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# Feed My Sheep

**Leader Notes:**

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

*Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.*

**I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.**

## Breathe

*Use this time to focus your attention on God.*

**Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out.** *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

## Tell and Wonder

**Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear?** *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

**Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.**

*Read "Feed My Sheep" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions. NOTE: It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

*You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.*

## Pray

*Close with prayer, using the following words or your own:*

**Dear Jesus, thank you for your Word, the Bible. Thank you for giving the disciples the miracle of the net full of fish. Thank you too for showing Peter that you really loved him and forgave him. You loved him so much that you gave him a huge, important job to do—taking care of your people. Help us to find ways to take care of others too. Amen.**

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

## Respond

*Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #137\* or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

*\*God's Big Story cards can be ordered from [FaithAliveResources.org](http://FaithAliveResources.org).*

## Easy Extra

*Using construction paper, have each person create a placemat. Remind them of the great catch of fish in today's story. For anyone who needs some ideas, suggest the following: a border of different kinds and shapes of fish, a picture of the net filled with fish, or a collage of the things that Jesus and the disciples ate for breakfast. If you have older children in your group who enjoy being helpers, they can work with younger children to write a verse or message from today's story, such as "Feed my sheep."*

## Story: Feed My Sheep [John 21:1-17](#)

*Open the Bible and show kids where the story is found in the book of John, chapter 21. Read [John 21:1](#). Tell the kids that this is how this part of God's great story begins.*

After Jesus died and rose again, he appeared sometimes to the disciples when they didn't expect him. One night, Peter decided to go fishing, and some of the others joined him. But they fished all night and didn't catch ANYTHING—not even one itty-bitty little fish!

**I wonder how they were feeling by the time the sun came up. If you had been there, what words would you have used to describe your feelings?** *(Pause for responses.)*

About the time they were ready to quit, the disciples noticed someone standing on the beach. They didn't recognize him, but they noticed him watching. The stranger called, "Have you caught any fish?"

In tired voices, they called back, "No!"

The stranger said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

Some of the disciples were very good fishermen, but this stranger was telling them how to catch fish. **If you had been a disciple in the boat that l-o-n-g night, I wonder what you would have thought of a stranger telling you how to fish.** *(Pause for responses.)*

The disciples did what the stranger told them to do. Immediately there was a fish frenzy! In a nanosecond there were so many fish that the net couldn't hold them all. In fact, the net was so heavy that they couldn't

haul it in. Then John knew who the stranger was and cried out, "It's the Lord!"

When Peter heard that it was Jesus, he jumped into the water, and headed toward shore. The other disciples began rowing as fast as they could, dragging the bulging net behind the boat. When they arrived on shore, they noticed a fire burning with fish already cooking over it. There was bread too. It must have looked and smelled so good to those tired fishermen!

Jesus said, "Bring some of the fish you just caught."

Peter dragged that big old net full of fish to shore. He counted the fish—153! And there was another surprise too. As full as the net was, it didn't rip! Not even one hole in it! Amazing!

Jesus invited the disciples to have breakfast with him. When they finished eating, Jesus said to Peter, "Peter, do you love me more than these?"

Peter answered quickly. It seemed like an easy question. "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

**What do you think Jesus meant by that?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Jesus asked Peter a second question. "Peter, do you love me?"

Peter answered a second time—but I wonder if he answered as quickly this time since it was the same question. Peter said, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

And then Jesus asked Peter a third question. "Peter, do you love me?"

**I wonder how Peter felt when Jesus asked him the very same question three times.** *(Pause for responses.)*

Peter answered again—the third time! "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Peter's feelings were hurt because Jesus had asked him that question three times. Maybe he wondered if Jesus didn't believe him. Did Jesus not trust him? Why did Jesus have to ask him three times?

**On that sad night before Jesus died, how many times did Peter say he never even knew Jesus? How many times did Jesus ask Peter if he loved him? Why do you think Jesus did that? What did Jesus want Peter to do—feed real sheep or something else?**

## Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [2nd-3rd Grade: Feed My Sheep](#)
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