

Background Scripture: Luke 5:1-11 • Print Passage: Luke 5:1-11

KEY VERSE: Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people."
(Luke 5:10b)



Ezra is the Student Council president for Smithhale Middle School. One major responsibility of the president is to collect ideas from the students

to do a special project or give a gift to the school. Moving through the last semester of his seventh-grade year, Ezra thought about what his classmates could do to leave their mark on the school. Ezra knew that he did not want to buy a statue or a fixture, such as a stadium banner, like many other classes had done in the past. Whatever project or gift his class chose, Ezra wanted it to be something significant that would leave a positive legacy of service for many years to come. Ezra asked his parents and Sunday school teacher for ideas for a school project. He also talked to as many students as he could to find out their thoughts and ideas. Many of the students wanted to buy trees or other greenery for beautification projects. That was a good idea, but



Ezra wanted to do something that was more service-oriented.

As Ezra was riding home from school one day, he noticed a long line of people standing outside of the community garden. "That's it!" Ezra thought. Ezra envisioned a partnership between his school and the community garden workers. Ezra asked his father and two of his friends to go with him to meet with the community garden supervisor to share his idea. The supervisor met with Ezra willingly and offered

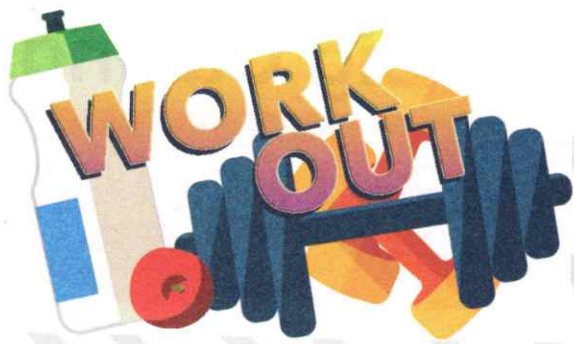
several different ways that students from Smithhale High School could offer service throughout the school year. Ezra was pleased that the community garden supervisor thought the partnership was a perfect idea. For as long as the school wanted, eighth graders and other students from Smithhale Middle School would have a place to serve the community. Ezra's principal approved the community garden partnership. Ezra was proud of the service opportunity he arranged for his school.



WORD UP

Luke 5:1-11

1 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. 2 He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. 3 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. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." 5 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." 6 When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. 7 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. 8 When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, 10 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." 11 So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.



Today's lesson records a miraculous catch that awed the men who would become the first disciples to follow Jesus. Still in Galilee, Jesus' reputation had grown. When Jesus spoke, crowds of people came to listen. On this particular day, the crowd was pressing in on Jesus so much that He decided to put some distance between the crowd and Himself. Jesus climbed into a boat that was near the shore and asked its owner, Simon, to push out onto the water. Jesus continued to teach the crowds from the boat.

After Jesus finished speaking, He told Simon to take the boats out in deeper water to fish. Simon was not really excited about

Jesus' command because Simon and his fishing partners had spent the previous night trying to catch fish without any success. Nevertheless, Simon did as Jesus said. This time, Simon caught so many fish that the nets were tearing from the

weight. He had to call his partners to come with the other boat to help him, and the same thing happened to them. There were so many fish that the boats almost sank.

Simon and the others who were with him realized that Jesus was the one who made the difference in their situation. Simon knew he was a sinner, and he did not feel worthy to be in Jesus' presence. Jesus assured Simon and the others that He would teach them to fish for people. From that time on, Simon, James, and John left everything about their lives behind and followed Jesus.

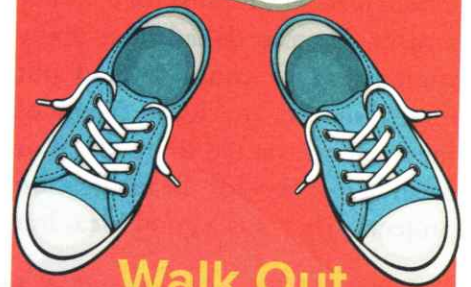
INSIDE OUT

After Jesus finished teaching, He shifted His focus to Simon and the other fishermen. The night before, Simon and his crew were unsuccessful at catching fish; and now Jesus wanted them to fish in the same lake where they had previously failed. Simon obeyed Jesus and received a miraculous blessing. The bounty of fish they caught was so great that they were barely able to handle it. Simon and the others recognized Jesus' power and authority and followed Him. In every challenging situation, Jesus makes the difference. Trust Jesus and follow Him.



There's an App for That!

In today's lesson, Simon and his fellow fishermen were disappointed by an unproductive night of fishing. When Jesus instructed Simon to repeat his fishing mission, Simon initially made an excuse as to why he did not want to go fishing again. When Simon surrendered his will and followed Jesus, his situation changed in an instant. Many people allow negative experiences to keep them from moving forward. Do you believe Jesus can lead you to victory when you face difficult choices and decisions? When you are tempted to give up because of past failures, ask God for direction and expect Him to answer.



Walk Out

After witnessing the miracle of the big catch, Simon and the others were never the same. Jesus has transformational power—a person cannot truly know Jesus and remain the same. When you let go of your selfish desires and invite Jesus to be in control, like Simon, you will be awed by God's provisions in and grace over your life.