



**Educate
+ Engage**



OUR MISSION
IS FISHING



Reel wisdom:
principles of connecting

OVERVIEW

Jesus called Peter and Andrew to follow Him in Matthew 4. Since they were fishermen, Jesus related their life's purpose to their trade. He told them that as they followed Him, He would make them fishers of men. We have been made on purpose and with a purpose, which is to win souls and make disciples. In this series we learn how to be fishers of people.

This lesson focuses on informing students how to effectively connect with others around them with the intention of leading them to Jesus.

Scripture Passage

Matthew 4:18–20 (NKJV)

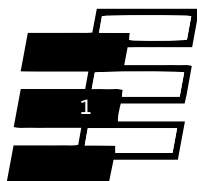
And Jesus, walking by the Sea of Galilee, saw two brothers, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishermen. Then He said to them, "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." They immediately left their nets and followed Him.

EDUCATE

How has prayer for your friends been this past week? Isn't it amazing how much of a burden we have when we are intentional about realizing the needs all around us? Each of us was made on purpose and with a purpose. Your call to follow God is inseparably connected to the call to go and lead others to follow God.

We can have the desire to bring people to Jesus, but we have to understand how to effectively reach them. This week we are going to explore some "reel wisdom." We are going to learn some principles of connecting to others with the intention of leading them to a saving relationship with Jesus Christ and developing them into fully devoted followers of Him.

Point 1: In the previous lesson we briefly discussed the adage that people do not care how much you know until they know how much you care. We intentionally show the love of God to others. People will be drawn to you or away from you by the way you treat them and others. A solid relationship will open the door to sharing key doctrines like the power of the Holy Spirit. The initial sign that we are filled with the Spirit of God is that we will speak in an unlearned language as God gives us the ability to speak the words.



The continual sign that we are filled with His Spirit is that we have the fruit of the Spirit. According to Matthew 7:15–20, people will recognize us by our fruit, whether good or bad. We must ensure we are recognized by the godly love we have for others. Think for a moment about how you can better show the love of God. We must daily allow His Word to make us better and better. We must desire to show His love more and more. Our mission is fishin', and we can effectively be fishers of people by showing others the love of God.

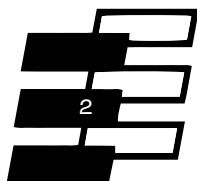
Discussion Question: In what practical ways can you show someone the love of God this week?

Point 2: We must meet people at the point of their needs. Have you ever seen a fisherman catch fish in the sand in the Sahara Desert? Have you ever seen someone with a fishing reel at the top of a skyscraper? No way! If we are going to catch fish, we have to meet people where they are. People might not step foot into a church service until you have a conversation with them in the cafeteria. People might not attend a youth service until you first pray with them at the local coffee shop.

If we are going to be successful fishermen, we must go where the fish are; we can't expect them to approach us first. A good principle to remember is: "Before you can lead people to holy ground, you must first meet them on common ground." We shouldn't immediately start in the Book of Revelation. Focus first on relationship. Some might start a friendship over sports. We may relate to others because we like the same kind of food. We can begin with a mutual connection and allow God to use that to eventually lead to conversations about Him. When asking someone if they would like a Bible study, we need to remember to be sensitive and non-confrontational while still being bold. How can you meet someone on common ground? "Fish" are all around and we must meet them at the water. We follow God and go. Our mission is fishin'!

Discussion Question: What do you think of when you think about teaching a friend a Bible study?

Point 3: When we are fishing, it is important to have the right equipment. We don't take a knife to the water and frantically stab away, hoping to catch and clean a fish; we take a fishing rod and reel. This fishing pole allows us the ability to connect and catch the fish. The Word of God and the truths it contains are what will ultimately change people's lives. When "fishing," we don't have to immediately rush people to salvation. Meet them where they are, not just relationally, but where they are spiritually. We don't wield the Bible as a weapon but as a tool. If someone believes differently than the Bible, find a point of agreement and start from there. For instance,



if an atheist and you form a connection, start with the mutual agreement that people should do good and treat others well. From there you can define good by discussing a moral, loving, and just God who commands us to do good and love others.

For someone who believes in God but doesn't understand John 3, Acts 2, and other Bible passages about new birth salvation, you can start with the mutual agreement that God exists. Once they realize you aren't attacking them and you agree with them in certain areas, they will be more open-minded to hear other truths from the Word of God. People will let down their defenses when you are willing to highlight things you both agree on and build from there. Fish don't like hooks, but they do like the bait on the hooks. Practice meeting people at the point of their needs. Get with a friend and have a mock conversation that leads to Jesus.

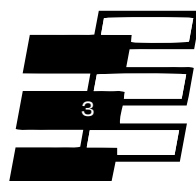
Discussion Question: How can you find common ground with someone you are reaching?

Closing

We must be known by our love for others. The greatest commandment is to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind. The second greatest command is to love others as ourselves. Our mission is fishin', and we must love people enough to share the hope we have in Jesus. We should love others enough to have a gracious yet truthful conversation with them. We should love others enough to actively lead them to a saving relationship with Jesus.

Our love for others should motivate us to meet them where they are. We don't use the Bible as a weapon but as a tool to lead others to Him. We relationally and spiritually meet them at the point of their needs. Instead of rushing them straight to new birth salvation, begin with getting them to understand that God loves them. Rather than starting with holiness, begin by living in a way that does not cause condemnation.

Build connections by affirming mutually agreed points, and use God's Word to declare truth. We must love people enough to not leave them where they are but to guide them to Jesus.



ENGAGE

Remember the person whose name you wrote down last week? Pray for them specifically:

1. That they and others feel the love of God in every interaction with you
2. That you are diligent and discerning to meet people at the point of their needs
3. That as you present the Word of God, their hearts and minds will be open to receive its truths

Every day this week look at that name or names you wrote down. Pray daily for them, and at least one time this week have a meaningful connection with them. Let's go fulfill our mission. It's time to go fishin'!

