

Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

The Kingdom of Heaven Is at Hand

Focus: To welcome the call to new life.

Catechist's Context

Jesus invited Simon and Andrew to catch people instead of fish. The work of bringing people into the net of Christ's love and care is not yet complete. We share in this work by virtue of our Baptism. What stories and experiences about Jesus can we share to attract new followers?

Focus on Church Teaching

God comes to us in many ways. God meets us in the world, in other humans, through revelation, and through grace (CCC, 31–38, 1996–2005). Grace is God's love, freely given to us in our daily lives. It is assistance we cannot deserve. Through it, we participate in the life of God. When we are grateful for God's blessings, it is a sure sign of God's grace (CCC, 1996–97).



Liturgical Calendar Connection

Help the children find today's date on the liturgical calendar. Point out what feast days are coming up this week. As a group, choose one saint to read more about (see pages vi–viii for more information about the saints). In what ways did this saint proclaim the coming of God's Kingdom?

Sign of the Cross

All stand and make the Sign of the Cross.

**In the name of the Father, and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.**

Gospel Acclamation

See Mark 1:15

Alleluia, alleluia.

The kingdom of God is near:
repent and believe the good news!

Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel

Mark 1:14–20

Refer to page xi for citations to the standard Lectionary.

A reading from the holy Gospel according to Mark.

After John was arrested, Jesus went to Galilee and told the good news that comes from God. He said, "The time has come! God's kingdom will soon be here. Turn back to God and believe the good news!"

As Jesus was walking along the shore of Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew. They were fishermen and were casting their nets into the lake. Jesus said to them, "Come with me! I will teach you how to bring in people instead of fish." Right then the two brothers dropped their nets and went with him.

Jesus walked on and soon saw James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in a boat, mend-

ing their nets. At once Jesus asked them to come with him. They left their father in the boat along with the hired workers and went with him.

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Gospel Reflection

Jesus' Call to New Life

In today's Gospel, two brothers, Simon and Andrew (the same men we heard about last week), were fishing. This was their job, and they were working when Jesus was walking on the shore. Jesus called to them in their boats. They heard him say something very unusual. Jesus asked Andrew and Simon to come with him. He promised to teach them how to fish for people instead of fish!

☉ What did Jesus mean? How could these fishermen catch people?

To catch fish, fishermen needed boats and rods and hooks and nets. They didn't need any of those things to catch people.

☉ What do you think they needed?

They needed to follow Jesus, to act as he did toward the poor and sick and hungry. They needed to tell people about the Word of God. They would not be using their own tools but God's tools: God's Word, God's care, and God's love. Simon and Andrew heard Jesus' call to a new life, a new way

of living. They weren't going to be fishermen but fishers of men. So Simon and Andrew left their boats and followed Jesus. They knew it wouldn't be easy, catching people. It was hard work just to catch fish. It would be much harder to catch people! But they knew God would be helping them. They knew Jesus would be teaching them. They knew this would be important work. Since it was so important, Jesus even gave Simon a new name as he began his new work. We heard it in last week's Gospel passage; do you remember? [Peter] So Jesus continued walking and inviting others to join him. He saw two more fishermen: James and John. Jesus called to them too.

☉ What did they do when they heard Jesus call? [They left their nets and followed Jesus.]

☉ Why do you think these fishermen left their work and decided to follow him? What was so inviting, so special about Jesus?

☉ What would make you follow Jesus?

Jesus calls to us too. We've been called ever since we were baptized. We learn to follow Jesus by putting in practice all that he has taught: by helping people who need us, by knowing the stories about Jesus and sharing those stories with other people who haven't heard them yet, by praying. That's a lot we can do!

Jesus Is Fishing for Me!

You will need enough outlines of fish on multicolored sheets of paper for each child to lead this activity. You will also need crayons and markers and a small basket for your prayer table.

Invite the children to write their name (assist as needed) on the fish and decorate it. Then, one by one, have the children bring up their fish and place them into the basket on your prayer table. Call up each child with these or similar words: "(Name), when you were baptized, Jesus caught you with his love. He wants you to follow him every day."

Fishing for People

Have the class act out the Gospel passage that they have just heard. You will need five volunteers to play the parts of Jesus, Simon, Andrew, James, and John. All of the other children will be people that are being told about Jesus for the first time. After reenacting the Gospel, invite the children to practice telling each other about Jesus. Encourage them to be disciples this week by telling others about Jesus outside of class.

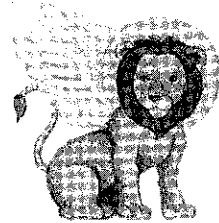
Drop Everything

In today's Gospel, the fishermen Simon, Andrew, James, and John left everything behind—their jobs, even their father—to answer Jesus' call to follow him.

Make a list on the board of the things that the children love and cannot do without. This can include toys, favorite foods, parents, friends, etc. Review the list together. Could the children really imagine dropping all these to follow Jesus? Impress upon the young children that they don't have to drop everything they love but everything that doesn't show others they are followers of Jesus Christ. Can they drop bad attitudes and listen to their parents? Can they drop making unkind comments about a classmate? Can they drop playing with a videogame or a toy one evening and spend more time praying? What else might they drop for God? To God these actions are everything.

Living the Liturgy at Home

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Scripture Readings

Jonah 3:1–5, 10

Psalms 25:4–5, 6–7, 8–9 (4a)

1 Corinthians 7:29–31

Mark 1:14–20

Prayer

Lord our God,
you sent your Son into the world
to live with us as one of us,
to heal, to teach, to sanctify,
and to proclaim the Good News
of the coming of the Kingdom.
Help us to live our Baptism to the full
and to find ways to do what Jesus did:
to bring joy and life wherever we go,
to lift up the suffering,
and to tell other people
about the new life
Jesus has brought us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

?? Did You Know?

... that the Sea of Galilee is the largest freshwater lake in modern-day Israel? It remains an important site for commercial fishing, the same industry in which the earliest disciples were working when Jesus called them. The sea is also Israel's most important source of drinking water.

Conversation Questions

☉ Jesus goes out to look for his followers. Do we let Jesus find us? Do we hear Jesus calling each of us by name?

☉ Are we brave enough to go out and look for others to know Jesus? What is our mission?

Faith in Action

Among the early Christians, the fish was a symbol of Jesus. You can still see this symbol today on jewelry, bumper stickers, car magnets, etc. It comes from an acrostic made from the Greek word for fish: ΙΧΘΥΣ. Each letter stands for a Greek word:

I (Ι) = Iesous (Jesus)

X (Χ) = Christos (Christ)

Θ (Θ) = Theou (God's)

Υ (Υ) = Uios (Son)

Σ (Σ) = Soter (Savior)

Explain to your child that early Christians used the fish as a secret symbol so that other Christians could find them.