

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Breakfast with Jesus
John 21:1-14

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a series of sessions needs to have access to the "Introduction" article found at the beginning of each series (Bible Teaching #....). The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Bible Study Leader:

Please read the information printed at the end of this session regarding the Sea of Galilee. Bring a copy of those pages and a copy of the map of the Sea of Galilee with you when you lead the Bible Study. A white board would be good to record the six headings of the session so that the story may be followed logically and progressively by the church.

Worship Time Leader:

Please read the information printed at the end of this session regarding the Sea of Galilee. Your “Sharing Time” message on Jesus’ call to Peter and Andrew” takes place at the Lake of Galilee and the meaning closely relates to the teaching in the Bible study. The more you can apply the Bible study to your concluding message, the more memorable your message will be to your people.

Music Sources:

Shout to the North, *The Worship Hymnal* #350; CCLI #1562261

I’ll Tell the World That I’m a Christian, *The Worship Hymnal* #368; CCLI #19045

Set My Soul Afire, *The Worship Hymnal* #533; CCLI #26409

Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated, *The Worship Hymnal* #534; CCLI #390 Public Domain

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Breakfast with Jesus*****Focal Text**

John 21:1-14

Background Text

John 20; 21:1-14

Main Idea

This passage records the last story we have of Jesus meeting some of His disciples before His ascension, His return to Heaven. John recorded it desiring that we readers would understand its importance to our spiritual journeys.

Questions to Explore

What spiritual teachings were involved in the fishing trip that seven disciples of Jesus took?

What spiritual teachings were involved in the lakeside breakfast?

How can we apply those teachings to our own journey with Jesus?

Teaching Aim

To guide each person in the church to practice a daily encounter with Jesus that leads to a continuing and steady spiritual growth.

Gathering together:

Begin with a hymn or song of praise to God for the opportunities He gives for us to bring people to Him and to disciple them.

Spend time as a group in sharing both praise for blessings and answered prayer. Then, bring your requests before the Lord for His presence, power, and for those in need of God's grace, peace, and help.

First thoughts:

Gone Fishing

Every attitude possible can be found in regard to fish and fishing:

1. Some people enjoy eating fish and opportunities to go fishing.
2. Some enjoy eating fish but would not go fishing even if payment were offered.
3. Some earn their living by fishing.
4. Some are physically allergic to certain types of fish or seafood.
5. Some simply find the whole love of fishing disgusting.

Interestingly, several of the men whom Jesus chose to be His first followers and learners, His disciples, were fishermen. In fact, more were fishermen than from any other single profession. For sure, Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen. Probably Thomas and Nathanael were fishermen. Perhaps Andrew and Philip were, as well. Surely, when Jesus was not teaching them, lots of fishing stories were told among the group as they sat around their evening campfires—often eating fish, of course. We wonder just how many “big ones” got away.

In the time that Jesus lived, fishing in northern Israel provided income for much of the population. Boats and nets had to be built and maintained. Fishermen made the catches of some 20 varieties of fish found in the small Sea of Galilee. Retailers and fish brokers sold the catch. In addition, tax collectors, barrel-makers, and a lot of others directly or indirectly depended on the fishing industry of some 30 towns and villages scattered around the lake.

Our Bible study and worship time today comes out of the story of a fishing expedition. But it is more than a story. It is one of the most important teachings we have in how the first churches would begin, grow, and reproduce—and what that teaches us about what Jesus expects of each of us and of our church.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Ask someone to pray—thanking God for the lesson that we are about to receive from His Holy Word.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won't need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

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Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Breakfast with Jesus

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Introduction to your personal study:

As the leader and for this Bible study session, you will complete the next-to-final session from the Gospel of John, the longest series of unified studies offered by Home Church Online. It is an important session.

Until now, even with a session on the events surrounding the open tomb after the resurrection of Jesus, the story remains unfinished. Clearly the disciples of Jesus did not yet quite understand what Jesus expected of them once He was gone, though He had

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Breakfast with Jesus – 16-43-15-en

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told them in “clear” language. So, the Apostle John offers us the opportunity to see how Jesus would use this encounter to lead them beyond the “condition or state” of their commitment to Jesus—to the active battalion of witnesses to the world for Jesus, their “Lord and their God” (as Thomas had declared in John 20:28).

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the “**Introduction**” article found at the beginning of this series (Bible Teaching #....) of Bible Study and Worship sessions. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you, as well.

John chapter 20 leaves us thinking of the disciples and the appearances of Jesus in and near Jerusalem. This final recorded personal encounter of Jesus with His disciples takes place well north, on the Sea of Galilee.

Focusing on the Meaning:

1. Prequel to the Story (John 20:13, 21)

13They (the two angels) asked her, “Woman, why are you crying?” (v. 13). Those first moments in front of the empty tomb left not only Mary of Magdala but all of Jesus’ followers who heard about it confused—and that resulted in fear and surely many other emotions. Jesus would soon help them move beyond confusion and fear to belief that He really had been resurrected from the dead by God. Nevertheless, that belief and what it would mean to their lives would take time, teaching, and His presence. He would give it 39 more days before physically leaving them and returning to His Heavenly Kingdom. Those days He would focus entirely on His followers rather than to those who did not believe. Their opportunity with Him, personally and physically, had passed. Now He would prepare those who believe that He is Saviour, Lord, and God.

Mary Magdalene (meaning “of Magdala”, a town on the southwest coast of the Sea of Galilee) would believe more easily than some of the other followers of Jesus. Thomas, the twin, wanted physical evidence that he could touch.

25 So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”

But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” (John 20:25)

Perhaps we need not be critical of Thomas’ demand for physical evidence of Christ’s resurrection. The other ten disciples needed to see Jesus eat and hear Him talk to them. The couple who also were His followers, going home, met up with Jesus on a road from Jerusalem to Emmaus where they had their home. Their belief evidently depended on needing Him to disappear from their eyes while dining with them in their home. They needed that particular experience, however unconsciously, to complete their own belief

in Him as God in flesh and to launch their own mission of sharing the “Good News”. Each of us today sometimes realizing our own need again for reassurance that Jesus really lives and is guiding our lives. We especially need that when so much seems to be going wrong.

21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.” (v. 21).

Ten of the disciples (and maybe even other followers) locked themselves in a room on the evening of the day of Jesus’ resurrection. Their fear at that time was undoubtedly from the Roman soldiers controlled by Jewish and Roman-appointed officials. Something beyond the comprehension of the city’s officials as well as Jesus’ disciples had happened that morning in the cemetery and the government officials were upset enough to try to put a stop to any talk of it.

The disciples had real reason to be afraid and nowhere to go. They feared that they could be hunted down and murdered in order to silence them. Remember that they, along with Jesus, had already been betrayed by Judas, one of their own small group of Christ followers. Therefore, it would be logical to secure their meeting room as strongly as possible. Then, ***“Jesus came and stood among them....”*** (20:19). It was His presence and His voice that brought them belief and peace.

Twice Jesus calms their fears. The term “Peace be with you” was a common greeting. Perhaps it was the authority in Jesus’ voice that made it more than common. He then uses it a second time.

21 Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

John does not tell us why Jesus said it twice. Perhaps He was trying to help them recognize that He meant a peace that only God could give them in the moment of the great fear which they were all experiencing.

Near or at the end of each of the four Gospels there exists a statement by Jesus that, including the one above, can be called the Great Commission or Our Commissioning. Luke also includes one at the beginning of his letter that we call “Acts”. Each one seems to build on the previous, almost as if they were the succeeding verses of a mighty hymn. Above we have the commission by Jesus that John chooses to share with us. It certainly adds to Jesus’ desire that, in coming to know Him as Lord of our lives, Jesus fully expects us to obey His call for each one of us to serve as a witness to our commitment to Him and to go wherever He chooses to send us.

John is preparing us to experience the next big step in the discipling of the disciples!

2. The Setting (Water, Nets, and Dawn) (John 21:1-6)

On the final pages of this session, you will find a discussion of the Sea of Galilee, along with a map of that area. It is very important that both the Bible study leader and the worship leader carefully read and bring to the session the material on the Sea of Galilee. The whole teaching of the session centers on the Lake. John's recording of Jesus' use of symbolism as his final teaching tool for his disciples focuses on things relating to the Sea of Galilee and their experiences on and around it. The map and the material are at the end of the session to facilitate making copies. But it is a must for the Bible study leader to have it in hand.

(John 21:1,2). Nazareth, Jesus' hometown, still exists and is located southwest of the Lake of Galilee, about halfway to the Mediterranean coast. He spent much of His ministry teaching and healing in towns around the lake. It must have been hot in the area. The surface of the lake sits as the second lowest lake altitude on earth, some 700 feet (213 metres) below sea level. Only the Dead Sea, just down at the end of the Jordan River, is lower. The Lake is located on a branch of a major rift or tear in the surface of the earth known overall as the Great Rift Valley. The Lake lies at the bottom of the branch called the Hula Valley between the Galilee Mountains on the west and the Golan Heights on the east side.

No explanation is given in the scripture as to why Peter decided sometime after the first post-resurrection week to go fishing. It is probable that this trip is related to the quote by Mark in chapter 16 of his Gospel that the disciples were to go to Galilee to await Jesus. No scriptural proof of that exists. It might have been a different time. It is possible and logical that the disciples were already sent by Jesus to the area of Galilee. This, not Jerusalem, was home to the majority of the disciples. And it would have been much easier for Jesus to spend his final days on earth instructing them there rather than in Jerusalem.

A walk from Jerusalem to the Sea of Galilee would have taken about 4 days via Samaria. Most Jews chose that route rather than the 6 day walk down first to Jericho and then along the Jordan up to the lake. That route was filled with places of danger and, in only 12 miles, one had a difference of some 3,000 feet down to the river or, the other way, up to Jerusalem. On the other hand, the shorter route took them through the hated Samaria. There was relative safety in numbers for Jews traveling through Samaria, but only with larger groups.

Again, we tend to picture the disciples deciding to go fishing while they were still in Jerusalem although John does not say where they were. It is this writer's opinion that they were probably already near the lake, perhaps in one of the 30 villages surrounding the lake. That would make the decision easy and logical for a group of fishermen who were "on site". It is reinforced by John's comment in verse 3: ***So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.*** If it means "that same night" they were already at the lake and near the boat—not four days of travel away in Jerusalem.

They had followed Jesus' instruction for them to meet Him again in Galilee. And there, they waited for Him.

(vs. 3-6). Now we have a visual. We can all picture the disciples fishing all night with their lamps lit in order to attract the fish to the surface. Yet, they had caught no fish at all—not even one. That would have been unusual. Smaller, “bait fish”, at least should have been trapped in the nets.

Jesus calls to them from the shore. With the sun not yet up and the shoreline still in the dark, they probably could only see the outline of a person and the fire he had built. That would certainly be true if the scene were along the eastern shore and the high hills on that side blocked the sun from shining down on the shore until it was a bit later.

⁵He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

⁶He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

We do not have a record of the attitude of the fishermen regarding the suggestion of a stranger to do something that they, expert fishermen, saw no reason to do. However, with nothing to lose (their best nighttime fishing was over), they gave it a try.

Having done so, they were instantly blessed with an overabundance of large fish, too much to “boat”. The greater surprise was that the large fish were in the shallows where they should not have been, even at night.

3. The Guests and the Host (Who's Coming to Breakfast?) (John 21:1-13)

(vs. 1-3). John lists Peter (the instigator of the fishing trip), Thomas the twin, Nathanael, James, himself (i.e.: the sons of Zebedee), and “two other disciples” in the group. As we will see, some logic dictates that the two unnamed were Andrew and Philip. Therefore, according to the list, seven of the faithful eleven men whom we refer to as the apostles participated in the venture.

(vs. 7,8) John and Peter again play the leading parts in the story.

⁷Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. ⁸The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.

Ninety-two metres is quite close to shore to have been fishing on the Galilee. Peter did not have far to swim. The others arrived at the shore nearly as quickly. Soon, they were all heaving their load of fish up onto the shore.

At this point John begins to use symbolism to teach the lesson of evangelism and discipleship—the critical future of the church.

The first symbolic teaching comes in the fact that they could not complete the “catch” in their own traditional way. They caught the fish with the guidance given by Jesus. But they were unable to finish even their own work by hauling the catch onboard.

4. The Meal (Bread and Fish?) (John 21:9-14)

(v. 9) As in some places today, bread and fish comprised a very common first meal of the day for night fishermen. John often uses the commonplace, the ordinary, to help us relate to Jesus. This meal was not a banquet. It would fill them up for the work of the day—a day that would be both ordinary and yet so very special. This day would add a new dimension to every day for the rest of their lives.

The fire they see on the shore would have been one of many as the night fishermen on the lake sorted their catch and faced the work of hauling the catch to markets to sell or trade for goods that they needed until they could return home for needed sleep. At the moment they needed breakfast and breakfast, obviously, would consist of some of their catch. Some commentators have noted that those who had “day” jobs probably ate two meals, morning and evening, and the first meal would have been substantial. For night fishermen, the schedule was opposite.

(v. 10) *Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”* This seems to be such a simple command unless one considers the possibility of it being filled with symbolism.

Let’s speculate without scriptural proof that the two unnamed disciples present were Philip and Andrew. Further, let’s assume that they were at the same spot (likely this landing was a popular place to land a boat) where Jesus had once taught 5,000 men plus women and children who were sitting on the hill leading down to the eastern shore of the lake. Now go back to **John 6:1-15**. **Reread that story.** You will immediately see that the disciple who worried that the cost of the bread and fish would be too high to purchase, and the disciple who derided the amount of food already available as being “nothing”, were Philip and Andrew. In chapter 6, John says nothing about those two being sorry for not believing in the miracle of the feeding. Nor were they rebuked by Jesus.

However, their time would come. Now, in 21:10, Jesus asks the disciples to bring some of their catch to the table. Throughout his Gospel John consistently uses fish as symbolically representing people (caught or “catch” in this case). He uses bread as the symbol of salvation of people: The “Bread of life” means salvation in Christ. At the “Last

Supper”, Jesus passes around the unleavened bread and says **“This is my body, broken for you”**.

(v. 11) We have little information as to why John (other than he was a fisherman) wrote such a detailed description of their catch. Commercially, probably only the poundage and types of fish mattered. But John wanted his readers to know other specifics: the size of the fish (all large, that is, important); the number of fish (153); the condition of the net (not torn). We will guess at the meaning of these symbols—but John does not explain further.

(v. 12) John allows us to see the event as unfolding a moment at a time. Even the identity of the host for their breakfast is being absorbed by them only little by little. They knew it was Jesus but the reality of Him being again in their presence took a bit of accepting.

(v. 13) The disciples were well aware that their assignment was to be **“fishers of people”**. Now, even Philip and Andrew must understand the lesson. Jesus already has fish baking over the fire. He also has bread. He requests the disciples to add to his supply of fish. Quite obviously, John wants us to see the spiritual symbolism in this scene. He sets it up in detail.

Jesus is in charge of the scene. The bread represents salvation. Only He can offer salvation to persons. It is his body. That is, He made salvation possible with the sacrifice of his body for us. He does not ask the disciples to bring bread to the table. He has fish on the fire. He can and has directly brought people to Himself. We know of a few: Paul, the Samaritan woman, the thief on the cross among others. And He said that He has other “sheep” of whom we do not know. However, He has chosen us to add to what He did. He instructed the disciples (and us by extension) to bring fish (people) to Him. Interestingly John lets us know that not a single one of those “fish” were unimportant fish. There was not one single throwaway or inferior type of fish in the catch.

This moment presents another expression of the Great Commission—this time in beautiful, highly visual symbolism. Every one of the Gospels and Acts carry verses that specifically mandate this great commission to **Go, Tell, Baptize, and Disciple**.

(v. 14) John now tells us that this is the third appearance of Jesus to his disciples since his resurrection. He does not say that it was the final one. Obviously there was one at his ascension—his return to Heaven.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

Set your goal for the session to instill an initiative in each person to actively pursue following Christ by sharing their own faith with others and ministering to other people to meet whatever needs they may have.

For Personal Reflection:

What have I learned from this study?

What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?

What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Breakfast with Jesus

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc.

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

John 21:1-14

Background Text

John 20; 21:1-14

Main Idea

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Teaching Aim

To guide each person in the church to practice a daily encounter with Jesus that leads to a continuing and steady spiritual growth.

Connect with Life:

Gain attention of the group by sharing this true story: A four-year-old boy named Austin caught his first fish. He even reeled the fish in by himself. It was only about 10 cm. (4 inches) long. He felt a wondrous pride in his accomplishment. When he had the opportunity to share his story—of course the size of the fish which he demonstrated with

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Breakfast with Jesus – 16-43-15-en

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his hands had grown considerably. His older brother and sister were quite happy to correct him, but the size of his catch stayed larger than life in his mind for several more days.

You may or may not have a “fishing story” that is larger than reality to remember. However, all of us remember real times in which we accomplished something that we knew was special or even wonderful. To others, it may have not appeared all that important. Yet we realized the importance of that moment or effort and no one could take that from us. It was truly important, not an exaggeration, and we knew it and were satisfied.

Guide the Study:

1. Prequel to the Story (John 20:13, 21)

Explain: In our Bible study today we will turn the happy story of that little boy around backwards. In this case, we will see God’s Son who was recently resurrected by God to life from a dead corpse encouraging and teaching seven of his disciples to fulfill the most important and wonderful purpose in life that could be dreamed. He was depending on them to go do something so important that it would have eternal value for all the world, even though it would be devalued and even despised by millions of people. They were to fish for people and to bring those people to Jesus for their salvation and eternal life with Him. So far, some of Jesus’ training had been put into practice by his disciples. However, the total commitment of their lives as fishers of people was yet to be brought to reality.

Have everyone find the Gospel of John, chapter 20.

Offer this question: Who did Jesus choose to be the first witness to the resurrected Jesus?

Then request: Would someone find and read the verses in chapter 20 where Jesus asks Mary Magdalene to do something. Then tell us what He asked and what she did. (vs. 17-18)

Explain: We should view all of chapter 20 which we studied last week as a prequel or as leading up to chapter 21. Without what John presents in chapter 21, the story of the launching of the church would be incomplete and, even with the stories of Mary Magdalene and the disciples from Emmaus, we would have difficulty in understanding the need for our own total commitment to a life of sharing the good news of salvation with those to whom God sends us.

Now have someone read John 20:21.

Ask: Apart from the fact that the phrase was a common Jewish greeting, why do you think Jesus said, "Peace be with you" and then said it again. (He needed the disciples to be calm in order to listen to Him. And He probably wanted them to understand that only He could bring them real and lasting peace.)

Have a brief discussion: What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "**As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.**"?

Seek an answer to this: Then, does this commandment or commission apply to us today or only to those first disciples?

Share: Now we will look at the scene set up by all that had passed and recorded in chapter 20.

2. The Setting (Water, Nets, and Dawn) (John 21:1-6)

Request a participant to read John 21:1-3.

In your own words, briefly share the information from the "**Teacher Preparation**" (See page 10) regarding why the disciples were probably already near the Lake of Galilee when Peter decided to go fishing. Show the group the map of the lake. Point out the eastern side of the lake where the "Breakfast with Jesus" story probably took place.

Ask: Who were the disciples who agreed to go fishing that night? (Three were named or identified: Peter; Thomas the twin; and Nathanael. James and John and are identified as "...the sons of Zebedee". Two others are noted by John but not named.)

Note: Most, if not all, of the seven were professional fishermen. For them, fishing would have been an important part of their lives, their identity. The significance of this experience with Jesus would impact these seven most of all the eleven disciples.

Have another person read John 21:4-5.

See if someone can answer: Why did the disciples not realize that the man calling to them from the shore was Jesus? (The sun was still behind the hill on the eastern shore and the figure would have been obscure in the dark.)

Also: Why did Jesus' question about the men not having caught any fish have such an impact on the disciples? (It would have been very unusual that, in an entire night of fishing, not even small, bait fish would have gotten entangled in the large net. They would have felt a sense of failure as professional fishermen.)

Share: Jesus tells the group to do something that logically was useless.

Ask someone to read John 21:6.

Then ask: Why did Jesus' suggestion appear illogical and useless? (By dawn the fish would be gone. They were too close to the beach for any fishing, anyway. Changing sides of the boat would not have made a difference. If the speaker were a fisherman, he would have known these things—therefore he must not have been a fisherman and not listened to.)

Now add this question: Why do you think that a big haul of large fish at that place and moment would have surprised the fishermen? (Being fishermen, they knew that by dawn larger fish would have already gone down to cooler, darker water much further out in the lake and below the reach of their net).

3. The Guests and the Host (Who's Coming to Breakfast?) (John 21:7-8)

Now have a person read John 21:7-8.

Question: Did the disciples recognize Jesus by what He looked like or by what He did? (What He did.)

Also ask: How do we recognize the presence of Jesus among us?

4. The Meal (Bread and Fish?) (John 21:9-14)

Ask someone to read John 21:9-14.

Explain to the group: John uses much symbolism to teach within his writings. Some of that is simple and comes directly from the teachings of Jesus as He, Jesus, uses symbols. Some involves symbols within symbols. Throughout his Gospel, John always uses Jesus' concept of bread to symbolize salvation—which only Jesus can bestow on a person. Jesus also uses fish to represent people. John is only recounting what Jesus was teaching with these symbols.

Discuss each one of the following points: Now, thinking of the bread and fish as symbols, let's look at some of the teaching by Jesus in this story of the breakfast and discuss the meaning of each element.

1. Verse 9 indicates that Jesus already had bread available and fish ready to be eaten. What significance does this have on our part in the work of evangelizing the world?

2. In v.10 Jesus asks them to bring some of their catch to add to what He already has. The wording is actually in the grammatical form of a commandment. Find John 10:16 in your Bible and, if it reads differently than the New International Version, please share your reading with the rest of us. Then let's try to decide about whom Jesus is speaking. (The Bible does not say, so we can only guess.)

I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. (John 10:16)

3. In v.11 Peter drags the net to shore. He specifies that it held 153 fish, all large, quality fish (not one a throw-away). He also says that the net was not torn so that every fish they caught was saved.

Commercially, probably only the poundage and types of fish mattered. But John wanted his readers to know other specifics: the size of the fish (all large, that is, important); the number of fish (153); the condition of the net (not torn). We will guess at the meaning of these symbols—but John does not explain further.

Leader: See if the group has any ideas as to why John was so specific in his description of this scene.

4. In v.12 we see that the invitation (the initiative to partake with Him) comes totally from Jesus and they knew it was He who invited them to the breakfast.

- a. What does this say about God's initiative in the salvation of a person? (God is always seeking us. We simply respond to His initiative.)
- b. What does it say about our initiative in presenting the good news of salvation to a person? (God's initiative still includes our mandate to share the gospel.)
- c. What does it say about God's promise that anyone, anywhere will receive salvation when they confess their sin to God and seek His salvation?

5. In v.13 we notice that Jesus was in charge of the table and He alone decided who got what to eat.

- a. Again, with no overt teaching, John allows us to see that we need to turn our preferences and desires over to Jesus. Let Him make our decisions. He knows what is best for us.

State: All of that provides a lot of teaching to be applied to our following Jesus.

5. Dividing the Scenes (From Understanding to Action) (John 21:14)

Have someone read v.14.

Share with the group: Now John allows us to move on to the next level of the story. Notice how he does this in v. 14 by reminding us again that this took place after Jesus' resurrection. Again, he gives a precise number—this time of the number of appearances of Jesus to the group of disciples up until this point. It is as if he wants us to remember that number. It is also interesting that he does not give the number of disciples involved in each appearance: (10, 11, 7). Therefore, subconsciously, we understand that it matters how often we meet with the Lord. It does not matter how many of us are at each meeting.

Ask someone to read 1 Corinthians 15:5-8.

Explain: This is Paul's list of post-resurrection appearances but it is not complete. We do not find anywhere in the New Testament where the total number of post-resurrection appearances of Jesus are listed in one place. Much disagreement exists among New Testament scholars as to the number and details. John comments only to make a limited point for us.

Add: Take the scene as a whole. Our mandate is to give ourselves over completely to God, to share the message of salvation with all with whom God gives us ability and opportunity, and to leave the salvation to Him.

Encourage Application:

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Include the youth in today's application of the lesson..  
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Share these conclusions: As we conclude the study, let's think again of those things that John wants us to consider and act on.

1. Expect an encounter with our living Lord anywhere, anytime—not only in a worship or Bible study time--maybe even while fishing. Practice by looking daily for those encounters. Prepare for them with daily prayer and scripture study.
2. Look for His teaching us in everything we see and do. It will be much easier if our thoughts and hands are involved in the best of things.
3. Let Jesus guide your activities. Listen for Him to lead you to "fish on the other side", especially when you think you know better.
4. Consider your call to be a fisher of persons for Him—to be a wonderful privilege and never a burden.
5. Give Jesus your catch. You are only the messenger. He grants salvation, not you.

6. Enjoy the joy of being one of a team that works together for the catch. Into whatever your personal part develops, it is vital to the assignment. Your home church is your spiritual family. It is probably your best team for the task of sharing with those outside the family.

7. Be willing to be creative and daring for the Lord. You may be afraid to be the first to jump “out of the boat” but Jesus may be expecting you to be as impetuous as Peter.

8. Share fully in the joy of your spiritual family when a person finds Jesus as Saviour and Lord. And know that, when it happens, your work and the work of your church has just begun. That person must be discipled. And, in that, there is a place for every one of you.

<p>Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.</p>

YOUTH!!! TAKE TEN

Bible Study Application for Youth

Breakfast with Jesus

John 21

Being a Part of the Family

This week, stay with the adult group to apply the Bible study. One of you may need to volunteer to say to the adults that every application in the list includes every youth in the church. Every Christian in the congregation should have a place in sharing the good news of salvation in Jesus—and in discipling those brought to Jesus.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Breakfast with Jesus***
John 21**Beginning the Service:**

Choose some or all of the following to sing:

I'll Tell the World That I'm a Christian, *The Worship Hymnal* #368; CCLI #19045

Set My Soul Afire, *The Worship Hymnal* #533; CCLI #26409

Take My Life, and Let It Be Consecrated, *The Worship Hymnal* #534; CCLI #390 Public Domain

Offering:

Praying for the World: The city of Shizuoka, Japan, is home to Mount Fuji. The Japanese say, "All roads lead to the top of Mount Fuji," which many interpret to mean that all religions will lead to heaven. Pray that the people of Shizuoka will come to understand the claims of Christ in their lives.

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

Fishers of Men
Matthew 4:18-20

¹⁸As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will send you out to fish for people." ²⁰At once they left their nets and followed him.

Even between just English translations of the Bible that much loved and quoted passage that called Peter and Andrew to serve Jesus—is worded several different ways. Obviously, some of those versions reflect the beliefs and understandings of the translators and the religious institutions to which they were committed. However, it also describes the difficulty of translating words from any language to another. Some variations include these:

“Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” (English Standard Version)

"Come, follow me! I will teach you how to catch people instead of fish." (God's Word)

"...and I will make you fish for people!" (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

“...and I will show you how to fish for people!" (New Living Translation)

Yet, all of those 100 or more translations really hold the same challenge. And that challenge is as real and strong for us today as it was for Peter and Andrew. It doesn't matter how it is worded. In every interpretation, the challenge begins with a condition that must be met first: Come follow Me. Jesus wants no doubt regarding what is essential to our devotion to Him. Come follow Me.

The version titled “The Expanded Bible” adds the explanation “[be my disciples]”. That comment helps us to recognize that the phrase “Come follow Me” is really an expectation to both “be” and “do”. Neither you nor I can “fish for people” if we are not totally committed to follow Jesus every day.

“Come”

The first condition, “Come”, means to make a commitment of everything we are: body, soul, and mind. Yes, we are each an individual person—a unique creation in the universe. And we do have the God-allowed ability to sort of divide ourselves into parts. We, as God's creation, can actually convince ourselves that as long as we claim God with our minds, we can sin with our bodies. Or, if we claim publically that we are Christians, we can hold anger, prejudice, illicit sexual desires, and other sins in our minds.

In one single word, “Come”, none of that is allowed. A person cannot do any of the above sin and come to Jesus with all of his or her heart, soul, mind, and strength. Remember Jesus' words when He said:

“...Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

“Come” means leaving our old, sinful self behind.

“Follow Me”

The second half of the condition to the challenge is “Follow Me”. This part demands that we take action—that we expect to do something, prepare to do it, and then actually do it. How do we follow anything? Perhaps we can make the word grammatically passive—as in “to follow a sport” or a political party. But the word as used by Jesus means much more than that. It means to be trained and then seek to find out how Jesus wants that training to be used in his service; in his Kingdom’s work. Finally, it means to put that training and knowledge to work, to actually perform the daily tasks that God places before us.

“And I will send you out to fish for people.”

After we meet the conditions of the command, Jesus lays out the heart of the task. He says that He will send us out to fish for people. The task is clear and the goal is certain, even in the symbolic language of fishing that He used for Peter and Andrew. This was the point of our Bible study today. Tell the world what Jesus has done for you and for me. Point them to salvation in Jesus Christ, God’s only Son. Share with those whom God sends across our path the truly Good News of Christ’s sacrifice for them.

We don’t go on our own. When we read “I will send you out to fish for people.”, we read that Jesus takes the initiative. He sends. We go. It is as simple as that.

Finally, Jesus did not send out Peter and Andrew to bear the burden of getting results. They were sent to lead people to the feet of Jesus. Jesus would bring the results. They were to fish. The catch would be his responsibility and his alone. The same is our command. He sends, we go, He brings the results.

Call to Commitment:

“Come. Follow Me. I will send you out in the world to fish for people.”

The command is clearly the most important one that any Christian will ever face. And it is the one we must accept as our challenge and commitment every day of our lives.

Concluding the Service:

Leader: Say to the congregation: Everyone stand and bow their heads in submission to the God of Glory. Then read:

Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord, According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue. Amen and amen. (II Peter 1:2,3 King James Version)

For the session leaders. Copy as needed for interest among the church.

The beautiful and tranquil body of water known familiarly to Christians as the Sea of Galilee astonishes the eye, lying like a giant sapphire set in blue or mauve tinted basalt hills. It is, of course, no ordinary body water. It exists as much in faith and legend as reality, and it holds a central place in the hearts and minds of millions of Christians around the world, for much of Jesus' ministry took place along, or in close proximity to, its shores. Not surprisingly, many pilgrims find here not only sunshine and water, but also the very spirit of Jesus' life and the echoes of his words.

One of the most beautiful spots in Israel, its charm is enhanced by its luxuriant subtropical growth. It is Israel's largest freshwater lake and, although it is fed by rain water and underground springs, most of its water comes from the Jordan River, which flows into it from the north from its sources at the foot of snow-covered Mount Hermon. The shoreline is filled with beaches, historic sites and farms raising a whole gamut of fruit: apples, avocados, beans, olives and bananas. Yet, amazingly, most of the shoreline remains wonderfully undeveloped and it looks much the same as it did at the time of Jesus. Today, however it is much quieter and its shores far more rural than they were in Jesus' day. Then, the shore was lined with villages, towns and substantial harbors, consisting of stone breakwaters and protected anchorages. Whereas today only four small ports serve the motorized boats and pilgrim ferries that move across the small lake, two-thousand years ago there were at least sixteen man-made harbors servicing the thousands of residents living beside its shores. Among the major harbors were Tiberias, Magdala, Gennesaret, Bethsaida, Capernaum and Hippos. The lake formed a primary transportation hub between three distinct political entities — Herod Antipas, Herod Philip and the cities of the Decapolis — who conducted commerce with each other and collected taxes from the merchants who crossed into their territories to sell their goods. Josephus tells us that in the 1st century AD there were some 230 fishing boats regularly working the lake which in a land with few fresh-water sources, still supports 20 different species of edible fish, the same as those caught by Jesus' fisherman disciples nearly two millennia ago.

"Galilee" is both the name of the lake and the region where it is located. The Sea of Galilee lies roughly 700 feet below sea level, the second lowest point on the earth's surface after the Dead Sea. It is 13 miles long, 7.5 miles across at its widest point and up to 150 feet deep. The high mountains and plateaus that almost surround it fall off sharply, especially on the east, forming a vast bowl; a result of ancient volcanic action.

Today it is Israel's major water source, supplying one third of the country's annual consumption. Throughout history it has been known variously as the "Sea of Chinneroth" and "Kinnereth" (Old Testament), "Water of Gennesar" (in accounts of the Hasmonean revolt), the "Lake of Gennesaret" the "Sea of Tiberias" and the familiar "Sea of Galilee" (New Testament), and the "Lake of Gennesareth" (in The Wars of the Jews, Josephus' record of the First Jewish Revolt against Rome). Today in Israel it is known by its ancient name, Yam Kinneret. In Hebrew, the word 'yam' means 'sea' and in ancient times it was used to describe both large and small bodies of water. That is why it was translated 'sea'

in European languages by those who never saw the lake or stood on its shores. The name Kinneret, some say, comes from the Hebrew kinnor, meaning harp or lyre, because the shape of the lake roughly resembles a lyre. Another tradition states the name derives from the the harp-like sounds of its waves. Still another tradition derives the name from the kinnara, a sweet and edible fruit produced by the Christ-thorn tree (*Ziziphus spina-christi*) which grows in the area, and from which, tradition says, Jesus' crown of thorns was fashioned. Regardless, a satellite view shows it to be in the shape of a human heart.¹

A NASA satellite photograph of the Sea of Galilee (Yam Kinneret) taken in 2009 is presented on the following page.

¹ http://www.welcometohosanna.com/LIFE_OF_JESUS/023_Ministry3SOGTowns.htm (no copyright noted on website).

