



# Stop Look Listen

LEARNING  
FROM  
PETER'S  
WALK  
WITH  
CHRIST

Your Grow. Pray. Study. (GPS) Guide  
for Small Group and Family Conversations

# STOP. LOOK. LISTEN.

GROW. PRAY. STUDY. GPS Guide for Small Groups and Family Conversations

January 1-7, 2018

Luke 5:1-11

## Jesus Calls the First Disciples

<sup>5</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. <sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." <sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." <sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. <sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

**Pray** *God of all creation, we come before you today as children longing to discover more about you and about our relationship with you. Guide us to listen to you as you call us out of our comfort zone and into places where leadership, compassion, and acts of justice are so desperately needed. You gift the called and provide for all that needed for your glory. Thank you for this journey! In your name, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior we pray. Amen*

**Insights** In the Gospel of Luke, we can envision the actual encounter Jesus had with the fishermen. There is a shoreline where the land meets the water and the scriptures says, "people" gathering around the boats to see the daily catch. Those who have been out to sea were tired and reluctant at first to follow God but Simon Peter responded in his exhaustion, "But because you say so, I will let down the nets." His leadership was obvious at first but his obedience was noted by all. He had followed Christ not because he was promised a huge collection of fish but because Jesus asked Simon Peter and the people to let out their nets and they did so, maybe grumbling a bit; they obeyed. Then the boats are filled with fish and Simon Peter falls at the feet of Jesus with his confession of sinfulness at his awe and disbelief. Jesus answers him, not with ridicule, but takes the moment to have a teachable experience...saying, "Don't be afraid, from now on you will fish for people."

## Discussion

After you have shared your highs and lows, discuss...

- How do you envision this scene from Luke? What would you do if you were out fishing (for a living, not a hobby) and you have returned with little catch only to be told what to do? Why or why not would you do as Jesus asked?
- Jesus reassures the people by addressing their fear. What kind of fear are they experiencing? Is there a difference between "awe" and "fear of God?"
- What do you think they were fearful would happen?
- If you and I dropped everything and followed Jesus, like Peter did, what could happen?

- Why did Jesus ask the “every day” kind of person to be disciples and “fishermen for God” instead of calling on distinguished religious leaders?
- Can you try to re-tell this story using the setting of your very own life? What is the same and what is different? Is it just as hard to imagine – dropping everything and following this radical, loving, life-giving Jesus today?

### Discussion for a Younger Crowd

- Ask – have you ever gone fishing? Why not? Or ask “what was it like?”
- Is something like going fishing a chore or playtime?
- The people in our scripture made all their money for their family by fishing. This is how they fed their families! Jesus has them continue to fish, but shows them there is more: more fish, more joy, more with Jesus. Yet, they are afraid. Ask “why are they afraid?”
- If you were asked to stop playing a video game, going to your sports practices/tournaments, or participate or perform in plays/music, would it be difficult?
- What about giving up your phone for a day? Or forever? Would you do it?
- In our world, is Jesus asking you to give up everything as a punishment or as an invitation to keep God’s message of kindness, caring, and love over the power of your phone! (video, game, sports, or TV/other)
- Would you be willing to give it a try? Put down the phone and listen to some great music that is God honoring. Put down the video game and read a book or talk with your family. Tell your coach that you will need to miss practice on a Sunday morning or Wednesday night so that you could go to church. Is this possible? Simon Peter figures that out; with Jesus, all things are possible.

### Family Activity

- Ask everyone “Who do you think is the most encouraging person in our family?”
  - How do you feel when you are encouraged?
  - How can we thank someone who encourages us?
    - Make a card, cookies, or simply say, thank you for encouraging me!
  - Challenge: Can we in our family see the best of one another? Leave a piece of paper on the refrigerator or public spot in the house; every time you see someone do something to encourage another person, write or draw it out! At the end of the week, look over the piece of paper and share how you felt to be encouraged.

### Notes

# STOP. LOOK. LISTEN.

GROW. PRAY. STUDY. GPS Guide for Small Groups and Family Conversations

January 14-20, 2018

Matthew 14:22-34

## Walking with Jesus in the Storm

<sup>22</sup> Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. <sup>23</sup> After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup> and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. <sup>25</sup> Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. <sup>26</sup> When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup> But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." <sup>28</sup> "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup> "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. <sup>30</sup> But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" <sup>31</sup> Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup> And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. <sup>33</sup> Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." <sup>34</sup> When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret.

### Pray

*God of all creation, stir our hearts to believe that you indeed believe in us! We give you thanks for all you have given us so many gifts, talents and resource. Forgive us that we are children who still struggle with wanting, more. May we turn around and upside down our idea of "more" and see that the more is – more hope, more strength, more love because we have faith in you and your mission. We ask that you give us a holy nudge to see what is before us so we become helpers to carrying your mission of hope forward into the world. Amen*

### Insights

Let's recap the scripture. It's a typical day of ministry for Jesus and his disciples. Or is it? After a busy day, the disciples stay in the boat where, as fishermen, they are pretty comfortable. It appears Jesus needs some quiet time, so he goes alone up onto the mountain. While there, Jesus prays. A storm comes at the same time. The scriptures say, Jesus walked up to his disciples (remember the disciples are out a considerable way in a boat.) Even though they have been with Jesus night and day, when they see him, they believe him to be a ghost and they are so frightened they scream. Once again, yes, once again, Jesus responds to this group of followers who are in his closest inner circle of friends, "Be encouraged! It's me. Don't be afraid." We are seeing this kind of response time and time again. The disciples just don't know who this Jesus really is. Or do they and they just struggle to live into this gift of Jesus walking right there with them in their highs and in their lows? Peter then cries out to Jesus, "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water." Jesus responds with, "Come." Then Peter must live into this tension that all of the disciples are struggling with trusting. God has gifted them with all they need. Jesus knows they can walk on the water; he has faith in them. They have an "ah ha" moment; with Jesus, the winds settled down. Their response? They worship Jesus!

### Discussion

After you have shared your highs and lows, ask...

- Have you ever been on a boat or flying on a plane? Share what was it like for you.
- How did you know whether you were on the boat or plane you were safe?
- Have you ever thought about walking on water?
- Our scripture has many themes. Can you think of a few words to share what you are hearing?
  - Maybe you leaned into Jesus needing quiet space.
    - Have you ever thought, "If I could only have 15 minutes of quiet, I would..."
  - Maybe you leaned into Jesus walking on water (how is this possible – proof?)

- Why would God invite Peter to be like him – to have the power to walk on water?
    - John 3:15-3:17
- Maybe you leaned into the theme that God is inviting – commanding – longing for our undivided attention.
- Maybe you leaned into this “ah ha.” Peter is so worried about falling into the water that he doesn’t pay attention to the “wow” of what God has gifted him to do. He fails to rejoice; instead, he goes straight to panic.
  - Do you sometimes have such a busy life that in the big “wow’s” you don’t have the energy or space to catch your breath and say “Thank you Jesus!”?
- Is this passage about Peter believing in Jesus’ ability to walk on water or about Peter accepting the ministry gift and to receive that Jesus trusts and gifts Peter to walk on the water?
- Pr Ortberg provided an insight that Peter could walk on water: he had to get out of the boat. Ask “What do you need to leave behind in order to move forward to what God is calling you to do?”

### Discussion for Youth

- Do you ever wish you had superhero powers? If yes, what powers would you want?
- In a superhero movie, what needs to happen for the super hero to prove to everyone his/her powers? (Crisis? Chaos? Destruction?)
- What do the people around a super hero typically do? Are they in “awe, disbelief, or joy?”
- Jesus isn’t a superhero; Jesus is God. He isn’t waiting for a disaster to prove his strength. Maybe we think we must “see” God to believe God? However, when Jesus was walking on the water, the disciples didn’t recognize him. Why? Was he too far away? Were they worried about the storm? Couldn’t they imagine he really could just come to them out on the boat? Why do you think we struggle to see Jesus?
- Maybe you are going through a “storm” right now with a friend, homework, or with your family. Do you have someone you can talk to about your storm? Would you be willing to pray about it?
- Jesus is with the disciples – always...whether or not they can see him.

### Family Activity

- Take a large brown grocery bag or the largest piece of paper you can find and tape it up in a spot you can easily see , write on, and talk about. Draw a line down the center of the paper.
  - On one side of the paper:
    - Think of names of people who have encouraged you, cheered you on, talked with you, and your gifts and talents.
    - Add names to the list all week long of people who are cheering you on.
  - On one side of the paper:
    - Think of names of people you have encouraged. Talk about how you cheered them on.
    - Pray for the people you are encouraging and thank God for their talents and gifts.

### Notes

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January 21-27, 2018

**Matthew 26:31-35**

**I Will Not Deny You**

<sup>31</sup> Then Jesus told them, "This very night you will all fall away on account of me, for it is written: "I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' <sup>32</sup> But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you into Galilee." <sup>33</sup> Peter replied, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I never will."  
<sup>34</sup> "Truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "this very night, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times." <sup>35</sup> But Peter declared, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." And all the other disciples said the same.

**Pray** *God of all creation, I am still learning things about myself. Sometimes it seems like I have it all together and, at other times, I disappoint everyone, including myself. God, thank you for your ongoing grace. Thank you for your patience and a safe place where I continue to grow in my faith, understanding, and willingness to proclaim you as Lord, even when I am afraid or when I am dancing for joy. Amen*

**Insights** This passage is located in the midst of Jesus' ministry. He has been with his disciples for approximately three years. He says to them, "You are going to deny you know me." What is the connection to other scriptures? It says in Zechariah 13:7 the very words that Jesus says to them. But Jesus doesn't just leave them in the thick of this crushing foreshadowing; he gives them the message of hope, "But after I have risen, I will go ahead of you..." Peter is closest to Jesus and says he will never deny who Jesus is – no matter what. We learn later that he does exactly as Jesus predicted: he denies his best friend is indeed the Son of God.

## **Discussion**

After you have shared your highs and lows, talk about...

- The scene with Peter is mentioned in all 4 of the gospels. Why do you think that is?
- Do you think that Peter shared his story with other people? Would they be shocked or wonder about what they would have done? Or have done?
- Have you ever had one of those moments or experiences that you were truly embarrassed or even ashamed? Would you be willing to share with the group?
- What would you do if you could do that same moment over? Peter wished he had walked on the water and that he had acknowledged Jesus when he had the chance. And yet, Jesus tells him this message of hope "I am with you always" Jesus tells us this message of hope, not because of what we have done, but because of what Jesus does for us. He has taken on all of the sin, even though he was without sin.
  - Read 1 John 1:8. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.
  - Jesus forgives always. There is never an \* next to your name or anyone else's!

## **Discussion for Youth**

- What is the craziest video or message you have seen? What made it funny, craziest, or most embarrassing?
- Have you ever done something that was so embarrassing that you couldn't go to sleep?
- Have you ever hurt someone so badly with your words that you couldn't talk to them again?
- Have you ever sent a message on your cell phone that you knew would hurt someone? Or have you read "one of those kind of messages" and done nothing?
- Spend time thinking on and challenging yourself to pause for one minute and ask yourself who have you encouraged today and who has encouraged you today? Why and how?

### Family Activity

Find a balloon for each member of your household. Place the balloons in the center of the room.

Ask each person to pick a balloon and give to them a marker. Before going to the next step, say, "We are going to talk about what we put on our balloons. And when we are sharing, we will listen, not interrupt or correct what people are sharing."

- Each person may write or draw a picture of something they have done wrong.
- Once you are done, gather in a circle. Ask people to talk about what they have drawn or written.
- Read 1 John 1:9 out loud.  
*<sup>9</sup>If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.*
- Explain that this passage means that, no matter what we do, we can tell God we are sorry and we are promised that God will forgive us.
- Once everyone is done, have a moment of quiet. Simply say, "Thank you, God."
  - Go ahead and pop the balloons as a way of saying that this thing you have confessed, God has forgiven.

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January 28-February 3, 2018

**Matthew 16:13-23**

**Foundation Stone or Stumbling Block**

<sup>13</sup> When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”<sup>14</sup> They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. <sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. <sup>19</sup> I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”<sup>20</sup> Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.<sup>21</sup> From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.<sup>22</sup> Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. “Never, Lord!” he said. “This shall never happen to you!”<sup>23</sup> Jesus turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns.”

**Pray** **God of all creation**, we hear this message that you are the Messiah, the one who will love and forgive us forever. Help me, God, to hear the message that I, too, mess up. Help me to accept my failures and fault as just that -- mistakes. You will never separate me from your love and your forgiveness. Thank you, Jesus! Amen.

**Insights** Some people had many opinions about Jesus; this included the disciples! In this passage, Jesus is asking his disciples, his followers, “Who do you say I am?”. The conversation is both enlightening and then maybe a bit puzzling. When Peter boldly says, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” he is making a huge statement to the other disciples and to the people in general. Note: Christ is not the last or second name for Jesus. In the Greek, it is word mean the same as the Hebrew “Messiah.” The people have waited for generations for this Messiah and now he says he is with them; but he is going to die and rise from the dead? Peter is listening to his best friend, the one that he has given up everything to follow for the last three years; and now, his friend says that he is going to be killed.

## **Discussion**

After you have shared your highs and lows, discuss...

- If you were waiting for someone to solve your problems, free you, or to be the powerhouse over all your hurt and disappointments, who would you be waiting to see? What do you imagine Jesus looked like?
  - First-Century Jews were expecting a Messiah to CONQUER their oppressors and to be intimidating “like a god.” What they got was a Messiah that was selfless, self-sacrificing, and had power over death by defeating not their everyday enemy, but defeating DEATH!
    - How do you hear this message today?
- Even the Jews wanted or thought they wanted more power. What do you want? What do you need?
- Do you wear a cross necklace or have one hanging in your home? Why? What does it mean to you today? What does it mean to, “take up your cross?”
- Peter was a “Rock” a real servant-leader and he messed up because he was human!
  - He asked Jesus all kinds of questions, but listened for the answer.
  - He prayed, but he fell asleep.
  - He spoke out, but he was silent.



- What does this all mean? Could we be just like Peter?
- What does it mean to be a leader in the church today? Who would you say is the faith leader in your home? At church? Did you say you? Why or why not?
- Peter asked a lot of questions. He answered in ways that Jesus said, “No, get behind me.” Is it okay to ask questions of Jesus? (Doubt isn’t the same thing as denial. It isn’t the opposite of faith; it is part of the journey to grow!)
- Do you feel you are growing in your faith? Why or why not?
- How can you be encouraged and how could you encourage another person?
- We are called to be disciples which includes being a leader. What is the best way to be part of God’s work on this earth in the here and right now?
- How did God use Peter’s weakness as well as his strength to serve God’s purposes?

### Discussion for Youth

- Are you the type of person who likes to talk when with your friends or be silent?
- Do you like to be known as a leader or do you like to be part of the team? (there are no wrong answers!)
- Imagine if you were on a football team (or any sports), dance team, choir, or theater and your group was really, really struggling. And you find out there is a new coach coming who, everyone says, will fix everything! How do you feel? What are you expecting?
  - Jesus came to the people, but he didn’t exactly look like a mighty warrior.
  - No one had or ever can defeat death! Christ does with his selfless gift of death on the cross, but more importantly being risen from the dead and promising we will be risen from the dead too! Is this the type of “coach” you would follow?
    - Would you be willing to invite a friend to church, worship, or youth group so that they can hear about Jesus and his love and forgiveness? Why or why not?

### Family Activity

- Get out a pen and paper. Ask one person to take notes!
  - Go around the group and ask everyone to say who is their favorite teacher of all time! (It could also be a grandparent, parent, coach, or someone who helped the individual “grow.”)
  - Now, ask why?
  - What was it that this person did for them in their lives that made their life more meaningful or joyful?
  - It isn’t always about what someone says. Was this person someone who acted like a caring person or listened and encouraged others?
  - Ask “Could you be that kind of ‘favorite’ teacher/coach/friend to someone else?”
- After you are done, invite everyone to write a note, card, or make a greeting card and actually send it to the person you have mentioned!

### Notes

# STOP. LOOK. LISTEN.

GROW. PRAY. STUDY. GPS Guide for Small Groups and Family Conversations

February 4-10, 2018

**John 21:4-18**

## **From Cowardice to Courage**

<sup>4</sup>Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

<sup>5</sup>He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.<sup>6</sup>He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.<sup>7</sup>Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water.<sup>8</sup>The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.<sup>9</sup>When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.<sup>10</sup>Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."<sup>11</sup>So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, but even with so many the net was not torn.<sup>12</sup>Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord.<sup>13</sup>Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish.<sup>14</sup>This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.<sup>15</sup>When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."<sup>16</sup>Again Jesus said, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."<sup>17</sup>The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."<sup>18</sup>Very truly I tell you, when you were younger, you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

**Pray** **God of all creation**, we struggle to comprehend your love story for each of us is the story of the gift of your grace. You not only walked among us, you fed, nurtured, and cared for us in ways that go beyond our understanding. Open our hearts to welcome you to guide us and to receive your never-failing love and compassion. We pray this and all things in your name, Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. Amen

**Insights** This is another story where the disciples did not recognize who Jesus was and they were afraid to ask him outright. Instead, they did what he told them to do. Everything he said would happen did. We learn that Peter, who is closest to Jesus, gets it! But listen, "Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It's the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard this he wrapped his coat around himself, stopped everything he was doing, and did as the Lord had told them to do. They cast out their nets and, when the nets were dragged back to shore, there was an abundant feast for everyone! Jesus ate with them and then said, 'Feed my lambs.' Jesus asked a second time, 'Simon son of John, do you love me?' Simon replied, 'Yes, Lord, you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Take care of my sheep.' He asked a third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love me?' Peter was sad that Jesus asked him a third time, 'Do you love me?' He replied, 'Lord, you know everything; you know I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

### **Discussion**

After you have shared everyone's highs and lows...

- Imagine seeing Jesus again after they have seen Jesus die on the cross. Would it be difficult to recognize him? What do you think your reaction may have been?

- Peter could have just faded from the scene, after all he denied who Jesus was when it seemed to matter most. Yet, it is Peter that Jesus appears to and gives him the biggest job of all “feeding my sheep.” What do you think Jesus was saying to Peter?
- Instead of Peter falling out of the picture, Jesus says Peter is the Rock. He entrusts this every day guy, this fisherman, this guy who has failed, who has succeeded and whom Jesus loved, he picks him to care for the most vulnerable of all people, the followers of Jesus. And Peter does. Would you?
- Who, would you say, fed you? Who taught you about God and demonstrated what it means to be filled with God’s message of hope?
- Is Jesus asking you to feed his sheep? What does this mean?
  - Can this be done with JOY? If not you, who will lead, teach, share, and serve in God’s name?

### **Discussion for Youth**

- What is your favorite brand name clothing item? Why?
- What is your favorite snack? Why?
- Have you ever been so hungry you “thought you were going to die?” When?
- Have you really thought about what it feels like to not eat for days?
- If there is enough food in our country, why are people going hungry? In your own schools?
- If someone asked you to trade in your phone for a phone that was wired to the house and didn’t have access to the internet, would you do it so that they could have a “good phone?” Why or why not?
- If you were asked to trade in your favorite outfit for a “new” outfit from the Salvation Army, Goodwill, or another resale store with donated items, would you do it? Why or why not?
- Really hard and challenging question: If not you, who is going to take care of people who need help with finding the very basic of things like food, shelter, clothes, or even clean water?

### **Family Activity**

- Pick a meal where everyone will sit down at the table together. Turn to one another at the table and, if possible, in pairs, feed one another. This means that you can’t feed yourself; you need the person next to you to HELP! They will make selections for you, to care for you – ummm -- FIRST!
- Ask “How did it feel to be fed and how did it feel to feed someone else?”
  - Did you laugh a few times? Did you worry if the other person was getting enough? What was the reaction of the person you fed, in your opinion?
- Ask someone to take out a phone and look up the church web site [www.holytrinityNL.org](http://www.holytrinityNL.org) Is there any listing of ways people can volunteer and make a difference at church?
  - What about looking up volunteer activities in your community? Where do you think people are caring for others, because they are “feeding” (meaning caring for others not just with food but with compassion and love)?
- If you are donating food to the food pantry, is the food you are sharing food you would eat or food you think others need? Can you imagine as a family what another family could need for one meal and then go to the store together and purchase the items?
- At Holy Trinity, we have a grocery cart that often goes empty! Why? What can we do to provide actual meals as well as feed souls?

### **Notes**

# STOP. LOOK. LISTEN.

GROW. PRAY. STUDY. GPS Guide for Small Groups and Family Conversations

February 11-17, 2018

## Acts 3:1-8

### The Rest of the Story

<sup>3</sup> One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. <sup>2</sup> Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. <sup>3</sup> When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. <sup>4</sup> Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” <sup>5</sup> So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. <sup>6</sup> Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” <sup>7</sup> Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. <sup>8</sup> He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God.

**Pray** God of all creation, we pray not for ourselves, but for all your children of all ages who are hurting, forgotten, and in need of care and compassion. God, we ask for your peace to come into our very broken world. We ask for your courage and strength to put ourselves into the lives of those who are longing to hear the witness of your love and grace. God, help stir our hearts so we see one another as worthy, valued, and your beloved treasure. We pray in your name, Jesus Christ, Amen.

**Insights** Imagine Peter and John are walking up to the temple for prayer. There is a man who is lame and he has been carried to the temple so that he could beg. The lame man sees Peter and John and asks them for money. Peter looks straight at him and says, “Look at us!” Peter wanted the man’s undivided attention. The scriptures continue: Peter looked at the man and the man looked back expecting “something from them.” Peter told him something completely different than anything the lame man could have imagined. Instead of coins, in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, Peter heals the man and the man walks! Together, they all go into the temple and praise God. The Book of Acts is known as a second volume of the work by Luke, the author of both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. The purpose of the Book of Acts is to continue to record history, to give a foundation for the teachings of Christians, to be a guide for the early church (and our churches today!), and to make Christ known as the one and only who conquered death for our sake! Therefore, we are commissioned to go into the world sharing God’s message of grace, God’s message of the Good News!

### Discussion

- After you have shared your highs and lows, talk about a time when you were physically really, really ill or you broke a leg or arm and you needed someone to care for you. How did it feel to receive care?
- Share a time when you had to care for someone else who was hurting. How did it feel to care for another person? Ask “Are there many different ways we show we care?”
- Yes, Peter made a lame man walk. Have you ever thought maybe something you did, because you truly believed you were doing what Christ would ask of you do to, made any difference in the other person? Did it make a difference in your life? What was your motivation for serving another person?
- Have you ever experienced a “holy nudge?” A holy nudge might be when you can’t explain it, but you reach out with a kind word, gesture, or caring act; when you go on a mission trip, teach Sunday School, help provide snacks, or serve on a leadership team; when you sing in worship, read scripture, fully give your heart to your church community, your family, your community/town; and when you thought, there is no way I could have done that on my own.
- What does it mean to intentionally care for the “other?” Someone not exactly like us?
- Jesus doesn’t say, “Feed some of my sheep.” Jesus says, “Feed My Sheep.” What does this mean in a world where we talk about our differences?

- Ask someone to get out their phone and look up the ELCA mission and vision. This is who we are as a church. What do you think? Would you be willing to talk about what it means to be inclusive as Peter is told: care for Jews and Gentiles, Feed My Sheep, and all of God's children. Peter finds out that even the circumcised (the Jews) and the Gentiles were all gifted with the Holy Spirit for one purpose: to care for one another. How does this insight welcome the conversation of inclusivity in our community?
- How can we proclaim compassion and live, love, and share Christ in our community right now?! What is your, our responsibility to live out the message that God's grace is for ALL? Peter was willing to die for this message. Are we willing to be uncomfortable and stand firm so that all brothers and sisters are equal, not only in the sight of God, but in our actions in today's world?

### **Discussion for Youth**

- This is our final week of digging deeper into this idea of being loved by Jesus so that we would love one another.
- Has anything felt different to you? Why or why not?
- Ask someone to get out their cell phone or laptop and look up the ELCA.org and holytrinityNL.org
  - What do you see? What is the same and what do you wish you would see?
- We are part of a larger church, God's church, where everyone is claimed as a child of God's own redeeming. There isn't anything that gives us the power to exclude or judge who is loved, worthy, or valued. How would your school, home, or community be different if we started each day with thanksgiving and then spent our energies caring and serving one another in love?
  - What could that look like? Maybe think about ways you can do chores without grumbling. Say hello to strangers at school. Welcome people to play with you at recess. Invite someone to sit with you at lunch. Suggestions?
- What is different in your opinion because Christ lived, died and rose again for our sake?

### **Family Activity**

- You may want to watch the movie Utopia. Use this movie as a conversation piece with your family. Once you are done, get those crayons out, coloring pencils, maybe a bit of glitter and draw pictures of your home and your world in ways that we see our world as a better place! Where are people working together, loving one another, using our gifts and passions as God has asked us, not for our glory but for God's glory?
- Now that we are coming to the end of our Stop, Look and Listen, what ways will your family encounter one another, your schools, neighbors, and strangers in different ways?
- Jesus told Peter not once but three times, "Feed My Sheep." Why three times? To get our attention because we need to be told again and again and again?
- There is nothing in the Bible that says, "Do nothing." So how is your family forever changed because Christ lived, died, and has risen again?
- In this last week, pause long enough to bless one another, maybe with a high five or the sign of the cross on the forehead, and a prayer.

### **Notes**

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