

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Feed My Sheep

Adapted by:
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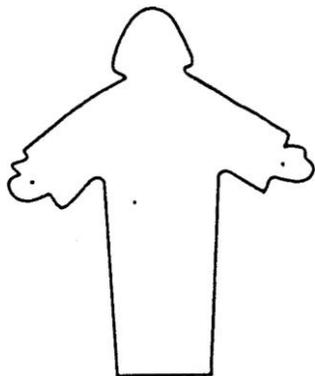
**Illustrations by:
Jennifer Schoeneberg**

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FEED MY SHEEP ... MATERIALS

- medium rectangular wicker basket to hold:

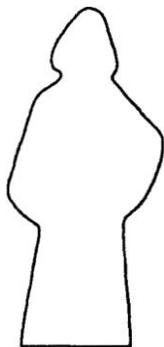
- wooden figure of Jesus
- wooden figure of Peter
- wooden figure of John
- wooden disciple figure
- wooden boat
- wooden fire
- blue felt oval sea



Jesus



Peter
Disciple



John



FEED MY SHEEP JOHN 21:1-19

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the story basket next to you.

During the silence, gently stroke the felt or wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place Peter, John and the other disciple figure at the far left of the storytelling area.

Unfold the blue felt sea. Position it in front of you, slightly to the left, and smooth the folds. Place the boat in the "sea", at the left edge. Put the three disciples in the boat.

Move the boat to the center of the sea. Point it away from you.

Place Jesus at the right edge of the sea.

Touch the Jesus figure and shake your head.

Touch the boat briefly.

Shake your head as you say "no".

Indicate the right side of the boat (children's right).

Gently touch Jesus. Touch the sea where the nets would be "thrown" in.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make it your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this story.

After Jesus had risen from the dead, the disciples saw him several times.

One day Peter, John and some of the other disciples decided to go fishing.

They went out and fished all through the night, but they caught nothing.

Just as the sun was coming up Jesus came to the beach.

The disciples saw a man on the beach, but they didn't know it was Jesus.

Jesus called to them, "Children, did you catch any fish?"

The disciples called back, "No."

Then Jesus said, "Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

They still didn't know it was Jesus. But they threw their nets on the right side of the boat.

Starting with fingertips together, move your hands apart to indicate many fish.

Touch the figure of John.

Remove Peter from the boat. Turn the figure horizontally and move it quickly to the right, through the sea, to stand next to Jesus.

Move John and the other disciple to the right edge of the sea in the boat.

Place the wooden fire to the right of Peter and Jesus.

Indicate the boat, with one hand.

Move John and the other disciple figure to the right of the fire. Outline an imaginary pile of fish. Emphasize the number "153".

With one or both hands gesture for the disciples to come.

Touch one or more of the disciples.

Hold out your hand to each disciple, one at a time.

Hold up three fingers as you speak.

Move Peter and Jesus to the right, slightly away from John and the other disciple.

Touch Peter and speak softly.

This time they caught so many fish they couldn't pull the net back into the boat.

Then John said to Peter, "It is the Lord."

When Peter heard this he quickly put his cloak back on that he'd taken off for fishing and jumped into the water and raced to Jesus.

But the others came in with the boat. They weren't far from shore and they were dragging the net full of fish.

When they all got to land, they found that Jesus had made a fire and there was fish and bread on it for them.

Jesus told them, "Bring some of the fish you caught. "

When they brought the fish, there were 153 of them. Even though there were so many the net was not broken.

Jesus said, "Come and eat breakfast."

None of the disciples dared to ask, "Who are you?" They knew it was Jesus.

Then Jesus gave them the bread and the fish.

This was the third time Jesus had been seen by the disciples since his resurrection.

After they ate Jesus said to Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Simon Peter said, "Yes, Lord; you know that I love you. "

With one hand, indicate part of the circle of children.

Touch the Jesus figure.

Touch the Peter figure, nod and speak a little louder.

With one hand, indicate the rest of the circle of children.

Hold up three fingers and touch the Jesus figure.

Move the Peter figure forward slightly and rest your hand on it.

Turn Peter to face Jesus.

With one hand, indicate the entire circle of children.

Nod as you speak the first sentence. Speak the second sentence very softly and clearly.

Touch the Peter figure very lightly and use a gentle voice.

Turn Jesus away from Peter and move the Jesus figure three "steps" to the right.

Move the Peter figure right behind Jesus.

Then Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

A second time Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Again Simon Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

A third time Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Now Peter was very sad, because Jesus kept asking if Simon Peter really loved Jesus.

Peter said, "Lord, you know everything. You know I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Jesus said then, "When you were young, you could decide where you would go. But when you are old, someone will tie you up and carry you where you don't want to go."

Jesus said this to help Peter understand he would die for his faith.

Then Jesus said to Peter, "Follow me."

And Peter did.

-:-
WONDERING QUESTIONS:

■ wonder why Peter jumped out of the boat?

■ wonder where Jesus got the fish and the bread?

■ wonder why Jesus asked Peter the same question three times?

■ wonder if Peter believed he would die for his faith?

Carefully place the wooden pieces In the basket.

Fold the left curved edge of the blue sea to the right curved edge.

Fold the bottom edge to the top edge.

Fold the left bottom corner to the right bottom corner.

Smooth the folds and place the felt piece in the story basket.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelf. Return to the circle and sit down.

Be sure each child has had the opportunity to choose their work before dismissing the children all together.

Watch carefully how ■ put these materials away so you will know how to handle them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

This is how we fold the blue felt sea. Put these side edges together.

Now put the bottom edge to the top edge.

Then place this corner with this corner.

Smooth the folds and it will now fit in the basket.

Watch carefully where ■ return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

■ wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and choose what each of us will do.

FEED MY SHEEP TEACHER HELPS

The placement of this story is to help those who can follow chronologically to understand that Jesus appeared to his disciples after the resurrection. This text tells us very clearly that this was the third time Jesus had appeared to the disciples. Often we tend to treat the Easter story as the end of the story. In actuality, it's the beginning.

There are some fascinating events in this story, and some strange ones. It's fascinating that the disciples didn't recognize Jesus. Even when they heard his voice they didn't recognize him. Not until Jesus had done one of his famous "signs" (those actions that pointed to him as the Messiah) did John, the disciple Jesus loved, realize it was Jesus. Then, impulsive Peter jumps over the side of the boat to go and find the Savior. The others prudently return, dragging the net that has been filled to overflowing and yet didn't break. Another fascinating and yet strange occurrence is Jesus asking the disciples for some fish, when the author tells us there is already fish on the fire. It's also very fascinating that the disciples don't dare say to Jesus, "Who are you?" They know he's Jesus and yet they are having a hard time really believing that this is the Jesus with whom they walked and talked. We get the feeling that the only one who dared to talk with Jesus was Peter.

Jesus invites the disciples to eat. That seems like such a simple statement, but in it is a powerful model for us today. The disciples had worked all night. They were tired and they were hungry. It was not time for theological discussions, sermons or faith questions; it was time to eat. So often we are anxious to bring the gospel to people who are hungry, homeless and cold. But Jesus reminds us that, first, we must meet their basic human needs. Only after breakfast does Jesus take Peter aside for his talk.

Three times Peter is asked if he loves Jesus and three times Peter says he does. We have to wonder, as do most scholars, if this is not Jesus' restoration of Peter's place with Jesus. Peter's three affirmations replace the three denials in the courtyard the night of Jesus' trial.

The last part is particularly difficult. I hesitated first to include it and yet I believe it is important for the story. Jesus has just asked Peter to feed the sheep and lambs, those who follow and trust. And Peter has said that he will, because he truly loves Jesus and believes him to be God's son and the Messiah. Jesus then reminds Peter that when he was young he went where he wanted. But now, as he gets older and completely commits his life to Jesus, he will probably suffer for his promise. Most scholars believe this has been included to allude to the death of Peter, which by tradition was under the reign of Nero, about 64 BE by crucifixion. (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible, edited by Charles Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987, p.728) Peter has one last chance not to follow Jesus. He's been warned. But Peter is finished with his denials and weaknesses. He followed Jesus and became the leader of the disciples.

In the wondering questions we first try to understand why Peter jumped out of the boat. Did he want to be the first one near Jesus? Did he want to make sure it wasn't a ghost? Was he just so happy that Jesus was there? Allow the wonderment and encourage all answers.

The second question wonders where Jesus got the fish and bread. You will notice an interesting movement among the children here. Some of the children will believe that Jesus produced it by magic, while others may say he brought it with him. But most children will lean toward Jesus somehow magically producing what the disciples would eat. The children are ready to give Jesus power and authority in these matters. They are comfortable with that.

When answering the third question, some of the older children will remember the story of Peter denying Jesus three times. If they don't remember it, don't panic. The story will be theirs one day, as long as we keep telling them faithfully. Instead, enjoy other responses. They might say, Jesus wanted to be sure or Jesus was testing him or perhaps they believe Peter had to be sure, so he wouldn't forget. Don't give them the answer about Peter's three denials. If you do that, you merely take away the child's experience of learning. The passing on of information is not teaching, nor is receiving it, learning. Learning is encountering the information personally."

As we speak of Peter's death, the very young children will not understand how it is related to the story. They will, most likely, miss completely the last two verses of this story. The older children may be divided on the answer. Some, will believe Peter knew he would die when he agreed to follow Jesus, others will not believe that he did.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

This is a good place to read the story of Peter's denial of Jesus (Matthew 26:30-75). Ask the children how the three responses of Peter in today's story compare with the three responses in that story.

Why do you think the disciples were afraid to ask Jesus "Who are you?"

What do you think the other disciples thought about Peter jumping out of the boat?

Who in your life do you love and trust enough to follow for the rest of your life?