

Jesus Helps Catch Fish

John 21:1-14

MEMORY VERSE

JOHN 20:30-31

And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Construction paper, scissors and markers.

A table, a large sheet, and cut-out fish.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Through Christ I Can...

Play “Simon Says” with a different twist. Instead of saying “Simon Says” and giving a command, say “Through Christ.” This will remind the children that only through Christ can we do anything. As an example, have the leader say:

Through Christ I can touch my head
Through Christ I can clap three times.
I can jump on one foot.
Through Christ I can touch my ears.

If the children copy the leader when he says, “I can” they are out; if they copy Simon when he says “Through Christ” they can continue to play. Continue playing using other commands, on occasion the leader should see if they can throw of the rest of the group by giving a command without saying, “through Christ.”

Explain to the children that today they will learn that **We can do all things through Christ.**

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to see where Jesus performs a miracle for His disciples. He has risen from the dead and has only appeared to His disciples a couple of times. Through the miracle that Jesus would perform, Jesus was going to teach His disciples a valuable lesson. We will learn for our lives that **we can do all things through Christ**. We begin our story with Jesus at the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee.

JOHN 21:1-3

After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples at the Sea of Tiberias, and in this way He showed Himself:

Simon Peter, Thomas called Didymus, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples were together.

Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We are going with you also." They went out and immediately got into the boat, and that night they caught nothing.

Jesus had told the disciples to meet Him in Galilee. While they waited for His appearance, Peter decided to go fishing. The other disciples followed him. It is possible that Peter began to doubt that Jesus was going to come and he returned to what he did before he met Jesus. Peter may have thought that everything was over in the way of a ministry. But Jesus wasn't done using Peter. He certainly had other plans for him.

Peter was a natural born leader. He comes up with the idea that he was going to go back into the fishing business and the rest of the disciples thought that would be a good idea. So they all packed into a boat and went out fishing. They spend the whole night fishing and the Bible says that they caught nothing.

Have you ever tried to do anything apart from Jesus, in your own strength? So many times it turns out to be a disaster. What the disciples were learning here was very valuable. They couldn't do anything without Jesus. Jesus said in John 15, "without Me you can do nothing." How true that is. We need Jesus' help and blessing upon everything we do for it to go right. It is when we don't include Jesus, or ask Him if a decision we make is OK that we get into trouble. Well the disciples are going to learn that without Jesus we can do nothing, however **we can do all things through Christ**.

JOHN 21:4-6

But when the morning had now come, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus.

Then Jesus said to them, "Children, have you any food?" They answered Him, "No."

And He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast, and now they were not able to draw it in because of the multitude of fish.

The disciples had fished all night but had caught nothing. Jesus knew they had a need; they had no food. So Jesus met the need and told them where they could find fish. The disciples tried all night to accomplish things on their own but as soon as they had Jesus' word they had success. We too can try to accomplish things in our own power but we will never know true success until we are doing what Jesus has told us to do. **We can do all things through Christ.**

Something else that is interesting is that they were doing what they knew best, fishing. Peter had spent his entire life fishing before he came to Jesus. So he might have been considered kind of an expert. So do you think that it may have been difficult for him to take instruction from someone when he is an expert? Sometimes our pride gets in the way of the things God wants to do in our lives. But for us to really learn valuable spiritual lessons we find that often they come mixed with humility.

Peter found that there were so many fish that the net couldn't even hold them all. Jesus provided for all of his needs. Jesus was communicating to Peter that he didn't need to go back to fishing as his occupation. He was going to provide for him. As we will see later, God had other plans for Peter's life. God has a plan for our lives as well. We can trust Him to provide everything we need.

JOHN 21:7-8

Therefore that disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" Now when Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment (for he had removed it), and plunged into the sea.

But the other disciples came in the little boat (for they were not far from land, but about two hundred cubits), dragging the net with fish.

John is known as “the disciple whom Jesus loved.” And he was the first to recognize Jesus. He got excited and yelled out, “It is the Lord!” Now Peter got even more excited and jumped in the water. Peter seemed to like to jump in the water whenever he saw Jesus. Remember when he jumped in the water when he saw Jesus walking on the water?

Peter loved Jesus very much and couldn't wait to be able to spend time with Him. The others followed in the boat bringing the fish with them. **We can do all things through Christ.**

JOHN 21:9-11

Then, as soon as they had come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish which you have just caught."

Simon Peter went up and dragged the net to land, full of large fish, one hundred and fifty-three; and although there were so many, the net was not broken.

While in the boat, the disciples could not draw in the net because it was so heavy, but when Jesus commanded Peter to bring the fish he was able to drag it to land by himself. When Jesus tells us to do something, He gives us the power to do it, even though it may seem impossible. **We can do all things through Christ.**

So-o-o-o-o-o Many Fish

Have your class cut out as many fish shapes from construction paper as they can in an allotted time (2 – 3 minutes) Have the fish all be the same size to be fair. When they are done, have them count up as many as they've cut. Compare the number with the number of fish in today's story.

Let the children take home a few fish each to be used as book marks to remind them of today's lesson. They may want to write on each fish: **We can do all things through Christ.**

JOHN 21:12-14

Jesus said to them, "Come and eat breakfast." Yet none of the disciples dared ask Him, "Who are You?"--knowing that it was the Lord.

Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and likewise the fish.

This is now the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Jesus showed His acceptance of the disciples, despite their lack of faith, by asking them to eat with Him. This showed that they were still a part of Him and His ministry. The disciples realized their mistake in doubting that Jesus would come and did not ask Him who He was. This was the third time the disciples saw Jesus alive after He was buried and came back to life.

Isn't it wonderful to still see the servant's heart of Jesus? He served the disciples breakfast. He cooked it and ministered to them. Jesus had risen from the dead. He is God in the flesh. If anyone could demand being served it is certainly Jesus, yet He has the humble heart of a servant. How we can learn from His example!

We need to trust God's word and know that what He says is going to happen will. We also need to be confident that when Jesus tells us to do something, He will equip us to do it. **We can do all things through Christ.**

All Things Through Christ

Turn your classroom table upside down or make an outline on the floor with masking tape for a boat. Pretend that it is in the Sea of Galilee. Have your children crowd onto the boat and cast a net, you can use a sheet or a large towel, on one side of the "boat." Have them cast the net on the other side and add all of the fish that they made in the "So Many Fish" activity.

Retell the story as the children act it out.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to trust in the Lord completely and to always include the Lord in everything they do. If there is any child who has not responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.