

GOD'S PLAN IS BEST

SERIES: A NEW LIFE

Join us throughout the month of March as we learn stories about the NEW LIFE Jesus Christ offers in himself when we accept Him into our hearts! We will be reading through the books of Luke and John.

REMEMBER VERSE

PSALMS 139:23-24—Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.

SCHEDULE

All Services

0:00—0:35	Small Group (Respond Activity/Lesson)
0:35—0:40	Transition to Large Group
0:40—1:00	Large Group (B100)
1:00—1:05	Transition to Small Group
1:05—1:15	Bless and Dismiss

NOTES

LEADER RESOURCES

SERIES OVERVIEW

CURRENT WEEK: God's Plan Is Best

Peter

WEEK 2: God Knows Everything

Woman at the Well

WEEK 3: Jesus Seeks and Saves

Zacchaeus

WEEK 4: Remember & Celebrate

Feast: Trumpets

EQUIP

Imagine that you're fishing at a nearby lake or beach. Suddenly, a person walks up to you and asks you to leave your family and your business and follow him. This person might draw more than a strange look from you—maybe even a call to the police. But when this scenario played out with Jesus and Peter, a very specific cultural context applied.

In the Jewish educational system of the day, there were three different levels of learning. Both boys and girls, ages six to 12, participated in Bet Sefer, where they learned to read, write, and memorize the Torah (the five books of Moses). The next level was Bet Midrash, for boys ages 13 to 16. Only the top students continued at this level. Here they memorized the entire Old Testament. They continued to be taught by the local rabbi while also learning the family trade.

Then, only the best of the best would be specially selected by well-known traveling rabbis to enter Bet Talmud, for those ages 15 to 30. Very few would make it this far. Those chosen would often leave home to travel with and emulate the rabbi. This was the highest of honors.

As such, countless requests were made of these rabbis to take on new talmidim, or disciples. The potential talmidim were evaluated on their potential to become like the rabbi and on their perceived commitment level. Most students were rejected. Only a very select few heard the longed-after words "Follow me."

So when these young fishermen were asked by this very famous Rabbi, Jesus, to leave everything they had ever known to follow Him, this was a dream come true. This was something every Jewish mother dreamt of for her child. This was something that conferred upon them the highest respect. And this was something through which Peter learned that God's plan is best.

ENCOURAGE

God calls us—ordinary men, women, and children—to be a part of His story. We may not be able to skip ahead to the chapters we like, and we might not like how the stories of our lives progress, but we know they will be amazing in the end. We know that we don't write our own stories; God does that. As Proverbs 16:9 says, "In their hearts humans plan their course, but the LORD establishes their steps."

But being in the middle of the story, not knowing how things will resolve, isn't easy. Take a sheet of paper and write down a couple of "scenes" from your life that were very difficult or painful. Can you look back and see how God was at work in them, using them for good (Romans 8:28)? Are you going through something hard right now, something you can't imagine God ever using for good? Ask Him for His comfort and the ability to trust Him and His carefully orchestrated plans. God is good, He loves you, and His plan is best.

WELCOME

Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: If you invited someone to follow you around for a whole day, what are three activities they might see you doing?

RESPOND

A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.

God's plan is best and He has invited each one of us to know Him, follow Him, and be a part of His great plan.

INSTRUCTIONS: Hand each child a sheet of Boat Cutouts. Instruct them to write the word "people" in the blank space on the cutout for the body of the boat. Have them color the pieces as they would like. Then have them cut out the pieces and glue together the sail, mast, and body of the boat.

SUPPLIES:

- Boat Cutouts
- Coloring Supplies
- Scissors
- Glue

REFLECT

A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.

Jesus provided a miraculous catch of fish for Peter and the other fishermen. Then Jesus invited them to be part of God's plan. God's plan is best! We can also "fish for people" by telling others about God's plan.

- Why did crowds of people follow Jesus? *John 6:2*
- What was so amazing about their catch of fish? *Luke 5:6-7*
- Why did Peter tell Jesus to leave him after he saw the miracle Jesus did? *Luke 5:8*
- How would you respond if you saw Jesus perform a miracle in front of you?
- What did Jesus mean when He said that Peter would "fish for people"? *Luke 5:10b*
- What do you think it would be like for Simon Peter and his friends to leave their lives and follow Jesus? Why? *Luke 5:11*
- How has God invited you to be a part of His plan?

BLESS

A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

JEREMIAH 29:11 - "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

BLESSING: May you know that God's plan is best. May you trust Him each day.

NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

RESOURCES PROVIDED:

- NONE

STORYTELLING

Have any of you gone fishing before? Did you catch anything? This reminds me of another part of The Big God Story. Before I tell you more, let's pause and invite the Holy Spirit to teach us. *Lead kids in a Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

Jesus is God. He chose to come to earth as a baby and grow up like you and me. But Jesus never sinned. The Bible says that as Jesus became a man, He was wise and "grew in favor" with God and others. He knew that God's plan is best.

When Jesus was 30 years old, He began His ministry to others. Crowds of people followed Him just to hear Him speak. They were amazed by the things Jesus said as He told them about how God's plan is best.

Jesus traveled to a place called Judea and began to teach the people. *Invite kids to turn in their Bibles to Luke 5:1 and follow along as you read.* I wonder how it would feel to be in a huge crowd! The crowd got so big! Let's see what happened next. *Read vv. 2-3 (or ask a volunteer to read) as kids follow along.*

Ask a volunteer to read v. 4 as everyone follows along. Peter didn't fish with a fishing pole and a little hook. Many fishermen at that time used heavy nets that they lowered into the water. Fish would swim into the net, and then the fishermen would pull up the net and take out the fish. The net full of fish could get really heavy. It was hard work!

Let's see how Peter responded to what Jesus told him. *Read or ask a volunteer to read v. 5.* These men caught fish for a living. Was Jesus a fisherman? *Invite responses.* No, Jesus was a teacher and a builder. People didn't necessarily know Him for His fishing skills. Even so, Peter agreed, went into the deep water, cast his net, and ... guess what happened? He caught so much fish the nets began to break and the boat began to sink! It was probably the best catch of fish that the fishermen had ever seen or would ever see again!

Do you think Simon Peter was jumping for joy with all those fish? Let's read how he really reacted. *Read vv. 8-9.* They knew it was a miracle. They knew Jesus, who had performed the miracle, was no ordinary man; He is God! Peter didn't feel worthy of this amazing miracle. Well,

Jesus didn't go away. Instead, Jesus asked Peter to come with Him! What does that mean? *Pause for answers.* It's amazing: God, the God of all creation, invited Peter, a fisherman, to be a part of His plan! Wow! Jesus said, in verse 10, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." When Jesus said, "fish for people," He meant that Peter would tell others about Jesus. God was inviting Simon Peter to use his talents for a bigger purpose—to be a part of God's big plan to bring people into relationship with Him.

Peter was an ordinary guy who might not have thought he was in any way special, but Jesus did. Jesus loved him and had a special part for Peter to play in The Big God Story. Let's see how Peter responded. *Read v. 11.* Peter didn't feel worthy of God's loving choice to use him in His big plans. Just like Peter, we might not feel worthy for God to choose to use us in His big plans. But because God's plan is best and He loves us so much, He invites us to follow Him.

God also invites us into His plans to bring people into relationship with Him. How do we enter into relationship with God? *Invite answers.* Good thoughts. When we trust that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose again, we become one of God's children and will live forever with Him! It's such good news, and we can share it with others. What are some ways we can share the good news? *Pause for answers.* Good thinking. We can show love to others. How? *Invite responses.* Good thoughts. We can take care of those who are hurt or sick. We can pray for people who are having difficult times. And so much more. When people see how we treat them, and one another, they'll see that we're Jesus' disciples—they'll see His love through our lives. It's all a part of following God's plans, and His plans are best.

Jesus calls us to more amazing lives than we could ever dream for ourselves. Because of God's great love and mercy, we have been invited into His plans—the best plans.