of you ever played "Follow the Leader?" Of course you have! I played the game when I was a child, my father played the game when he was a child, his father played the game when he was a child. Follow the Leader is a game that is played and enjoyed by children all over the world.

The rules are very simple. You choose a leader and you follow him wherever he goes and do whatever he does. You stomp through puddles, climb over fences, swing from a tree—all to stay in the game because nobody wants to be "a quitter."

Follow the Leader is a great game, but in our daily lives we play follow the leader too. In school, in Church, in sports, in any activity we are in, there are always leaders. Every day we are faced with making a choice of which leader we will follow. We must be sure to choose a leader that will lead us in the right direction.

One day Jesus was walking along the sea shore. He saw two fishermen, Peter and Andrew, who were throwing their fishing nets out into the sea. Jesus called out to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." The Bible tells us that they laid down their nets and followed Jesus. Jesus went a little farther and he saw two more men, James and John sitting in their boat mending their nets. Jesus called out to them and the Bible tells us that they left their boat and followed Jesus. (vs. 19-20)

Jesus is still calling people to follow him today. He has called you and me to follow him. Now it's up to us to decide if we will follow the leader.

**FOLLOWING THE FISH PATH:** The teacher will make cutouts of footprints and create a path on the floor for the children to follow. At the end of the path, place a pan of FISH cutouts. Each child will take one of the fish and return to the work area. When children have all arrived back at the work area, they will write THEIR own name on their fish along with the sentence, "FOLLOWING JESUS, I WILL FISH FOR PEOPLE!"

**FISH DROP GAME:** The teacher will provide small fish cutouts and a fishbowl for this game. The children will kneel on a chair and attempt to drop the fish cutouts into the fishbowl placed on the floor behind the chair. After all of the children have had a chance to drop fish into the fishbowl, ask the children how many people they know who do not know Jesus and then pray together that those people will come to know Jesus!

**REFRIGERATOR MAGNET:** Each child draw a fish and color it. Write "I WILL FISH FOR PEOPLE" and glue a magnet to the back of the picture to display on the refrigerator at home.

**FOLLOW THE LEADER:** Each child will have a turn being the leader and leading their classmates in various activities of their choice. Encourage the children to use a variety of activities such as singing a song, jumping, running, crawling, or hopping. When all of the children have had a turn being the leader, have the children sit in a circle to hear more about today's lesson and pray together that they will follow Jesus like Peter, Andrew, James and John did. Children can all say together: YES LORD, I'LL FOLLOW YOU – WHEREVER YOU MAY LEAD ME. AMEN!

**FISHING NET HANGING:** The teacher will provide some mesh or a fish net for the children to hang little cutout fish in the nets. The teacher will hang one larger fish with "I WILL FOLLOW JESUS AND FISH FOR PEOPLE!" written on it.

**FOLLOW ME CHART:** The teacher will hang a poster on the wall with the words, "I WILL FOLLOW JESUS" written at the top. Have the children take turns going to the poster and say, "I will follow Jesus." They will write their name on the poster. Each child could use a different colored marker to write their name and begin writing at the end of the previous child's name so that all of the children's names will create a path around the poster.

**BIG FOOT PRAYER:** Let each child trace their own foot or another child's foot onto a piece of paper. The children will write "Jesus, you have called me, I will follow you." Let the children decorate their foot around the border with glitter glue and write their name on the BIG FOOT to take home.