



# Following surprising instructions

## Children's Story

Cycle C, Epiphany 5

**Title:** Following surprising instructions

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**Text:** Luke 5: 1-11.

**Theme:** Jesus calls us to follow him

**Needed:** a paper towel, basin of water, and a clear cup.

### Wondering questions:

- I wonder what would have happened, if the fishermen in this story had refused to follow Jesus' instructions.
- I wonder if everyone who follows Jesus gets instructions that are surprising.
- I wonder what kind of surprising instructions Jesus has for us.

### Gathering Activity:

Invite the children to come and see what will happen in the children's story time. Thank them for gathering and invite them to become quiet, way down where they can feel God is near, where they can notice God is planning to surprise them with something today. Introduce the topic of following surprising instructions with this activity, an activity that can help us see that surprising things sometimes happen when we follow instructions. *Ask a helper to crumple up a paper towel and a second one to place it inside a clear cup. A third helper turns this cup upside down and immerses it in the basin. Then say something like: What happened? Were you surprised that the paper towel didn't get wet? The first time I tried this, I sure was! All kinds of things can happen when we follow surprising instructions. Now let's hear a story, from a six year old boy, where people were surprised at what happened when they followed some surprising instructions from Jesus.*

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## **Story:**

I was six years old when I saw Jesus for the first time. I remember that because it was the year Papa taught me to cast a net. We'd gone out to Lake Gennesaret nearly every day that summer. Papa and the men were using 8 foot nets, but Papa started me off with a 4 foot net. I vowed that some day I would be casting the 10 foot nets. There's nothing I wanted more than to be a fisherman like Papa. He told me once that the perfect casting technique required years of practice. Every time I cast the net into the water it became twisted and tangled. I could tell that Papa's friends were frustrated when this happened, but Papa patiently untangled the net and told me to try again, even when I got frustrated and wanted to give up.

The day I saw Jesus was one of those frustrating days, even for Papa. We had been out on the water all day and into the night, but had caught nothing! Papa's friend, Simon, finally told us to pack it in. There would be no fish today. We docked the boat at the shore, and I started washing the seaweed from the nets. As I did, I noticed Simon talking to another man. I couldn't hear what they were saying, but I was awfully curious. The man didn't look like any fishermen I'd seen lately, but I saw him step into Simon's boat. Simon shrugged his shoulders and brought the boat a little ways from the shore. My curiosity finally got the better of me. I put down the nets and raced to shore, pushing my way in front of the crowd that had gathered, eager to see what this strange man was going to do. Surely he wasn't going to try fishing tonight! I asked the older boy beside me who this man was. He told me it was Jesus, of Nazareth. Didn't I know that by now! I felt sheepish. Of course I had heard about Jesus, I had just never seen him before. Jesus started speaking from the boat and, even though there were hundreds of people on the beach, his calm voice could be heard by all. I was amazed that Jesus, the man everyone had been talking about, was sitting in Simon's boat!

After he finished speaking to the crowds, Jesus turned to Simon and said, "Go out into the deep water and let your nets down for a catch." Simon, along with the rest of us fishermen, was puzzled. I started to yell, "But we've been out all day and have caught nothing!" but Papa shushed me quickly. I was still puzzled when I saw Simon move the boat further from the shore, pick up the 8 foot net and, with perfect technique, cast it out into the deep water. After a few minutes Simon yelled, "It's full! The net's breaking! We need some help here!" Papa and I ran for our boat. Before I knew it both boats were filled with fish! I was so shocked that I froze for a moment and James had to tell me to keep working. Finally we made our way back to shore in boats that were nearly sinking! What a day! I never expected anything like this to happen!

The crowds cheered as we pulled onto shore. People couldn't stop talking about what a great catch we'd had. As I turned my head to start unloading the fish, I saw something few others saw that day. Simon fell down at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man." Jesus then said something I still think about today. He said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." I kept watching Simon as we cleaned up our best catch of the summer, still in awe of what we had received that day. He seemed different. Then, I heard Papa calling that it was time to go home. As we left the lakeshore, I saw Simon, James, and John all following Jesus. They just left everything and followed! I wished I could do the same. I didn't know much about Jesus the summer I turned six, but I knew that I wanted to get to know him.

## **Prayer:**

Jesus, please help us to be ready for your surprising instructions, to follow you, and get to know you better! Amen..