Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Restores Peter

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus asked Peter, "lovest thou me?" and said, "Follow me." Jesus gives new starts, and we show our love for Him by following Him and caring for others.
Bible passage: John 21:1–19. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs." *John 21:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Clear some space for the opening game.

1. Opening game: Second Chance Toss (5–10 minutes)

Kids stand in a circle and toss a paper fish (or a rolled-up sock) to each other. Anyone who drops it gets a second chance: they pick it up and keep playing. Ask: *How does it feel to get a second chance after you mess up?* Say: "Peter once failed Jesus badly. In today's story, Jesus meets Peter on a beach and talks with him."

2. Bible story: Jesus Restores Peter (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to John 21. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Before this story. On the night before Jesus died, Peter warmed himself at a fire of coals and denied three times that he was Jesus' disciple (John 18:17–18, 25–27). Then Jesus died, was buried and rose again.

A night of fishing. Look up John 21:1–3. Shewed means showed. Seven disciples were together: Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee (James and John, Matthew 4:21) and two other. They fished all night and caught nothing.

The stranger on the shore. Look up John 21:4–6. Meat means food. They cast the net on the right side and could not draw it in for the **multitude**, the great number, of fishes.

"It is the Lord." Look up John 21:7. Girt means tied on. Peter put on his fisher's coat and cast himself into the sea. The others came in a little ship, dragging the net, about **two hundred cubits** from land, about 300 feet (21:8).

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Breakfast on the shore. Look up John 21:9–11. There was a fire of coals with fish on it, and bread. Peter drew the net to land, full of great fishes, one hundred fifty-three, and the net was not broken. Jesus said, "Come and **dine**" (eat); none of them **durst**, dared, ask "Who art thou?" (21:12). Jesus gave them bread and fish (21:13). This was the third time Jesus showed Himself to His disciples after He was risen (21:14).

Three questions. Look up John 21:15. Lovest thou me more than these? means do you love Me more than these? **Yea** means yes. **Look up John 21:16–17.** Peter was **grieved**, sad, the third time. Each time Jesus gave him a job: feed My lambs, feed My sheep.

Follow me. Jesus told Peter something about his future, and then He said, "Follow me" (21:18–19).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. When Peter heard it was the Lord, he jumped into the sea (John 21:7). What does that tell you about how Peter felt about Jesus?
2. Peter denied three times that he was Jesus' disciple (John 18:17, 25–27). Jesus asked him three times, "lovest thou me?" (21:15–17). What do you notice?
3. Why do you think Peter was grieved the third time (21:17)?
4. Jesus said "Feed my sheep." Who are Jesus' sheep, and how can a kid help take care of them?
5. What does it look like to follow Jesus at school, at home and with your friends?

Recall questions

1. What did the disciples catch all night? *(Nothing, John 21:3)*
2. How many great fishes were in the net? *(An hundred and fifty and three, 21:11)*
3. What two foods did Jesus give them? *(Bread and fish, 21:13)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **dined** means ate; **lovest thou me** means do you love Me; **yea** means yes; **thou knowest** means you know; **lambs** are baby sheep. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Peter had failed, but Jesus gave him a job and said, 'Follow me' (John 21:19). Jesus also said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15, KJV). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). Not long after this, Peter stood up and preached (Acts 2:14), and he told the people how to obey the gospel: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: each morning, tell Jesus, "Lord, You know that I love You." Then find one way to care for someone that day.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. John 21:1: At what sea did Jesus show Himself? *(The sea of Tiberias)*
2. John 21:3: What did Peter say he would go do? *(A fishing)*
3. John 21:6: On which side of the ship should they cast the net? *(The right side)*
4. John 21:7: What did Peter put on before he jumped into the sea? *(His fisher's coat)*
5. John 21:9: What did they see when they came to land? *(A fire of coals, fish laid thereon, and bread)*
6. John 21:12: What did Jesus say to them? *(Come and dine)*
7. John 21:15: What did Jesus tell Peter to feed? *(My lambs)*
8. John 21:19: What did Jesus say to Peter at the end? *(Follow me)*

Or choose the **Jesus Restores Peter word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/jesus-restores-peter-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/jesus-restores-peter-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/jesus-restores-peter-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/jesus-restores-peter-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, You know all things, and You know that we love You. Thank You for giving Peter a new start, and for giving us new starts too. Help us to follow You and to care for the people around us. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what Jesus told Peter about his future (John 21:18–19): say simply, "Jesus told Peter that when he was old, others would carry him where he would not want to go, and that he would glorify God (21:18–19). Then Jesus told Peter, Follow Me (21:19)." Suggest they ask their pastor for more.

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