

FOLLOW ME!

Daily Lent Guide for Families

AMY ROBINSON

**kevin
mayhew**

For my parents, who gave me a love of stories and seasons:
and with thanks to my husband, who listens to all my stories.

kevin mayhew

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About the author

Amy Robinson is a writer, performance storyteller and ventriloquist. As co-founder of Snail Tales she has been telling all sorts of stories in all sorts of places for eight years, and is the benefice children's worker at her own church. She lives in a rectory in Suffolk with the rector, two children and several puppets.

Amy has also written for Kevin Mayhew: *Tales from the Jesse Tree* (1501441), an Advent book of 25 Bible stories, and a DVD and informative handbook: *Performing with Puppets, a Puppeteer's Guide* (1501414). For further details, please see our website: www.kevinmayhew.com

How to use this book

This is a book of stories, activities and reflections for Lent, intended to take a family through the time leading up to Easter.

Each week focuses on one passage from the Bible about being called to follow Jesus. Although the format provides a new activity for every day of the week, the daily suggestions could also be selected and rearranged to provide the basis for a single weekly study or family prayer time, depending on what suits your family best.

For each week, you will find a selection of readings, prayers and activities, all exploring the same story. Readings are taken from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, but do use the chapter and verse references to read the story in your family's own preferred version before trying one of the 'retellings'. The 'retellings' present the story using basic storytelling methods, play or poetry to give a different angle or a new point of view. This can be useful for bringing out different questions and for giving you a more direct experience of, and interaction with, the story in the passage. You can read them out loud together, or have a look at them and the tips for telling them, and then put the book down and have a go at storytelling yourselves.

Activities include different ways to retell or play through the story, crafts, suggestions for something to do together as a family, and an invitation to 'go wondering' and think through some questions about the passage. You will also see 'context' sections, which go into more depth by providing some of the surrounding story, relevant passages in other books of the Bible, or historical and cultural information which colours and explains the week's reading.

Since Lent begins on a Wednesday, day five of each week falls on a Sunday and has a 'community activity', which may involve anything from helping a neighbour to asking a friend a question. These suggestions are made with a church meeting in mind, but if you don't attend church

they will work just as well in other places: the main thing is to go out and interact with your community.

Be creative with all the suggestions. Depending on the age range of the people who are sharing this book, some activities will work better than others, some will need adapting and some may just not fit. You know your family best. Use what works well, try some new things, come up with ideas of your own and, above all, enjoy exploring together.

WEEK ONE

The First Disciples

Introduction

In this first story, we look at the moment that Jesus called his very first disciples to follow him. Their calling accompanies a miracle that used their own individual lives and expertise to demonstrate who Jesus was and what he wanted them to do.

Over the course of this week, we will be thinking about how Jesus might call us just as individually. You will discover the reason why Jesus already had such a big crowd following him, put yourselves in the shoes of the fishermen and retell the story with readings, a poem and some fun crafty activities. The community day offers a chance to talk to friends and family and find out how their own journeys of following Jesus began, celebrating each person's individual calling and value to God.

DAY 1

Telling

Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch.' Simon answered, 'Master, we have worked all night long but have

caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets.’ When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, ‘Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!’ For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, ‘Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people.’ When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him. *Luke 5:1-11*

Retelling

Tips and ideas for telling this story:

The little boat in this story goes through lots of different emotions: worrying that she has done something wrong, feeling surprised when Jesus jumps on board, impressed at Jesus’ teaching, proud to be carrying him, afraid when she begins to sink under the weight of the fish, ashamed and embarrassed, happy to have been chosen and called ‘useful’ by Jesus at the end. Her emotions mirror those of the new disciples to bring life to their experience of being chosen despite feeling unworthy. As you tell the story, put plenty of feeling into the boat’s thoughts, trying to use facial expression and tone of voice to convey them. With younger children, you could cut out discs with faces for each emotion and, whenever there is a change, ask the children to choose the one that they think the boat is feeling.

There was once a little fishing boat that lived on the shore of a lake. The lake was so huge that it was known as the Sea of Galilee. Sometimes the waters were still and blue, and at other times there were storms that made the lake as wavy and wild as a real sea. But the fishing boat felt safe there: she knew the lake well, and trusted the fishermen who sailed her.

Every night, the fishing boat sailed out to the middle of the lake, and every night, her fishermen let down nets over her sides and pulled up wriggling, shining fish. Every day at dawn, she carried the fish back to shore. Then the fishermen would take the fresh fish to sell at the market, and spend the rest of the day on the shore, mending and washing their nets and getting ready to go out again when it got dark.

This morning, though, they had not brought back a single fish. Not one! Over and over again, the nets had come up empty. The little boat wondered whether she had done something wrong.

She was distracted from her worries by a loud commotion approaching the shore. A huge crowd of people jostled and elbowed and shouted their way towards her. Just as they reached the place where she was tied up, a man pushed his way out of the crowd and, with a flying leap and a scramble, stood on her deck!

The crowd pressed closer, and the fishing boat worried that they were all going to climb on! But then her fisherman untied her and, joining the strange man on deck, he pushed her away from the shore.

There she floated while the man spoke in a loud voice to all of the people on the shore. And, oh, the things that he said! Such funny stories, such wise and mysterious words, things that were frightening and wonderful and thrilling and strange! The boat felt proud to be a stage for such a fine speaker. She loved everybody looking at her. She wished it could go on for ever.

Eventually, though, the man stopped speaking and turned to the fisherman. ‘Let’s go further out, and catch some fish,’ he said.

The little boat giggled to herself. Whoever heard of catching fish now, in the middle of the day, when they hadn’t caught a thing all night! Sure enough, her fisherman was chuckling too. ‘We’ve been out all night and not seen so much as a minnow!’ he said. ‘Still, you’re the boss – let’s go!’

The boat floated out towards the middle of the lake, enjoying the wind puffing out her sails, and hoping that the people on the shore were still watching her. Then the fisherman let down the nets, and at once – just like that – they were full! The boat had never felt such a flapping and tugging before. She rocked from side to side, desperately trying to stay

have a disease or a disability – but the man they're waiting for is not a doctor.

'We've heard that Jesus of Nazareth can cure people instantly,' says Joanna, 36, whose daughter has regular fits. 'We're desperate enough to try anything.'

Hannah, 29, breaks through the crowd to show me her son Nathan, a healthy toddler, aged 2. 'He was born with a terrible skin disease that meant he wore bandages all day,' she tells me, 'but look! Jesus touched him and now he's fine!'

As far as anybody knows, this man, Jesus, is a carpenter from Nazareth – but over the past few weeks he has been teaching in the synagogues and his name is connected with several strange incidents and crowds gathering. What will he do next?

DAY 3

Retelling

Tips and ideas for telling this story:

The lines of this poem are very short, but there's a lot packed in. Read it slowly and then read it again – or take it in turns, the second time, reading a verse each. Then have a look at the 'wondering' questions below.

We were just fishermen
mending our net,
then came the day
we'll never forget.

Huge crowd of people
filling the beach.
Man hopped on board,
started to teach.

- I wonder why Simon agreed to cast the net, even though they hadn't caught anything and Jesus wasn't a fisherman?
- I wonder why Simon wanted Jesus to go away from him?
- I wonder what the fishermen thought that 'fishing for people' might mean?
- I wonder what the fishermen left behind to follow Jesus?

DAY 4

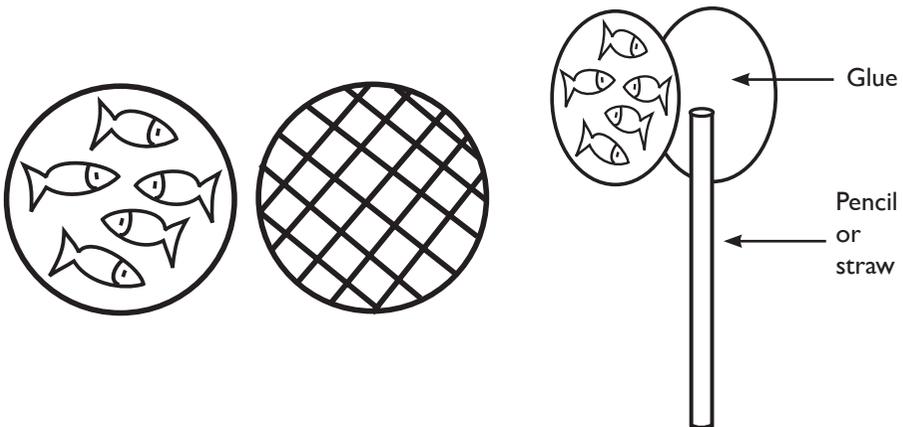
Make something

Here are a couple of fun crafts to help you retell the story about Jesus calling the fishermen.

Catch of fish thaumatrope

A thaumatrope is an optical illusion and a toy which was popular among Victorian children. It works by flicking between two pictures so quickly that the brain blends them together into a single image. Thaumatropes are very easy to make and are perfect for illustrating lots of stories.

All you need are two discs of white card (drawing around a roll of sticky tape, or the top of a mug, gives about the right size), some glue, a pencil or straw and something to draw the images with.



On one of the discs, draw lots of fish. On the other disc, draw a grid pattern across the whole circle so that it looks like an empty net.

Glue the discs back to back over the top of the pencil, so that the result looks like a big lollipop with the pencil as the stick and your two drawings on opposite sides.

Now hold the pencil between the palms of your hands, and watch the disc as you rub your hands together. You should see the pictures blend together so that it looks as though the fish are in the net.



Full fishing net

Have a go at making a net full of fish. Several things come in nets – oranges, little cheeses, chocolate coins. Cut fish shapes out of cardboard and wrap them in silver foil, or if you have longer, try sticking on sequins so that they overlap like scales. How many fish can you squeeze into your net?

- Jesus asked Simon to be a fisher of men: I wonder what he would ask you to become?

DAY 7

A Prayer

Dear Jesus,
here we are, in our lives,
surrounded by the things we know well:
things we are good at, things we like, people we love,
and things we wish we could change.
You know it all so well, too.
Step aboard our lives, Lord Jesus,
lead us out to risk the deeper water,
show us what our lives could be with you in charge,
and use our lives to reveal yourself to others.
Amen.