Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Restores Peter

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Jesus asked Peter, "lovest thou me?" We show we love Jesus when we follow Him and care 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, 6 index cards, a marker, about 20 paper fish, a bedsheet or blanket for a net, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 cards (see part 4). Hide the paper fish around the room. Put a bookmark in your Bible at John 21.

1. Opening game: Which Side? (5 minutes)

The kids stand in a line facing you. Call out "Left side!" and they hop to the left. Call "Right side!" and they hop to the right. Go faster and faster. Then say: "One morning some fishermen had caught nothing all night. Someone on the shore told them which side of the ship to cast their net. Let's find out what happened!"

2. Bible story: Jesus Restores Peter (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to John 21, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Jesus had died on the cross, and He rose again! Now Jesus **shewed**, or showed, Himself again to His disciples at the sea of **Tiberias** (John 21:1). Seven disciples were together there, and Simon Peter was one of them (21:2).

Peter said, "I go a fishing." The others said, "We also go with thee." They fished from a ship, but that night they caught nothing (21:3).

In the morning Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not know it was Jesus (21:4). He called, "Children, have ye any **meat**?" Meat means food. They said, "No" (21:5). Jesus said, "Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find." They did, and the net was so full of fishes that they could not pull it in (21:6)!

One disciple said, "It is the Lord." Peter put on his fisher's coat and jumped into the sea (21:7)! The others came in a little ship, pulling the net full of fishes (21:8).

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The story continues: On the shore they saw a **fire of coals**, with fish on it, and bread (John 21:9). Peter pulled the net to land. It was full of great fishes: one hundred fifty-three! And the net was not broken (21:11). Jesus said, "Come and **dine**," which means come and eat (21:12). Jesus gave them bread and fish (21:13).

When they had eaten, Jesus asked Peter, "Simon, son of Jonas, **lovest thou me**?" That means, "Do you love Me?" Peter said, "Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs" (21:15). Lambs are baby sheep.

Jesus asked a second time. Peter said, "thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" (21:16). Jesus asked a third time, and Peter was **grieved**, or sad. He said, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep" (21:17).

Say: "Not long before, on the night before Jesus died, Peter had denied three times that he was Jesus' disciple (John 18:17, 25–27). Now Peter said three times, 'I love thee.' Jesus gave Peter a job: take care of My people, like a shepherd feeds his sheep. Then Jesus said, '**Follow me**' (21:19)."

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. How many fish did the disciples catch that night? *(Nothing, John 21:3)*
2. On which side of the ship did Jesus say to cast the net? *(The right side, 21:6)*
3. How many great fishes were in the net? *(One hundred fifty-three, 21:11)*
4. What did Jesus ask Peter three times? *("Lovest thou me?" 21:15–17)*
5. What did Jesus say at the end? *("Follow me," 21:19)*

4. Memory verse: Fishes in a Row (5 minutes)

Write one part on each card: *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.* Explain the old words: **dined** means ate, **lovest thou me** means do you love Me, **yea** means yes, and **thou knowest** means you know. Read the verse together. Then give the 6 cards to 6 kids, mixed up. They are "fish in the net," and the class helps them stand in the right order. Read it again. Mix the cards and play again with 6 new kids.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus asked Peter, 'lovest thou me?' Jesus asks us the same thing. Jesus said, 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (John 14:15, KJV). God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! Not long after this story, Peter stood up and preached about Jesus (Acts 2:14). He told the people how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: show Jesus you love Him by doing one kind thing for someone every day, and follow Him by obeying His Word.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: 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), the coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/jesus-restores-peter), or **Fill the Net:** spread the bedsheet "net" on the floor. The kids find the hidden paper fish and bring them to the net. Count them together. Say: "Peter's net had one hundred fifty-three great fishes, and it was not broken (John 21:11)!"

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, 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 others. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks, "Did Jesus forgive Peter?": say, "Jesus talked with Peter, gave him a job to do and said, 'Follow me' (John 21:15–19). Later Peter preached about Jesus to a great crowd (Acts 2:14). Jesus gives new starts!"

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