

Breakfast on the Shore



Scripture Reference: [John 21:1-17](#)

Suggested Theme: Jesus forgives us and helps us follow Him.

Memory Verse: “But if we confess our sins, he will forgive our sins. We can trust God. He does what is right. He will make us clean from all the wrongs we have done.” [1 John 1:9, ICB](#)

Story Overview:

After the resurrection, Jesus appeared to many people. One of these times was to Peter and some other disciples who had spent an unproductive night fishing. Jesus directed them to cast their nets on the other side of the boat, resulting in a miraculous fish catch.

Jesus cooked breakfast for these followers on the beach and then provided Peter with a new opportunity to follow Him and care for others in the future. Peter had previously denied Jesus, but now Jesus says to “feed my sheep.”

Background Study:

The children will remember Peter denying Jesus. Perhaps they feel sad for Peter. He wanted to stand up for Jesus so much, but he really let Him down when he denied Him. Today’s story is special because it shows that Jesus could still be friends with Peter even though he had messed up. Jesus could forgive Peter, and He can forgive us.

This whole story is similar to the first time Jesus called the fishermen to follow him and become fishers of men ([Luke 5:1-11](#)). Then and now, the apostles had spent all night fishing without catching anything. Again, Jesus leads them to a huge catch.

The Sea of Tiberius was another name for the Sea of Galilee. It was a beautiful lake and almost 700 feet below sea level. It was 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) long and 6 miles (10 kilometers) wide. The upper part of the Jordan River fed into it.

It was common practice for fishermen of this time to fish at night. The cooling waters drew fish to the surface. Fishermen could also use torches or lamps to attract fish to the surface so nets could be drawn up to catch them. They would use a large, weighted net thrown from a boat and then dragged toward shore. Sometimes, two boats stretched the net between. In this case, they fished all night but caught nothing.

Do you love me?

The number three is significant between Jesus and Peter. Before His arrest, Jesus told Peter that he would deny Him three times ([John 13:36-38](#)). At the time, Peter was dismayed that Jesus would even think that would happen. Later, we learn this is exactly what took place. Peter denied Jesus three different times ([John](#)

[18:15-27](#)).

Now, when Jesus asks Peter these three questions on the shore, Peter might have been remembering how badly he had let Jesus down in His time of need. Knowing he had let Jesus down so badly, perhaps Peter did not feel worthy to claim *agape* love.

Much has been said concerning the three questions Jesus asked. In English, it seems repetitive, but not so in the original language. The conversation would have taken place in Aramaic, and the account would have been written in Greek. Different words are used for the English word “love.”

- Agape- This is the word Jesus used the first two times. The Greek word “agape” refers to a divine kind of love that involves a commitment to wanting the best for another person.
- Phileo- This is the word Peter used each time. This refers to a fondness or emotional love like friends’ love for one another.

Jesus was asking Peter if he loved Him in the *agape* way, but Peter could only commit to the *phileo* way.

Finally, the third time, Jesus changed the wording of the question. He asked Peter if he loved him with the fondness of a friend, and Peter answered that he did.

Jesus allowed Peter this grace and allowed him to state his love for Jesus in the best way he could. Before the crucifixion, Peter made brash and bold statements about his loyalty to Jesus. This new Peter is now more humble and careful to speak words he could live up to.

All Christian leaders are called to “feed the sheep” or take care of the people they lead ([1 Peter 5:1-4](#); [Hebrews 13:7](#)). Peter is not the only one. Perhaps Jesus knows that Peter needs special affirmation after the denial. Perhaps He wanted the others to hear that He accepted Peter.

Whatever the case, we know that Peter will go on to be a leader and an elder in the early church. Years later, when he pens his letters, Peter seems to reflect back to this time.

“Now I have something to say to the elders in your group. I am also an elder. I myself have seen Christ’s sufferings. And I will share in the glory that will be shown to us. I beg you to take care of God’s flock, his people, that you are responsible for. Watch over it because you want to, not because you are forced to do it. That is how God wants it. Do it because you are happy to serve, not because you want money. Do not be like a ruler over people you are responsible for. Be good examples to them. Then when Christ, the Head Shepherd, comes, you will get a crown. This crown will be glorious, and it will never lose its beauty.” 1 Peter 5:1-4 ICB

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children to tell you all the different kinds of places they have eaten breakfast (at the table at home, camping, in bed, in the car, in a boat, etc.) Ask them what kinds of foods they have eaten for breakfast. Share some of your own stories. “In today’s story we are going to learn about a time when Jesus made breakfast for his friends. Listen to the story very carefully. When you hear me say where he cooked the breakfast, I want you to say ‘Yum, yum!’ and smack your lips very loudly.” Do the same when I say what food Jesus cooked.

The Story:

The apostles were all very happy that Jesus had been raised from the dead. They had seen Jesus a few times since His resurrection.

One day, Peter said, "I'm going out to fish." Thomas, Nathanael, James, John and two other disciples decided to go along with him.

They all went to the Sea of Galilee and got into a boat. The way the fishermen fished was to put their nets into the water and pull them up to see if there were fish in them. People liked to fish at night because many fish came to the surface, and the fishermen could catch them. Usually, that worked, but not this time. Peter, James, John and the others fished all night, but they did not catch any fish. They tried throwing the net out as usual, but couldn't catch any fish.

Early in the morning, they looked up and saw someone on the beach. The man yelled and asked them if they had caught any fish. When they said "no," the man yelled again, "Throw your nets on the right side of the boat, and you will find some fish."

The fishermen probably wondered about that. After all, they had been throwing the net all night, and they hadn't caught anything yet. Why should they do it again?

Finally, they decided to give it a try and cast their nets off the right side of the boat. When they started pulling the net up, they saw there were fish in it. There were lots of fish in the net. In fact, there were so many fish that the seven apostles could not even lift the net into the boat. They decided to head for shore and pull the net beside the boat.

Then John looked at the beach again. He took a closer look at the man standing there. Wait a minute. The man looked familiar. It was Jesus! When John told everyone, Peter got very excited. He really wanted to see Jesus again, so he jumped into the water. Peter made his way to shore while the others followed with the boat and a net full of fish.

When Peter and the apostles got to the shore, they saw that Jesus had a fire going and some fish were already cooking. "Bring some of the fish you caught, and we will eat them too," Jesus said. "We will eat breakfast on the beach."

Peter and the others brought some of the fish. There were plenty left because they had caught 153 big fish! Jesus fed the apostles a big breakfast of fish and bread. Would you like to eat fish for breakfast?

While they were eating breakfast, Peter probably thought back to another time when they had all eaten together. Peter loved Jesus, but he had done something for which he was very sorry. A few weeks ago, at the Last Supper, Peter told Jesus that he would be willing to die for him. Then, when Jesus was arrested, Peter got scared. He did not die for Jesus. He had not been brave at all. He told people that he did not know Jesus. Three times, Peter denied knowing Jesus. Peter wondered if Jesus could ever forgive him.

But Jesus loved Peter. He knew Peter would be a great leader one day. People are like sheep who need a shepherd to care for them. Jesus knew Peter's heart and knew that Peter would be a good shepherd. He would be a good shepherd of people.

So, after breakfast, Jesus asked Peter three questions that all sounded very much alike.

- Question 1: "Peter, do you love me more than these and with a deep love?"

Peter answered, "You know that I love you like a friend, Lord."

Jesus then said, "Feed my lambs."

- Question 2 was like the first to make Peter think:

Jesus asked again, "Peter, do you really love me with a deep love?"

Peter answered again, "You know I love you like a friend, Lord."

"Take care of my sheep," Jesus repeated.

- Finally, Jesus asked in a different way. He must have known Peter was trying his best. He asked, "Peter, do you love me like a friend?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus kept asking him. Asking questions three times reminded him of the three times he had denied Christ. "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you like a friend."

And Jesus did know Peter's heart. He knew Peter was trying to love him deeply. Jesus knew Peter would be a good shepherd for people. Jesus said, "Peter, feed my sheep."

Peter had made some big mistakes. He was not a good friend to Jesus when Jesus really needed one. But Jesus loved Peter and forgave him. Jesus even trusted Peter and gave him new jobs to do.

Have you ever made mistakes or bad choices? Have you done bad things? Jesus loves you, too, and He can forgive you.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

[Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.](#)

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. [Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.](#)

Review:

- After they fished all night and caught nothing, what did the man tell the apostles to do? (Cast their nets on the other side of the boat)
- Who was the man who told the disciples to cast their nets again? (Jesus)
- What did Peter do when he realised Jesus was on the shore? (He jumped out of the boat and went to shore)
- What did Jesus do for the disciples on the shore? (Made them breakfast)
- What did Jesus say to Peter three times? (Feed my sheep)
- What did Peter learn from Jesus in this story?
- What did this story show you about Jesus?
- What did this story show you about people?

Reflection:

- How do you think the net full of fish felt or looked like? What would the disciples have smelled like?
- How do you think Jesus' breakfast for the disciples tasted?
- If you were one of the disciples and you realised Jesus was on the shore, what would you have done or said?

- Does this story remind you of any other stories about Jesus in the Bible?
- Jesus had been resurrected and had His new resurrection body. He didn't need to eat food to survive. Why do you think He chose to cook and share breakfast with His disciples?
- How did Jesus show Peter that He loved him?
- How does Jesus show us He loves us?
- Earlier in the Bible, Peter denied Jesus, but Jesus showed Peter that He still had plans for him and He still loved him in this story. How do you think Peter felt after seeing and talking with Jesus?
- If you were Peter, what would you want to say to Jesus when you saw Him again?
- Jesus forgave Peter for his sin. Do you think Jesus will forgive your sins? (Encourage the children that Jesus will forgive those who repent)

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a lifelong friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. [A variety of prayer methods are found here.](#)

Song Suggestions:

- [Jesus' Love is a-Bubblin' Over Song](#)
- Sing [Fished All Night and Caught No Fishes](#)
- [ABC: Jesus Died for You and Me Song](#)
- [He's Still Working on Me Song](#)
- [J-E-S-U-S Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- [How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.](#)
- [Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.](#)

Activities:

- Eat fish for a snack today. Or be adventurous and plan a beachside fish fry.
- Serve breakfast to the class.
- Divide the group into two teams. One team stands holding one side of a large blanket, and the other team holds the opposite side. The blanket is the fishing net. The teams have the blanket slack while the teacher places a number of fish in the centre (these can be plastic or cut from sponges). When the teacher says, "Go fishing", each team tries to "bounce" the fish off one end of the blanket or the other. The teacher should have designated which end each team belongs to. The team bouncing the most fish onto their side wins the game. To keep the game from getting out of hand, mark off smaller areas where

the fish must land to gain points.

- Play a simple word game. [Bible Wordz Game](#) is an adaptable game where children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to words found in the Bible lesson.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. [Free printables for this story.](#)

Crafts:

- A very unusual craft is to paint a real fish with tempera paint, then let the children press it onto paper to make prints. The prints are unusual and show all of the scales and fins.
- Jesus told Peter to “take care of my sheep.” Make a sheep craft today. Younger children could glue cotton wool to a picture of a sheep. Older children might glue wool yarn to paper in the shape of a lamb or outline the words “Take care of my sheep.”

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. [Free printables for this story.](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page with text \(Ministry Spark\)](#)
- [Craft: How to make a fish net for kids \(ehow.com\)](#)
- [Craft: A number of fish craft ideas \(dltk-kids.com\)](#)
- [Craft: A number of fish craft ideas \(artistshelpingchildren.org-scroll down once you get to the page\)](#)
- [Craft: Make a fish. Choose from a selection \(dltk-kids.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Make a fish \(or other sea creatures\). Lots to choose from \(artistshelpingchildren.org\)](#)
- [Craft: Rainbow fish made from a coffee filter \(dltk-teach.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Rainbow fish. Cut out and then glue on bright paper \(dltk-teach.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Paper crafts for pre-schoolers: scroll down on page to days 4 and 5 \(ourcraftsnthings.com\)](#)
- [Craft: Adapt this boat made from a seashell at \(christiangamesandcrafts.com\)](#)
- [Craft: How to draw a campfire for drawing Jesus cooking the fish \(www.dragoart.com\)](#)
- [Worksheet, Feed My Sheep interactive group activities \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Worksheet, Feed My Sheep fill-in-the-blank worksheet \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Worksheet, Feed My Sheep multiple choice worksheet \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Worksheet, Feed My Sheep wordsearch \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [Teaching Tool: Perform the “Cutting off Fingers” string trick to show how we can be completely tangled in sin, but God can take it away. Be sure to practice this one! \(youtube\)](#)

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