Summary of Today’s Story
The disciples decide to go fishing, to carry on with their daily work. But after fishing all night, they catch nothing. Someone on the shore tells them where to cast their nets, and their nets are full. Peter recognizes his Lord and jumps into the sea to meet Jesus.

On the shore, Jesus shares breakfast with his friends.

When Jesus and Peter sit down to talk, Jesus asks Peter three times, “Do you love me?” Peter answers three times, “Yes, Lord, I love you.” Jesus then tells him, “Feed my sheep.”

Where You’ll Find Today’s Story
In the Bible
We recommend the New Revised Standard Version Bible.
John 21:1-19

In Children’s Bibles
If you plan to use a children’s Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today’s story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary
Today’s story is told in church on the following Sunday:
Years A, B, C: Friday of Easter Week
June 29, St. Peter and St. Paul (RCL)
Year C: Third Sunday of Easter

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Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

The men have gone back to their daily life and work as it was before they had met and been so changed by Jesus. Life is once again the same...or is it?

It makes sense that their lives should continue as before, at least on the outside. God means for us to be part of the world. Christ means to work in us as we live our normal everyday lives. He did not expect that we should stay “on the mountaintop” with him always.

And what does Jesus say to his friends? He tells them how to catch fish! At first, they do not know who this man is, for they—like us—often do not expect to see God in everyday activities and frustrations. But that is where he waits for us.

The Episcopal Thread

Anglicanism is an incarnate faith. That is, Anglicans believe God is present in all things and in our daily life and time. This is a legacy of our Celtic Christian heritage, which honored God in everyday life and work, and in even the littlest parts of our life. Like our Celtic forbears, we see God not just in worship but also in daily life and even in very ordinary chores.

Anglicanism is also a very practical faith. It is not enough just to believe; it is essential that we put our belief into action. It is not enough just to say “I love you, Jesus.” That love must be translated into action: “And because I love you, I will feed your sheep.” Thus, Episcopalians tend to have a deep commitment to outreach and social justice—to helping the poor, to feeding God’s sheep wherever they are and whatever their need.
Gathering
As the children enter the room, greet them and engage them in a simple activity that relates to today’s lesson. A coloring page, a puzzle sheet, or simple biblical maze are good quiet activities.

For a simple craft that can be used during storytelling time, have children make puppets of Jesus and the disciples. See page 9 at the end of this lesson for instructions.

On page 10 there are pictures of Jesus, the disciples, the boat, and the net of fish, which children can color and cut out. At the storytelling time, they can then use these pictures to act out the scenes while you tell the story.

Older children will appreciate a brief period for visiting with each other before the lesson begins.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer. Choose a prayer from the Prayer Book, say your own prayer, or pray the following:

- Lord God, we give you thanks for your church, and for the time that we have together in your church. We ask you to bless us as we learn your story, and to take care of those of us who are not here today. Help us to learn more of your love for us, and to see our love for each other today. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord.

  *Amen.*

Telling the Story
Read today’s story aloud from a children’s Bible, showing the pictures, or tell the story in your own words. You may use dramatic motions or voice inflections to bring out the intensity of these meetings with Jesus. Notice the excitement of Peter, and also his great humility and the poignancy of his talk with Jesus.

If children made puppets or cut out story figures during the gathering time, have them dramatize the story themselves while you tell it.

Let the children hear the story without analyzing it for them or discussing it. For now, simply let the story sink into their minds and hearts. Later, while having snacks, you can bring up the story again and invite the children to talk about it and explore its message.
Prayer
Set up a small worship center in your room.

Materials:
- small table with a cloth to cover it
- 2 candles or a single large Christ candle
- matches
- Bible
- cross
- optional: flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles. Read a verse from today’s scripture from a Bible so that the children connect the story they heard with the Bible, which is the word of God. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the reading:
- For younger children: John 21:12-13
- For older children: John 20:12-14

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:

Reader: A reading from the book of John: (Read the selected passage.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Reader: The word of the Lord.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself then invite prayers from each child in the circle:
- Invite prayers of thanks to God for what God has done for us during the past week. They may include thanks for the beauty of nature, for guiding us in our family and friendships, for giving us the gifts of skills and abilities newly learned.
- Ask children if they have any prayers asking for God’s help in their lives or others’ lives.
- Recognize any birthdays or other special occasions, thanking God for the opportunity to celebrate these occasions with our church family.
- End by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

Carefully extinguish the candles.

Sharing
Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as this adaption of the traditional Jewish blessing that the disciples would probably have prayed at the meal they were sharing:
- Blessed are you, O Lord God, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth. Amen.

This is an excellent time, while sharing a snack, to begin talking about the story that the children have just heard. Share your reactions and feelings about the story:
- Review what the disciples were doing at the beginning of the story and Peter’s part in the story.
- Remember the lesson from a few weeks ago when Peter had denied his Lord three times before the crucifixion, and that he was ashamed of his own lack of courage in facing Jesus’ accusers.
- Why do you think Jesus repeatedly asks Peter if Peter loves him?
- What might Jesus mean when he says, “Feed my sheep”?
- How can we do the same as Peter? If we love Jesus, how will we show it?

**Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.**

After Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today’s story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so that they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson on pages 8-25.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 3-6 in the Appendix (also downloadable) where we’ve provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.
Memorization

There is no biblical passage to memorize for this lesson.

Weaving the Family of God

As your time together draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:
- Who did Jesus meet in today’s story?
- What did the disciples do when they saw Jesus?
- What did Jesus and the disciples do together?
- What did Jesus and Peter say to each other?

Encourage the children to remember key *family of God* ideas and words from the story, such as: *love, believe, “feed my sheep.”*

Closing Prayer

Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God’s love and blessing. The prayer can be very simple, such as this one:

Loving God, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ, who came to live with us here on earth and teach us how to love you and to love each other. We thank you for Peter, Jesus’ friend, who learned a hard lesson about loving Jesus. Send us now back to our families to spread that love to our parents, our brothers and sisters, and everyone we know and see. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

End with a dismissal used in church, such as:
- Let us go forth into the world, rejoicing in the power of the Spirit.

The children respond:
- Thanks be to God!
Fishing Scene
for Preschool

Children make a picture of the disciples catching fish.

Materials:
- netting (from fabric stores)
- scissors
- fish-shaped snack crackers
- blue construction paper
- crayons
- glue
- stapler
- boat picture (p. 8)

Preparation:
Make a copy of the boat picture for each child. Cut off the bottom identifying text.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a fishing scene as follows:

1. Color the boat picture. Glue this picture onto a sheet of blue paper.
2. Cut a small piece of netting around 5”-6” in diameter. It can also be cut square.
3. Place a few goldfish crackers in the center of the netting. Gather it up and staple the ends to the picture, next to the boat.
STICK PUPPETS
for Preschool, Primary

Children make stick puppets of Jesus, the disciples, their boat and fish to use during storytelling time.

Materials:
- puppet pictures (p. 10)
- craft sticks
- glue or tape
- scissors
- crayons

Preparation:
Make a copy of the puppet pictures for each child, preferably on card stock or other heavy paper.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a set of puppets as follows:
1. Color the pictures and cut them out.
2. Glue the pictures to craft sticks.

Variation:
Copy the figures onto card stock paper and glue magnets to the back, or use as-is in the storytelling.
Children make a paper fish from a paper plate and decorate it.

Materials:
- white crimped paper plate
- scissors
- markers
- glitter or glitter glue
- googly eyes
- stapler

Directions:
Invite each child to make a as follows:

1. Cut a triangle out of the paper plate, around \( \frac{1}{5} \) of the plate. An adult will need to do this for the children.
2. Help children staple the triangle to the other end of the plate, making the fish's tail.
3. Show the children where to glue a googly eye to the fish, above the “mouth” formed by the cut-out piece.
4. Use markers to color the fish.
5. Use glitter or glitter glue to make beautiful “scales” on the fish.
FISH WREATH
for Preschool, Primary

Children make a wreath out of fish shapes and a paper plate.

Materials:
- fish pattern (p. 13 page)
- various colors of foam sheets or posterboard for the fish (foam will look more realistic, especially if you use gray foam)
- 9” Styrofoam® paper plate
- thin blue ribbon
- blue pipe cleaner
- glue
- scissors
- hole punch

Preparation:
Make a copy of the fish pattern and trace the pattern onto the foam sheets or posterboard. Make enough fish for at least 10 fish for each child. You will probably need to cut out the fish yourself, as young children will not have the attention span to cut out so many patterns.

Cut the center out of the paper plates and punch a hole at the top and bottom of the plate.

Directions:
1. Give each child a cut-out paper plate and some “fish.”

2. Have the children glue the fish onto the wreath plate base, being careful not to cover up the holes.

3. Twist a pipe cleaner through the top hole for hanging the wreath.

4. Take two more fish and punch a hole on the top of each fish. On one fish, write the child’s name. On the other fish, write Caught by Jesus.

5. Thread some ribbon through the hole of one fish, then through the hole at the bottom of the wreath, then tie a knot. Do the same with the other fish, using a different length of thread.
Children play a game like “Red Light, Green Light.”

**Materials:**

*optional:* fish-shaped snack crackers for prizes

**Directions:**

1. Choose one child to be *Jesus*. *Jesus* stands at one end of the room facing the wall, with a package of fish crackers.

2. At the other end of the room at a starting line, the other children lie on their bellies with their hands and arms holding up their head and shoulders, like the beginning of a pushup.

3. When *Jesus* yells “Red Fish!” children can use their hands only, to “swim” like a fish towards *Jesus*. They cannot use their feet!

4. When *Jesus* yells “Green Fish!” and turns around, the children must all stop moving.

5. When a child reaches *Jesus*, *Jesus* will give them a few fish crackers for a prize.

6. Play this until all children have reached *Jesus*. Then pick another child to be *Jesus*. This can be the first child to reach the first *Jesus*, or the last child, or a random choice. Let all children have a chance to be *Jesus*. 
FISH BREAD
for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children make “fish” from bread dough and remember that Jesus feeds us, too! This bread is slightly sweet.

**Materials:**
- 1½ cup whole wheat flour
- ½ cup white flour
- extra flour for flouring the kneading and shaping area
- 1-5 shakes of salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- extra flour
- 4 tablespoon honey
- 1½ tablespoons oil
- ½ cup milk
- ¼ cup water

**Preparation:**
To allow everyone a chance to make the dough, pre-measure the ingredients and put them in separate jars or containers, including the water. The flour can be divided into several containers. Label the containers. Then you can give each child a container of an ingredient to add at the proper time.

Have a piece of paper to “map” the locations of each child’s “fish” on the baking sheets.

**Directions:**
Invite each child make a fish-shaped bread as follows:

1. Mix together the dry ingredients. Add the wet ingredients (honey, oil, milk and water). Stir until dough sticks together.

2. Give each child a glob of dough to knead on a floured board 8-10 times. Add extra flour if necessary.

3. Pat the dough down to ¼”-½” thick. Form into the shape of a fish. Score top with a knife, making a cross or fish symbol if you wish.

4. Put on a baking sheet. Make sure that you draw a “map” identifying which “fish” is whose.

5. Bake approximately 15 minutes at 350 degrees.
DISCIPLES AND THEIR BOAT
for Primary

Children make a picture with movable figures of Jesus and the disciples in a boat.

Materials:
craft sticks, 12 per child
boat shape (p. 17)
blue construction paper (9” x 12”)
thin markers
glue
brown, yellow and white construction paper
straws or coffee stirrers
glue
transparent tape

Preparation:
Make a copy of the boat shape for each child.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a picture as follows:

1. Cut out the boat shape and use it to outline a boat shape on brown construction paper. If you wish, decorate this boat.

2. Glue this boat to the center of the blue paper, leaving the top edge unglued and with some space above it for a sail. (Glue only the bottom and sides of the boat to the paper.)

3. Cut a triangle or square sail from the white paper. Tape this to a straw or coffee stirrer. Then glue this to the paper, inside the boat.

4. Draw faces on all of the craft sticks. You may also add clothes, etc. Eleven sticks will be the disciples (Judas is not in this picture), and the 12th will be Jesus.

5. Cut out a tiny circle from the yellow paper. Glue this behind Jesus’s head, for a halo.

6. Put Jesus and the disciples into the boat.
Children use 3-D effects to make a picture of Jesus’ and the disciples’ beach breakfast.

**Materials:**
- Jesus-at-shore picture (p. 19)
- fish-shaped snack crackers
- thin netting (from fabric stores)
- red, orange and yellow tissue paper
- cornmeal
- liquid glue in a paper cup, mixed with a little water
- paintbrushes
- box or box lid, for capturing excess cornmeal
- scissors
- markers or crayons
- stapler

**Preparation:**
Make a copy of the Jesus-at-shore picture for each child. Cut off the identifying text.

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a picture as follows:

1. Color the picture.

2. With a paintbrush, lightly spread some glue on the “ground” of the picture. Pour some cornmeal onto the glue. Let dry for a few minutes while you work on the other parts of the picture.

3. Cut into small pieces (around 2” square) some red, yellow and orange tissue paper. Pinch the pieces together in the center and staple together at the crimped bottom part.

4. Empty excess cornmeal into a box or box lid.

5. Glue the tissue “fire” to the picture where the fire is.

6. Cut a piece of netting around 5” round, or make a rectangle around 3” x 6”. Place a few goldfish crackers in the center and gather the ends together (if a circle) or fold it over (if a rectangle). Staple this net full of fish to the picture.
FISHING BOAT MOBILE
for Elementary, Intermediate

Children use paints and foam sheets to make a mobile of a fishing boat.

Materials:
plain white paper plates, 1 per child
gray foam sheets (or posterboard)
brown foam sheets or poster board
string
hole punch
glue or stapler
optional: markers or acrylic paints and thin paintbrushes
blue acrylic paint or spray paint

Preparation:
Paint both sides of the plates blue. Older children may do this themselves.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a mobile as follows:

1. Cut out five or more fish shapes from the gray foam or posterboard. Decorate the fish with fins and eyes, etc. if desired, with paint or markers.

2. Cut out two identical boat shapes from the brown foam or posterboard. The boat should be almost as long as the diameter of the plate. Decorate the sides of the boat if desired with paint or markers.

3. Punch holes at various places in the plate, for hanging the fish. Punch a hole in the mouth of each fish.

4. Cut a length of string for each fish. Thread string though the fish and then through the hole in the plate, then tie a knot. Fish can hang from 2"-6" from the bottom of the plate.

5. Glue the two sides of the boat together at the bottom and sides, or staple them if necessary. Then glue the boat to the top of the plate so that it sits upright.

6. Punch two holes at opposite ends of the plate. Thread a long piece of string through each hole and knot, for hanging.
Tic Tac Fish
for Elementary, Intermediate

Children play a game just like tic-tac-toe, except that the pieces look like bread and fish, which makes it special!

Materials:
- masking tape
- large construction paper, gray and brown
- scissors

Directions:
1. Tape the floor to make nine squares, in a classic tic-tac-toe pattern. Make sure that the squares will be large enough to fit the fish and bread playing pieces.

2. Cut out several bread shapes and several fish shapes from the construction paper. For a fun idea, make stuffed paper fish and bread by stapling to identical pieces together with newspaper stuffed inside.

3. Divide the children into two teams and have the teams decide where to put their pieces. The goal is to line up three fish or three pieces of bread vertically, horizontally or diagonally.
OUTREACH:
A GIFT FOR OUR ELDERLY FRIENDS
for Elementary, Intermediate

Children assemble fish snacks to share with others in the congregation and community.

**Materials:**
- fish-shaped snack crackers
- gummy fish
- thin netting in various colors
- thin blue ribbon
- paper
- markers

**Preparation:**
Make arrangements with your church’s pastoral care team to distribute the gifts to elderly friends in your church and community.

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a gift as follows:

1. Cut a piece of netting around 9”-12” around.
2. Place the crackers or gummy fish—or both—in the center of the netting.
3. On a piece of paper, write a personal greeting. In addition, write
   “Jesus said, “Follow me and I will make your Fish for People.”
4. Gather up the netting and tie with thin ribbon.
CONVERSATION JUMP START:

“What Kind of Food Do Your Sheep Eat, Lord?”

for Intermediate

Children act out and respond to difficult situations they may encounter in everyday life.

Materials:
“What Kind of Food Do Your Sheep Eat, Lord?” sheet, 1 copy per child (pp. 24-25)

Conversation Jump Start:
Read the following aloud to the group:

Jesus said to Peter, “Feed my sheep.”

We are to care for God’s people not only by feeding them physical food but also by feeding them love and compassion. Sometimes that gets hard.

We will take turns reading the three situations aloud, then acting them out. Later, we will discuss our responses.

Note: If you have time, take turns acting out the different parts, so that everybody has experienced all sides of these issues.
WHAT KIND OF FOOD
DO YOUR SHEEP EAT, LORD?

Friends Forever?
Heather and Brittany had been best friends forever. When Jessica joined their class, both girls became friends with her. But in a couple of weeks, Jessica had turned Heather against Brittany, leaving Brittany alone at lunch, recess, and after school. Brittany feels hurt by Heather, and now she hates Jessica for stealing her best friend.

Now Brittany is paired with Jessica on a school project. Act out a scene in which Brittany tries to put aside her hatred of Jessica and show her love, even after what Jessica has done to her.

Rich and Poor
Mark comes from a big family, and they don’t have much money, so most of his clothes are hand-me-downs or from used clothes stores. Steve always wears new and expensive clothes and makes fun of Mark because of the way he dresses. Mark hates being teased by Steve and once thought about punching him out. But one day in church, he heard a sermon that talked to him about “loving our enemy.” And he wants to do that.

Now Steve is teasing Mark again. Act out a scene with Mark trying to treat Steve with love and kindness and forgiveness instead of with anger and threat of violence.
Helping Hand
Kaitlyn is such a pain in class! She copies answers from other kid’s work, steals pens and pencils out of desks, and gets other kids in trouble for things she has done. But now Kaitlyn’s mom and Josh’s mom have just become friends. Josh’s mom invited Kaitlyn and her mom to come to church this Sunday, and has asked Josh to help Kaitlyn feel welcome in church.

Now Josh and Kaitlyn are in the Church School class and Josh is going to try to be friendly and kind to Kaitlyn.

Act out this scene.