** BIBLE 101**

Unit 4: Fisher of Men – The Making of Disciples

*Peter – The Feeder of Lambs*

**A Note to the Teacher:** Simon Peter is the most well-known and influential of Jesus’ 12 disciples. Simon and his brother Andrew were fishermen – blue collar workers looked down on by society – when Jesus called them to follow him. They left behind everything they had ever known to begin a ministry that would change the world.

Throughout this unit, students are coming to understand that disciples are not merely historical figures of ancient Biblical times. They, themselves, are disciples of Jesus. This lesson teaches that being a disciple means sharing God’s love with all of God’s children. Make time throughout the lesson to reinforce that Jesus’ command wasn’t only to Peter but to *all* disciples, forever more: feed my lambs.

**Gathering**

As students enter the space, gather them in a seated circle. Place toy lamb (or several) in the center of the circle. **Ask, “Can anyone guess why we are sitting around a flock of sheep?”** Give time for answers.

**Say, “This month, we are talking about what it means to be a *disciple* of Jesus. Today we are going to learn about one of Jesus’ 12 original disciples, and an important job that Jesus gave him (and us!). When Jesus started his ministry, he asked 12 men to travel with him. He needed their help teaching people about God, healing the sick, and providing food to the poor. One of the men that Jesus called was named Simon.**

**Simon was an excellent disciple. He was very loyal, and he believed with his whole heart that Jesus was Immanuel – God with us. Jesus came to depend on Simon’s help, both with his ministry and with managing the other disciples. So Jesus gave Simon a new name, Peter, which means rock. Peter was Jesus’ rock.**

**In today’s story, Peter and Jesus are alone. It isn’t long before Jesus knows that he will be crucified, and he wants to make sure that his disciples, and especially his rock, are ready to continue to share his message of love with the world.”**

For grades 2-5, have students turn to Gospel of John, chapter 21 in their Bibles. For prek-grade 1, open the teacher’s Bible to the Gospel of John, chapter 21. You may choose to read directly from the Bible or to paraphrase.

*Read John 21:15-17*

**Say, “Over and over Jesus says the same thing to Peter. What does he say?”** Give time for students to answer. You can even create a brief chant:

 Teacher: If you love me

 Children: Feed my lambs!

**Ask, “Do you think that Jesus actually wanted Peter to feed a flock of sheep? Did Jesus even have a flock of sheep?”** Give time for answers.

**Say, “When Jesus asked Peter to feed his lambs, he was asking him to take care of his people. Being a disciple of Jesus means taking care of others, especially those most in need.”**

To help illustrate the story, set out a series of cutout sheep. Hang a piece of green paper on the wall to represent a pasture. Work as a group to write the names of people or groups of people on each sheep that Jesus asks us to care for. Examples include: those without homes, children, the elderly, immigrants, those with addictions, etc. Be sure to give each child a chance to complete a sheep. In older classes, children can write their own sheep. In younger classes, have students offer their ideas aloud while the teacher writes.

**Say, “Our world is full of sheep that need to be fed. Jesus wanted Peter to take care of people and to continue to show God’s love with everyone he met. That is what Jesus asks us to do as disciples, too. Jesus wants us to love everyone, no matter what, with our whole hearts. He wants us to care for people the best we can and to treat them the way we want to be treated.”**

**Lamb Food**

**Say, “To help us get started feeding God’s lambs like Peter, we are going to make some lamb food. When we head to the table, I am going to give each of you a paper bag. Decorate it however you want, but be sure to write (or have a teacher write) *Lamb Food* on the front. Then I am going to put out strips of paper. On each strip, write something you would say to someone to help them know that God loves them. You could write “You are loved” or “Jesus loves your.” You could write “You are made in God’s image.” Or you could just draw a heart. You need to make a bunch of strips, because we are going to attach them to pieces of candy and use them to fill our lamb food bags. This week, you can practice feeding God’s lambs by giving them one of your pieces of candy with a special message on it.”**

Move to the work tables, allowing students to select the standing or seating arrangement that works for them.

Give each child a paper bag and help them to get started decorating. As students finish with their bags, set out strips of paper.

When everyone is finished drawing/writing, help students tape strips to pieces of candy and fill their bags.

When everyone is finished, come back together in a seated circle.

**Say, “I have a feeling you are all already excellent disciples, but it is always a good idea to practice. Let’s go around the circle and feed one another. When a fellow disciple gives you a piece of candy, you can go ahead and eat it.”**

Demonstrate by giving one child a piece of candy and then allow students to continue around the circle until everyone has a piece of candy.

While students eat, spend a few moments in discussion:

1. Is it always easy to feed Jesus’ lambs? ALL of Jesus’ lambs?
2. In addition to sharing your lamb food, what is one way you can be a good disciple this week?

**Closing**

Corrie arrives to teach music at 11:20am. At that time, students gather in a seated circle near the classroom couch. If time allows, have students help cleanup before heading to choir practice.