

CALLED...

OUT OF YOUR BOAT

"Anyone who serves me must follow me." John 12:26



connec⁺tion
ministries

**DISCUSSION GROUP
LEADERS GUIDE**

INTRODUCTION

This year's Summer Friendship Gathering (SFG) theme is "Called Out of Your Boat." We are not actually talking about getting out of your blow-up kayak or luxury yacht. We are going to study how we can eagerly jump out of our old way of doing things, and the things we want to do. Instead, Jesus is calling each of us to go and do the things He wants us to do. We join Jesus in His mission.

Our theme verse comes from John 12:26 (NIRV)

"Anyone who serves me must follow me. And where I am, my servant will also be. My Father will honor the one who serves me."

This week we will be studying Peter's journey to follow Jesus' calling on his life. We will be talking a lot about how we are also called to follow Jesus and love one another.

**DAY 1 - CALLED TO FOLLOW: Jesus calls Peter to be a Fisher of Men.
John 1, Luke 5:11**

Day 1 Bible Verse:

"So, they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him."

Luke 5:11 (NIRV)

Peter hears God's Word taught from Jesus' own mouth from his boat. He witnessed a miracle that landed him a boat load of fish. He left everything to follow Jesus' call to become a fisher of men.

INTRODUCTION CONTNTINUED

DAY 2 - CALLED TO STEP OUT: Jesus calls Peter out on the water and calms the storm. **Matthew 14:22-32**

Day 2 Bible Verse

“But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

Matthew 14:7 (NIRV)

Jesus walks on water to His disciples in the middle of a storm. He invites Peter to walk to Him and Peter steps out of the boat and walks on the water. He begins to sink when he takes his eyes off of Jesus. Jesus is inviting us to step out of our comfort and desires.

DAY 3 - CALLED TO JUMP OUT: Peter jumps out of his boat eager to get to Jesus.

John 21:1-17

(This lesson is taught during the Day 3 worship service)

Daily Bible Verse

“Peter, do you love Me?” “Yes Lord, you know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.”

John 21:16 (NIRV)

Jesus again demonstrates His love for His disciple with another boatload of fish. With excitement, Peter jumps out of the boat and swims to Jesus. Jesus challenges Peter’s love for Him and calls him to care for the people in His Church. Jesus wants us to have the same excitement to love and care for others.

HELPFUL HINTS

BE PREPARED!

To be properly prepared to participate in your discussion group please read through this guide, watch the Discussion Group video by following this link;

<https://connection-ministries.org/summer-friendship-gathering-training/>

and study the following Biblical passages prior to the event:



DAY 1

CALLED TO FOLLOW

The call of Peter to follow Jesus (John 1, Luke 5:1-11)

DAY 2

CALLED TO STEP OUT

Jesus walks on water and calls Peter to Him (Matthew 14:22-32)

DAY 3

CALLED TO JUMP OUT

Jesus re-invites Peter to care for Jesus' church (John 21:1-7)

REVIEW EACH DAY'S OUTLINE

REVIEW EACH DAY'S OUTLINE. In each day's lesson you will find 4 sections: Introduction, Bible Lesson, Discussion Questions, Reflection Questions, and Group Prayer. These are tools for you to use to help our adult friends understand the lesson.

INVOLVE EVERYONE IN THE GROUP

INVOLVE EVERYONE IN THE GROUP. Everyone in the group should be encouraged to participate in the discussion, including the adult friends, families, direct support staff, and volunteers. It is important to moderate the conversation so that all participants have a chance to share. Even though some adult friends may not use words, they can hear, listen, and learn from the discussion.

HAVE PARTICIPANTS READ ALOUD

READING ALOUD IS IMPORTANT. If you have adult friends with disabilities, direct support staff, volunteers, or a family member in your group that is a good reader, if time allows, consider having them read the Bible passage aloud, This encourages group participation and involvement.

PATIENTLY WAIT FOR A RESPONSE

PATIENTLY WAIT FOR A RESPONSE when asking a question. Those with disabilities sometimes need a moment to process the question, and to formulate their answer. If he/she does not respond after a minute, ask the question again or rephrase it. Do not hesitate to ask for help from our friend's direct support staff and housemates in the group. Companions can whisper answers in adult friend's ear.

CONNECT THE BIBLE LESSON TO REAL LIFE

CONNECT THE BIBLE LESSON. Connecting the day's Bible story to real life situations helps everyone apply God's Word to their own lives. Feel free to give examples from your own life where the lesson relates to your situation. And whenever possible, tie the discussions back to the importance of trusting Jesus and obeying His calling.

DAY 1 - CALLED TO FOLLOW

Jesus calls Peter to be a
Fisher of Men
(John 1 and Luke 5:1-11)

DAILY BIBLE VERSE

“So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed Him.”

Luke 5:11 (NIRV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Jesus wants us to trust Him when He asks us to do something we don't understand.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit reveals our sinfulness and need for a Savior.
- What does Jesus want each of us to leave behind to follow Him?
- How can we also be fishers of men (or people)?

HELPFUL PROPS & TEACHING AIDS

- SFG DAY 1 PowerPoint slides
- Object Lessons (see object lesson video with note pages)
- Props for skit - three chairs
- Three people to play in skit

DAY 1 LESSON **INTRODUCTION**

This week we will study three Gospel lessons about Peter. In these three stories we will see how Jesus called Peter out of his fishing boat to join Him in His mission. We will also look at ways Jesus is calling each of us to join Him in His mission.

Now, we aren't being called "out of our boat." Peter worked in a boat to take care of his family and himself. But like Peter, we are being called out of just living for ourselves to live our lives for Jesus.

DAY 1 BIBLE LESSON

Our story begins in the gospel of John chapter 1. Andrew and another disciple were following John the Baptist. One day they heard John refer to Jesus as the “Lamb of God.” At that time, they started following Jesus.

Andrew immediately finds his brother Simon, who we know as Peter, and tells him, “We have found the Messiah, which means Christ.” And he brought Simon to Jesus.”

“...Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon, son of John. You will be called Peter.”

The story continues in Luke 5 where Jesus is preaching the word of God in the synagogues of Judea. Crowds of people were pressing around Him.

Andrew and Peter were fisherman in the area where Jesus was teaching. They had been fishing all night but caught nothing. They were cleaning their nets.

Jesus saw their boats near the shore and decided to get in one of the boats which belonged to Peter. He asked Peter to take the boat out a little from the shore so the people could hear him better. Jesus then taught the crowds the Word of God.

In the midst of Peter’s frustrating night of fishing, Jesus got in his boat and began to teach the people. When he finished speaking, he turned to Peter and said, “Go out into deep water. Let down the nets so you can catch some fish.”

Jesus is now calling them to put their nets back in the water after they wasted a full night not catching any fish. They are tired! They already cleaned their nets and now they will have to clean them again.

You can hear Peter’s frustration when he answered, “Master, we’ve worked hard all night and haven’t caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.”

To their surprise, as soon as they let down their nets, they caught a huge number of fish! So many that their nets were at the point of breaking. They had to signal their partners James and John who were in another boat to help them. They all worked together to pull in their boat load of fish.

When Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus’ knees. “Go away from me, Lord!” he said. “I am a sinful man!”



DAY 1 BIBLE LESSON CONTINUED

Seeing this miracle and being in the presence of Jesus, Peter became aware of his sinful heart. Faced with his sin, he didn't think he could be close to Jesus. But Jesus was already close to him. He was sitting right there in his boat.

Jesus loved Peter and He said to him **“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men instead of fish!” Luke 5:10.**

Peter knew he was a sinner, but Jesus still called him out of his boat. He called him from being a fisherman to become a fisher of men.

The Bible says after they pulled their boats up on shore, they left everything to follow Jesus.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Jesus choose to teach from Peter's boat?

The crowds were pressing in on Jesus and He wanted to teach from Peter's boat so He could be heard.

2. What happened when Peter obeyed Jesus and let down his nets in the deep water?

To their surprise, as soon as they let down their nets, they caught a huge number of fish! So many that their nets were at the point of breaking.

3. So, what does it mean to be part of Jesus' work in the world?

Some of us can teach or tell a friend about Jesus. We can stop and pray with a friend or anyone in need. We can encourage others when they're sad or struggling. We can give to people in need.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Who do we need in our lives when we are frustrated?

Jesus! Yes, the disciples needed Jesus too. They did what He told them and let down their nets again.

2. Can we do this on our own, or do we need help?

Jesus equips and helps us with this work through His Holy Spirit.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. Like Peter, do you ever feel like you have a sinful heart when you are in the presence of God?**

The Bible says in Romans 3:23 Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. But if you have trusted Jesus, you have the Holy Spirit in your heart. Jesus lives in us through the Holy Spirit.

- 2. How can you be a fisher of men (people)?**

- 3. What are things we are willing to leave behind to follow Jesus?**

Skip watching TV so you can and go to Friendship Group.

Give up a nap so you can help someone with a chore?

Maybe, leave behind our fear and ask God to give you courage to pray with someone?

As part of this week's activity, take a few minutes to put names on the foam fish to be later added to the fishing net.

PRAYER TIME

Leave enough time to take praises and prayer requests. Be sure to ask all our adult friends, volunteers, family members, and care givers/support staff for praises and prayer requests as well.

At the end of your group's discussion time, be sure names are on the booklets and place them in the table bins with everyone's nametag.

DAY 2 - CALLED TO STEP OUT

Peter steps out of his boat and walks to Jesus on the water

(Matthew 14:22-32)

DAILY BIBLE VERSE:

*“Lord, is it You?” Peter asked. “if it is, tell me to come to you on the water.”
“Come,” Jesus said. Matthew 14:28-29*

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Jesus wants to build our faith so we will come to Him in any circumstance when He calls us.
- Peter wanted to be like Jesus and do the things Jesus did, even when it seemed impossible. Are we willing to do the hard things Jesus asks us to do?
- Jesus was Peter’s life preserver pulling him out of the water when he failed. Jesus promised to never leave us and He will be our life preserver too.
- We worship Jesus who is the source of everything that is good.

HELPFUL PROPS & TEACHING AIDS

- SFG DAY 2 PowerPoint slides
- Object Lessons (see video note pages)
- Props for skit - three chairs
- Three people to play in skit

DAY 2 LESSON INTRODUCTION

On day two Jesus walks to His disciples on the water in the middle of a storm. He invites Peter to walk to Him and Peter steps out of the boat. Jesus is inviting us to step out of our comfort zone and be willing to do the things He wants us to do. He calls us to trust Him even in the storms of our lives.

DAY 2 BIBLE LESSON

Today we will learn what happens when Jesus calls Peter to **step out** of the boat in the middle of a big storm. He invites Peter to come to Him walking on the water to build the faith of His disciples, and especially Peter's faith. There will be times when Jesus will call us to do something that is hard to do. When we do things that are hard, it builds our faith.

In Matthew 14, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat after a couple long days of teaching and healing people. He had them go on ahead of him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. He needed to be alone with His Father.

Later that night Jesus came down from the mountain after praying. The boat was already a long way from land when a great storm arose. The disciples were being pounded by the waves.

"Shortly before dawn, Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the water. They saw him and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear."

Note: *You will notice that Jesus did not come out immediately. He waited until shortly before dawn to come out. Do you think He wanted the disciples to know in their hearts that they needed Him?*

"Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid.""

"Lord, is it you?" Peter asked. "If it is, call me to come to you on the water."

"Come," Jesus said. So, Peter stepped out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!"

"Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" he said. "Why did you doubt me?"

Peter saw Jesus walking on water and he was only able to step out of the boat because he trusted Jesus. He was putting his life in Jesus' Hands. Peter only began to sink when he took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the wind and the waves.

Jesus doesn't always call us to step out to love another person when everything is going well. Sometimes it's in the middle of turmoil or trouble. Jesus wants us to love others, even when we are angry.



DAY 2 BIBLE LESSON CONTINUED

If we are only thinking about how angry we are, we will not love them like Jesus wants us to love them. But if we keep thinking about Jesus, we can love them. Jesus is there to help us, just like He was there to lift Peter out of the water. We can trust Him with our lives, but we need to look at Jesus and not at our troubles.

The Bible says, “Peter cried out, ““Lord! Save me!” Right away Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “Your faith is so small!” he said. “Why did you doubt me?””

“When they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those in the boat worshipped Jesus. They said, “You really are the Son of God!”

Jesus knows we are weak, but He still calls us to step out of our boat and into His mission. Like Peter, sometimes our troubles seem too big, but Jesus is the One who is able to calm us in the middle of our troubles. Jesus calls us to put our lives in His hands.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Prayer was important to Jesus. Why is it important to us?

It is a way for us to talk to God. It is important to follow Jesus' example and to find time when we can be alone with God without other distractions.

2. Did Jesus call Peter to come to Him on a warm sunny day or in the middle of a storm?

In the middle of a storm.

3. What happened when Peter took his eyes off Jesus and looked at the wind and waves around him?

He began to sink

4. What did Peter do when he began to sink and how did Jesus respond?

He cried out to Jesus, "Save me!!" Jesus *immediately* reached out His hand and lifted him out of the water.

5. How did the disciples respond when Jesus got in the boat and calmed the storm?

They worshipped Jesus and proclaimed He was the Son of God. They recognized that only God has command over all of creation including the wind and waves. God is present in all our troubles, always with us and guiding us. Like the disciples, our response should always be to worship God.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. How might God call you to step out and do something that is hard?

God may call us to forgive someone who hurt us or ask someone to forgive us when we hurt them. He calls us to help our friends or housemates. He calls us to love people who are hard to love. He wants us to ask someone to come with us to Friendship Group.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS CONTINUED

2. What helps us keep our eyes on Jesus?

Reading the Bible. Pray when we feel worried or fearful and ask the Holy Spirit to help us be brave. Go to church and listen to what God says through our preachers and teachers.

3. What happens when our eyes are off Jesus and on ourselves or our troubles?

We may not sink in the water but maybe our troubles sink us. We can become depressed, or angry, and unloving. We can stop praying, stop going to church, or even stop following Jesus.

4. Who do you cry out to when you need help? Is it Jesus or someone or something else?

As part of this week's activity, take a few minutes to put names on the foam fish to be later added to the fishing net.

PRAYER TIME

Leave enough time to take praises and prayer requests.

Be sure to ask all our adult friends, volunteers, family members, and care givers/support staff for praises and prayer requests as well.

At the end of your group's discussion time, everyone can take their books home. Be sure to place nametags in the table bin.

DAY 3 - CALLED TO JUMP OUT

Peter jumps out of his boat to get to Jesus as fast as he can

(John 21:1-17)

If your Gathering does not have Day 3 Discussion Group time, we encourage you to work on these questions at home.

DAILY BIBLE VERSE

“Peter, do you love Me?” “Yes Lord, you know that I love You.” Jesus said, “Take care of My sheep.” John 21:16

(NIRV)

LESSON OBJECTIVES

- Jesus is with us always! He wants to be present with us in the good times, the bad times, special times, and in ordinary times every day.
- When we fail, Jesus is always near to remind us of our calling. He will re-invite us back to his mission.
- Peter was excited and jumped out of his boat. We need to jump at the privilege to follow Jesus.
- Jesus calls us to love and care for His people.

HELPFUL PROPS & TEACHING AIDS

- SFG DAY 3 PowerPoint slides
- Object Lessons (see video note pages)
- Props for skit - three chairs
- Three people to play in skit

DAY 3 LESSON **INTRODUCTION**

Today's lesson is titled **“Jump Out”**, and we will see Peter **jumped out** of his boat and swim to Jesus! In this lesson, Jesus calls Peter back to His mission after he

DAY 3 BIBLE LESSON

Our story is from John 21:1-17. It takes place after Peter denied Jesus three times. Jesus already died on the cross, rose from the dead, and appeared to His disciples twice. The disciples had lost their leader and didn't know what else to do.

One day Peter and several of the disciples were together by the Sea of Galilee. Peter said to the others he was going fishing. They decided that was a good idea and followed him.

Peter went back to what he knew best, back to the same boat Jesus called him out of. Back to what he thought he was good at — fishing. It was comfortable!

But he didn't do very well fishing. He and the other disciples fished all night, but they caught nothing. This is a good lesson for all of us. Apart from Jesus, there is nothing of value that we can do.

““Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore. But the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, “Friends, don't you have any fish?” “No,” they answered. He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat. There you will find some fish.” When they did, they could not pull the net into the boat because there were so many fish.””

Can you believe it! This same thing happened twice. And at first, they still didn't recognize it was Jesus. But one of the disciples realized who it was and said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Peter heard “It is The Lord”, he **jumped out** of the boat and swam to Jesus while the other disciples followed in the boat.”

Jesus had a fire on the shore with fish already cooking. He was making breakfast for them. Jesus told them to bring some of the fish they had caught.

Peter climbed back in the boat and helped the other disciples haul in the great catch of fish. They had caught 153 fish and again, their nets didn't break! The disciples dared not ask who He was because they knew “it is the Lord!”

In our story Jesus invited the disciples to join him for breakfast, an ordinary thing to do. Jesus also invites us into everyday fellowship with Him.

When Jesus and the disciples had finished eating, Jesus spoke to Peter. He asked, him, “Do you love me more than these others do?”



DAY 3 BIBLE LESSON CONTINUED

“Yes, Lord,” he answered. “You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again, Jesus asked, “Simon (Peter), son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

Jesus spoke to him a third time. He asked, “Simon (Peter), son of John, do you love me?”

Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He answered, “Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

In 1 Corinthians 12 we learn that the Holy Spirit gives us “spiritual gifts, or abilities, that are intended for the good of all, not just us. In our story, Peter shared his fish, the fish he could not have caught without Jesus. Later, he would preach a sermon with the spiritual gifts God gave him and 3,000 people would come to believe in Jesus that day. We have also been given spiritual gifts, or abilities that are just as important as Peters. Just like Peter we can use them to be part of Jesus’ mission to the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does this story sound familiar? Do you remember another time Jesus surprised the disciples with a boat load of fish?

That's right in our story on Day One. After another bad night of fishing, Jesus told these same men to throw out their nets on the right side of the boat and they would find some. As soon as they did, they caught a huge number of fish!

2. Why did Peter jump out of the boat?

Peter's exuberant response from seeing his Lord compelled him to jump into the water and get to Jesus as fast as he could. The boat couldn't move quick enough for Peter. This was his Lord, His Teacher, The Son of God!

3. Why do you think Jesus asked Peter three times "Do you love me?" Why did it hurt Peter?

Do you remember before Jesus was crucified Peter denied Jesus three times? Even after Peter denied knowing Jesus three times, Jesus is still re-inviting Peter back into His mission. God will always re-invite us back into His mission even when we fail.

4. Why did Jesus tell Peter to take care of his sheep?

He was not asking him to take care of sheep, but to take care of His people. Often the Bible refers to God's people as sheep. In **Psalm 95:7 He is our God. We are the sheep belonging to his flock. We are the people he takes good care of.**



REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- 1. Like Peter, are you eager to spend time with Jesus?**
- 2. Do you know how much you are loved by Jesus? What are some ordinary times in your life where you knew Jesus was with you?**
- 3. What mission is Jesus inviting you, or re-inviting you, to join Him in?**

He may be calling you to love your roommate when they are unlovable. Maybe it's choosing to forgive a friend that has hurt you because Jesus has forgiven you. Or maybe He calls you to stop and pray with someone who is going through a difficult time. Maybe He wants you to invite someone to Friendship group.