

WHO, ME?



PETER

ROCKED BY GOD

CHRIS THEULE-VAN DAM

Faith Alive Christian Resources thanks Chris Theule-Van Dam for writing this study.

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Printed in the United States of America.

ISBN 978-1-59255-754-7

# WHO, ME?

Each of us has a story to tell, a journey of faith that began at God's invitation and will continue throughout eternity. In the *Who, Me?* series you'll be drawn into the life of one person in Scripture by hearing their ancient story and exploring it in deeper ways. As you immerse yourselves in Peter's life, your group will see how God was at work and is still at work in similar ways in our lives today. You'll use essential questions to find points of connection between your lives and Peter's, so that each of you can experience God's grace more fully and grow as a follower of Christ.

## GETTING STARTED

*Peter: Rocked by God* and all of the Bible studies in the *Who, Me?* series are designed to be easy to use in large or small group settings for Bible study, youth group, church school, or parachurch ministry. Aside from a few supplies, you'll find everything you need on one disk, including an outline of the essential questions for the study, all of the leader's materials with Bible backgrounds, and printable pages for use within your group. Simply make as many copies of the leader and participant materials as you need.

## STRUCTURE

Each Bible study in this series follows the same pattern:

- **Study Outline:** This outline offers a quick look at the questions you'll be exploring in each session.
- **Scripture, Materials, and Bible Background:** This section helps leaders prepare. We hope leaders will spend time prayerfully reading the Bible passage and Bible background in advance, and gathering or printing the materials listed for the session.
- **Connecting:** This section offers ideas for getting started as your group arrives.
- **Rewind:** After each session the short Rewind section will recap where you've been so far in the study. This is also an opportunity for the group to share ways they saw themes from the previous session emerge in their lives throughout the week.
- **Hearing the Story:** In this step a portion of the Bible story or passage is shared by the leader or someone else in the group, and a short discussion follows.
- **Entering the Story:** This step helps you engage the story a second time in creative and imaginative ways that draw out your questions and open you up to the Spirit's nudging and new insights about the story.
- **Living the Story and In My Life:** Here the rubber meets the road, usually through a time of discussion and reflection. Each person has the chance to consider how God is speaking to them and seeking to shape them through this story.
- **Closing Prayer:** Depending on the timeframe you're working with, you may want to use this time for a brief prayer or expand it to include the requests of the group.
- **Additional Ideas:** Each session will include at least two additional ideas for you to use along with or in place of ideas that were offered in the session. You know your group best, so be sure to consider these additional options and build a session that will work in your context.

This study is intended to be a tool for you, so feel free to tweak and change any part of it to fit your unique ministry setting!



## PETER OUTLINE

### SESSION 1 p. 6

**Essential Questions:** Has God ever asked you to do something that might not have made much sense at the time? Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. . . .” What is frightening about getting close to Jesus and following him? Peter and the disciples left what they were doing to follow Jesus. Is there anything you need to leave behind in order to better follow him?

### SESSION 2 p. 13

**Essential Questions:** What causes you to doubt and waver in your faith in Jesus? Certain situations? Certain people? Certain questions? What are you facing for which you need to trust Jesus? What would it look like for you to trust Jesus in those situations?

### SESSION 3 p. 20

**Essential Questions:** Who do you say Jesus is? What does it mean for you to “take up your cross” and follow Jesus? In what kinds of situations do you find it most difficult to follow Christ? What is most rewarding about your relationship with him?

### SESSION 4 p. 27

**Essential Questions:** What does it mean to you that Peter denied knowing Jesus but was forgiven and used by God in such mighty ways? When have you done something based on outside pressure and later regretted it? Jesus prayed for Peter. He saw beyond Peter’s failure and said, “When you turn back . . . .” (Not “if” you turn back!). What does that mean for you today?

### SESSION 5 p. 33

**Essential Questions:** How does it feel to know that Jesus doesn’t hold a grudge? Do you ever find it hard to forgive yourself even though God has forgiven you? What, in your life, is the connection between “Do you love me?” and “Follow me”? What are some of the ways you can answer Jesus’ call to “feed my sheep”?

**SESSION 6** p. 41

**Essential Questions:** How have you been surprised by God in your own life? What divisions that exist today need to be broken down? Think of some people in your life who have been marginalized or seem to not “fit in” when it comes to the church. What are some ways you can reach out to them? Is there a particular message God may be calling you to bring to certain people?



## SCRIPTURE

Luke 5:1-11

## MATERIALS

- Bibles or printouts of Luke 5:1-11 (p. 11), one per group member
- Writing utensil for each group member
- Printouts of “In My Life” (p. 12), one per group member, optional

## BIBLE BACKGROUND

In Jesus’ day there were many rabbis and teachers who taught and interpreted the Scriptures to their disciples. In many ways Jesus fit into that context; he was called a rabbi by some, and his followers were his disciples. What was unusual about Jesus is that while most rabbis set up “schools” and prospective students typically “applied” to be disciples, Jesus went out and chose his own disciples. And as we will see, they didn’t always seem to be the brightest prospects.

Another aspect of the rabbi/disciple relationship is that it involved more than attending class somewhere. The disciple literally followed the rabbi, so that he might truly learn the rabbi’s way of life. Christian discipleship is following Jesus’ way of life: his love and obedience toward the Father, his loving service to others, and his willingness to suffer for the sake of others. Most of all, it’s living by the joyful message of the coming kingdom of God.

Jesus began his ministry where he grew up and lived, in the towns and villages around the Sea of Galilee. We meet him here in Luke 5 on the shores of Galilee with large crowds of people gathered around, so much so that he had to teach from a boat just offshore. It’s important to remember that Jesus, although he was eventually crucified, was an extremely popular teacher who attracted mass audiences.

After he had taught from the boat and the crowds had dispersed, Jesus turned his attention to Simon, a leading fisherman (whom we’ll later know as Peter), and gave him some fishing advice. Simon, perhaps a bit irritated at getting advice in his own area of expertise from a carpenter and

rabbi, replied that they'd been out all night (the normal time to fish) but had caught nothing. Can't you just picture him in hardly veiled annoyance going along with Jesus' suggestion, sighing, "But if you say so . . .?"

Inexplicably, he pulls in a huge catch! So large that it takes two boats to get in all the fish! Seeing this, Simon stumbles onto the shore, falls at Jesus' knees (perhaps even clinging to them), and exclaims, "Go away from me Lord; I am a sinful man!" Obviously Simon felt both awe and fear in the presence of a man of such holy power. This was clearly, as people sometimes say, "a God thing," and in this light Simon felt his unworthiness and sinfulness.

Jesus responded with both an assurance and a challenge: "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." This was a challenge that grabbed Simon and intrigues us as well. Fishing for people—what a strange metaphor! Jesus was calling Simon (Peter) from feeding people with the fish he caught (important as that was) to being involved in the transformation of people's lives with the message of the kingdom of God.

What "hooked" Simon and the other disciples Jesus called wasn't just chalking up converts but the opportunity to profoundly influence the lives of others for eternity. Your young people also want to be significant in terms of their lives, to influence others and the world around them for good. There's no better way than to sign up as disciples of Jesus, the Savior of the world.

## CONNECTING (VARIED)

Once your group has arrived, ask everyone to "rate their week" between zero and ten, a zero being the worst week ever and a ten the best. Have everyone share their number and the reason they chose it.

After the teens have shared a bit about their weeks, consider asking them some questions to connect them to today's study:

- What's one thing you've always wanted to do, and why?
- What would be your dream job, and why?

Have each person share, making sure to share your answers as well. Once everyone has had an opportunity, lead the group in an opening prayer.

## REWIND (5 MINUTES)

*In future sessions this section will give you time to review where you've been in the study of Peter's life. For this first session, introduce the series on Peter by saying a few words about why you chose this study. Explain the format to your group: each week they'll start by talking a little about what's happening in their lives. Then you'll spend a few minutes reviewing what you've already discussed before hearing the next portion of the story and exploring it together in a variety of interactive ways. Invite the young people to look for similarities between their own lives and the life of Simon (Peter).*

## HEARING THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

### READ LUKE 5:1-11

This is an important step in helping students engage with the story. Think of yourself as a storyteller. Practice reading the text a few times before your group meets so you'll be able to look up occasionally to make eye contact and make sure your group is engaged. Pause occasionally for emphasis, or repeat key verses. When you're finished sharing the story, ask everyone to open their Bibles to Luke 5 or hand out the printout of this passage.

*In the future, rather than telling the story yourself each time, consider assigning group members in advance to present the story.*

**Lead a short discussion, using some or all of the following questions, to make sure the group understands the basics of what is happening in the story:**

- Describe the scene at the beginning of the story. Who was there? What was happening?
- Why do you think Jesus did what he did?
- Why did Jesus tell the disciples not to be afraid?
- Why do you think the big catch was so startling to Peter?
- How does the miracle relate to Jesus' words, "I will make you fishers of people"?

## ENTERING THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

Share a little background about the rabbis of that time and explain Jesus' countercultural move of inviting people to follow him rather than making people "apply" to be his disciples. Mention that Jesus called them to a new life of fishing for people. Clearly they knew that following him in this way would be a full-time job, but what would it entail?

Divide your group into smaller groups of three or four (or stay together if your group is already that size). Ask the participants to create a how-to guide for being a disciple of Jesus, or for being fishers of people. Encourage them to draw from the story and any other part of Scripture with which they're familiar to describe what they think it might have meant for Peter and his crew to follow Jesus and fish for people. Encourage them to think about why the disciples would have wanted to follow Jesus, what it cost them to follow him, and what they had to overcome or leave behind to do so. Give them 8-10 minutes to think of a way to present their how-to guide for being a disciple of Jesus/fisher of people. They could create a skit, a brochure, a video, a commercial, etc.

**If your group includes both teens who know the Bible well and those who don't, make sure each group has a mix of both.**

When everyone is ready, call them back together to share some or all of their presentations (depending on time).



## LIVING THE STORY (15 MINUTES)

Now that your group members have had a chance to engage with the story, lead a short discussion, using all or some of the following questions:

- What does it mean to follow Jesus today?
- Are there any “essential” tasks a follower of Jesus must do?
- What are some similarities and differences between Peter and the other disciples becoming fishers of people then and our being fishers of people today?
- Fishing for people goes beyond typical evangelism. What are some ways you can fish for people without asking them to “convert”?

## IN MY LIFE

*For this section consider giving everyone time to write down their thoughts before sharing them with the group. Also, if your group is large, consider dividing the group into smaller groups to talk. Use all or some of these questions to help students apply this passage to their own lives:*

- Jesus told Peter and his friends to go fishing again, right after they had worked all night and caught nothing. Has God ever asked you to do something that might not have made much sense at the time?
- Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. . . .” What might be frightening about getting close to Jesus and following him?
- Peter and the other disciples left what they were doing to follow Jesus. Is there anything you need to leave behind in order to better follow him?
- Jesus called the disciples to a new role that would have an impact on people’s lives. What do you think Jesus is calling you to do as you follow him?

**Close in prayer.**

## ADDITIONAL IDEAS

Here are a few additional ideas to use in place of or along with the original options to help you create a session that will work well with your group.

### EMOTIONS

Peter expresses strong emotions in this story. First he is frustrated when Jesus asks the disciples to go back out and fish, and after the miracle catch he is both in awe and afraid. Frustration, awe, and fear are all emotions many Christians experience today. On a chalkboard, whiteboard, or newsprint, draw three columns under the titles “Frustration,” “Awe,” and “Fear.” Pass out 3x5 notecards and ask everyone to write down one example of a time when they felt each of those emotions with relation to God. Bring the group back together and ask for volunteers to share what they wrote down. Lead a discussion exploring the kinds of things in our own lives that cause us to have the same emotions as Peter in this story.

## **LEADERSHIP**

Jesus was a leader people wanted to follow. Divide the full group up into small groups of two to four people each. Have them come up with a list of ten characteristics of Jesus that made him a great leader. Once the groups have had time to develop their lists, have one person from each write their group's list on the board or on a big piece of newsprint. Compare and contrast the different characteristics identified as part of a large group discussion.

# WHO, ME?

PRINTOUT



## LUKE 5:1-11

### JESUS CALLS HIS FIRST DISCIPLES

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen who were washing their nets. 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.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

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."

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 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.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 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." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything, and followed him.

# WHO, ME? IN MY LIFE



Jesus told Peter and his friends to go fishing again, right after they had worked all night and caught nothing. Has God ever asked you to do something that might not have made much sense at the time?

Jesus said, “Don’t be afraid. . . .” What might be frightening about getting close to Jesus and following him?

Peter and the other disciples left what they were doing to follow Jesus. Is there anything you need to leave behind in order to better follow him?

Jesus called the disciples to a new role that would have an impact on people’s lives. What do you think Jesus is calling you to do as you follow him?