

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year C – Fifth Sunday After Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Older Children**

**Scripture: Luke 5:1-11**

Epiphany: Shimmering glimpses of the abundance of the Kingdom of God. Perhaps we, too, noticed a star and followed it. Or maybe someone led us to the gift of faith. Now we take the Light — the Good News — out into the world. Will others see the light shimmering in us? Will they risk taking a journey into faith with us?

**A notation for this week's Gospel**

This week, Jesus has a boat as a pulpit. Amid the crowd are two exhausted fishermen who had worked all night long without catching anything. Casting nets, pulling in empty nets, all night long. Jesus uses these two men as his "sermon illustration." Jesus tells them to let down their nets for a catch. They muster up the courage to try yet again. They take the risk and find abundance.

**Theme: Risk seeking abundance**

**Beginning:** Ask the children if any of them have had a time when they tried and tried to do something and just could not do it; for example a really hard homework assignment, something in sports, music lessons, etc. You might begin by sharing something from your experience. Make sure you have copies of the scripture found below.

**Opening Prayer:** God, as we gather to hear and wonder about your ministry, help us to see ourselves in this story we have today. Amen.

**The Scripture. Luke 5: 1-11** Invite some children to read the parts of Narrator, Jesus, and Simon.

**Questions:**

I wonder what Jesus was teaching to those gathered? (Verse 1, the word of God.)

I wonder why Jesus wanted to speak to the crowd from a boat? (There were so many of them, that he needed to get where all could see him, and so they would not hem him in. Maybe he wanted to be closer to Simon.)

I wonder why Jesus told Simon to let down his nets for a catch? (Maybe to demonstrate what he was just teaching to the people. Maybe to make his point that there were lots of fish to be caught. Perhaps also out of compassion for Simon who had worked so hard for nothing, or as a recruitment test into his inner circle.)

I wonder what might have gone through Simon's mind when Jesus told him to let down his nets? (I just told you they are not swimming into the nets. Oh well, what's one more failure? Or maybe this Jesus knows something I don't know about fishing.)

What happened when Simon did let down his net? (So many fish got into the nets that they were about to break. He had to ask for help from his friends. It took two boats to hold all the fish.)

What was Simon's response to Jesus? (You don't want to be seen with me, I am not a good man.)

What did Jesus say about that? (Nothing. Jesus had obviously already made up his mind that he wanted Simon to work with him.)

What did Jesus say to Simon? (Verse 10b.) I wonder what that means?

What did Simon, James and John do then? (They simply left their boats right there on the shore and followed Jesus.)

**Option:** Suggest the children act out this scene in pantomime (no speaking parts), only body language and facial expressions). Ask for volunteers for Jesus, Simon, James, and John. Give them a few minutes to talk among themselves as to how they are going to do it and then present the mime.

**Option: Wondering about the story and our call**

I wonder where we are in this story?

What does it say to us about times we are discouraged about how hard things are for us?

I wonder what this can say to us about taking risks?

What does it say about hoping for things?

Are we, also, being called to "catch" people? I wonder what that might look like for us?

Ask them what they think about this statement: "You may be the only Gospel people ever see."

**Activity:** Ask the children to work on the "epiphanies" project, adding a symbol for today's story.

**Getting Closure:** Invite the children to share what they added in their epiphanies project today. If they did not have time to get to it all, you can also do some wondering with them about what epiphanies they may have had today.

**Closing Prayer:** Thank you, God, for reminding us again and again that we do not need to be afraid. Help us to do your work, as Simon did, and show us how we can "catch" people today. Amen.

## **Luke 5:1-11**

**Narrator:** Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, <sup>2</sup>he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup>He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. <sup>4</sup>When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon,

**Jesus:** ‘Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.’

**Simon:** <sup>5</sup>‘Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’

**Narrator:** <sup>6</sup>When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. <sup>7</sup>So they signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup>But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying,

**Simon:** ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’

**Narrator:** <sup>9</sup>For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; <sup>10</sup>and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon,

**Jesus:** ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’

**Narrator:** <sup>11</sup>When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

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