

TEACHING FOCUS:

TO PROCLAIM TO THE WORLD WHAT CHRIST HAS DONE IS A CHRISTIAN'S GREATEST PRIVILEGE AND GREATEST RESPONSIBILITY.

PURPOSE:

STUDENTS SHOULD COME AWAY FROM THIS LESSON MOTIVATED TO SHARE GOD'S LOVE WITH PEOPLE WHO ARE LOST.

INTRODUCTION

Activity: "The Last Word for the Baby-sitter"

Divide into groups of between five and fifteen people. Tell the group that you need to tell them something very, very, very important about the baby you are going to leave with them – but you can only whisper the message to one person at a time. You are going to whisper this important message to the person on your right. He or she is going to whisper it to the next person and so on. The last person will speak the message out loud to the group. When the last person tells you what they think the message is, then read what the original message says. Compare what the last person received with the original message.

MESSAGE (whispered to one person at a time): *"The refrigerator squeaks when you open it, so be careful since the baby sleeps lightly, especially when a car honks outside because a dog is running across the street, but don't worry if you hear a knock at the door because it will be the mailman bringing the package from Chicago and the mailman never wakes up the baby unless he rings the doorbell."*

When you compare the original message with the message that has passed through several people, the comparison is rarely close and normally quite humorous.

Last words are important. Jesus could have said anything before he left the earth, but he chose to give one mission. Jesus left us with clear instructions. Sometimes Jesus' message gets cluttered by all of the other things in our lives and we either forget the original message or it is changed drastically from the original.

These are our Lord's last words. Jesus commands us as his followers to *"Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* (Matthew 28:19-20)

Notice Jesus says GO, then He says I AM GOING WITH YOU. (I am with you always).

We have the freedom to proclaim the good news that God loved the world so much that He sent his one and only Son so that whoever believes in Jesus shall not perish but have eternal life. (see John 3:16). In America, we can openly talk about Jesus and the difference He has made in our lives.

Illustration: In Afghanistan, authorities arrested Dayna Curry and Heather Mercer because they were showing the Jesus film to some villagers. To share about Jesus with people who don't know Him was strictly forbidden. Telling others about Jesus is illegal in many parts of the world. (See the book *Prisoners of Hope*)

In America, we have the freedom to proclaim, but unfortunately most Christians do not use this freedom. Ninety-five percent of all Christians have never led anyone to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Let us get back to the freedom and the privilege of telling others about Christ.

Most of us know we should witness to the people around us. Most of us know we should proclaim the love of Christ with not only our words, but our actions and attitudes as well. Let's look at some practical tips about reaching the people around us and embrace the freedom to proclaim.

We have the privilege and responsibility to share the good news. Let us see what we can discover about the freedom to proclaim.

Read John 21:1-11.

 **When you proclaim the good news, remember three things:**

1. You cannot save anyone. (vs. 4-5)

"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, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered." (John 21:4-5)

The disciples had worked all night. They had tried everything within their resources. Were they successful? NO!

Maybe you are discouraged. You say there is no way that you could tell others about God's love. Maybe you have tried before and it went nowhere. Maybe you feel like the disciples did after fishing all night.

It doesn't matter how much of the Bible you know, how many verses you have memorized, how smooth you can talk about Jesus. On your own, you cannot make an eternal impact on a person's life – no matter how hard you try.

We can try as hard as we can and never win one person to Christ. The first step in reaching our world is to admit we can't do it.

2. Jesus desires to use you.

"Jesus 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." (John 21:6)

Question: What did some of the disciples do for a living before following Jesus?

Answer: Fishermen. These guys could fish. They had fished by themselves all night and caught nothing. Experienced fishermen know you don't catch a lot of fish with a net once morning comes.

They didn't recognize Jesus at first, so surely they thought, "Who is this guy? Doesn't he know we have already tried everything?" But they quickly realize – "Oh, it's Jesus and Jesus makes all the difference." Never fish alone.

The second step in reaching our world is to remember that **Jesus' presence makes all the difference.**

3. Your friends and family count.

"Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. (John 21:11)

Question: How many fish did they catch?

Question: We know that nothing in the Bible is there by accident, so why did God want us to know how many fish there were?

Question: If the number of fish the disciples caught is important to Jesus, do you think Jesus keeps track of the number of people you share with and tell about him?

Question: If the number of fish was important to Jesus, how much more important are your friends and family to Him?

Activity: Divide into groups no larger than six. As a group, try to list all of the people you know who are lost. If your youth group is large enough, identify 153 people that you will pray for and share with. If you are super creative – cut out 153 fish out of construction paper, put one name on each fish. Option #1: Create a wall where all the fish are placed and your youth will be reminded of the lost around them. Option #2: Let each student carry one or two fish in their Bible to pray for those names on a daily basis.

Activity: As a group, discuss ways you can reach out to people. How can you show them God loves them and not just say it? How can you build bridges? Does your life attract fish? Do people see the peace, love, joy, gentleness, kindness, goodness, and self-control that the Holy Spirit gives you? What are the best ways to win the souls of the people God has placed around you?

Reminder: Remember that Jesus tells us to throw our nets (share) and let him put the fish in our net (save).

Quote: You may convince people that you are right, but only the Holy Spirit convicts them that they need to get right. **THE KEY IS OBEDIENCE:** They wouldn't have caught any fish if they didn't throw their net into the water. You can't catch a fish, if you don't throw out a net. When you do obey Christ and simply put your net in the water (share), the results can be unbelievable.

God asks us to share with our world, not save our world.

God is less concerned about the number of people we win than the number of times we share the gospel. It is better to set a goal based on the number of times to share the gospel with others.

If you share Christ often enough, you will lead someone to Christ!

When we combine Jesus' command with our obedience the results are always unbelievable.

★ ★ ★ CONCLUSION

Illustration: A teenage girl in Dallas, Texas found herself on an outreach team at church. She was so excited about witnessing that she was handing out tracts to practically everybody she saw. When her team stopped at a convenience store to get something to drink, she walked up to a parked car and told the driver, "God loves you!" and handed him a tract. The driver, a young college student, threw the tract in the floorboard of his car, yelled

and cussed at her at the top of his lungs and peeled out of the parking lot. She was crushed and felt like this evangelism-proclaiming thing was not going to work in the 21st century.

The next Sunday, a college student came forward during the invitation at this teenage girl's church. He told about going out with a friend to party. On the way home, he looked down in the floorboard of his friend's car and saw a gospel tract. He picked it up, read it, and knew that a relationship with Jesus was what his life was missing. He prayed a simple prayer and asked Christ into his life and then came to the church because the address was on the back of the tract.

The teenage girl couldn't believe it. Because she was faithful to share the message, a tract that was thrown in the floors board of a car and carried the message that changed someone else's life.

You never know what God will use to spread the good news.
You do know he wants to use you. Embrace the freedom to proclaim.

NOTE: The following page is a handout to give to your students to follow along during the session.



FREEDOM



INTRODUCTION

“The Last Word for the Baby-sitter”

Jesus says _____, then He says _____.

“Prisoners of Hope”

When you proclaim the good news, remember three things:

1. You CANNOT _____ . (John 21:4-5)

We can try as hard as we can and _____ win one person to Christ.

The first step in reaching our world is to _____ we can't do it.

2. Jesus desires to use _____ . (John 21:6)

Jesus' presence _____ .

3. Your _____ and _____ count. (John 21:11)

“Name Your Fish”

“How to Catch Fish”

God asks us to _____ with our world, not _____ our world.

When we combine Jesus' _____ with our _____ the results are always unbelievable.

