

28.26 Catching Fish (Luke 5:1–11)

✓ “Check” it out; opinion, inference, supposed conversation, or fact one can verify follows
[. . .] indicates a remark to the teacher that usually should not be read. It also indicates answers to questions.

Visuals and Tools:

- Pictures and other visuals found at the end of this lesson. Please give credit to the sources of pictures.
- Check “Activities” and “Handwork” found below for additional materials.
- Nets

Bible Time Tips and Terms to Teach:

- *multitudes*: great crowds—hundreds and thousands of people
- *fishing net*: three kinds of nets are mentioned in the NT. The one, used by Peter and Andrew in this passage of scripture, is the *amphiblestron*, a circular, bell-shaped dragnet, which was thrown upon the water, so that it spread out and caught, by sinking, whatever was below it (TFG). Zebedee’s fishing operation used the *dictua*, which is mentioned in many Scriptures. The *dictua* was a casting-net (TFG). (See photos at end of this lesson.)

Scripture: (ESV)

Luke 5:1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon’s, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.” 5 And Simon answered, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets.” 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.

Introduction/Review:

Today’s story tells about a third meeting up with Peter and Andrew, James and John. Tell me about the first time they met. [James was a disciple of John the Baptist; he introduced his brother, John, to Jesus. Andrew met Jesus and introduced his brother, Simon Peter or Cephas.] Where were these fishermen the second time Jesus met them? [At the seashore.] What were they doing? [Mending nets and casting nets into the sea.] What did Jesus say they would do when they followed Him? [Become fishers of men.] What does “fishers of men” mean? [Spreading the good news that Jesus is the Saviour from sin.]

Story:

The third time Jesus met these men, He was again walking by the Sea of Galilee (also called the Lake of Gennesaret). [Locate on a map and point out the area near Capernaum.] Multitudes were following Him. In fact, so many people were “pressing in on Him to hear the Word of God” ✓that it was difficult to teach them.

Empty boats

Oh, look! [Show picture.] There were two empty boats! The fishermen who owned those boats were washing their nets. All night they had been fishing—pull, pull, pulling those nets out of the water, catching not even one single fish. Those nets were ✓dirty with mud from the lake bottom and stinky with seaweed.

Can you guess who owned those boats? One was owned by Peter ✓and Andrew; the other was owned by their partners, James and John. Jesus waded out into the shallow water and climbed into Simon Peter’s boat. ✓“Row out just a little way from shore, Simon,” Jesus told Peter. Simon Peter did as he was asked. Then Jesus sat down and from that spot, not being pushed by the multitudes, Jesus taught the people. Isn’t that neat?

Deep-water fishing

When Jesus was done with His lesson and, we assume, ✓the people were leaving, Jesus told Simon Peter to do something else, something that baffled Peter for it didn’t seem quite right. Jesus said, “Get out into the deep water away from shore and let down your nets for a catch.”

✓“Let down your nets for a catch?” thought Peter. “Haven’t we worked hard letting down nets all night? Have we caught any fish? No. All we did was cast, cast, cast, and pull, pull, pull. Nothing was in our nets but dirt and weeds. If we let down our nets in this same area and there were no fish before, how could there be fish here now?”

We will learn that Simon Peter is not a man who can keep thoughts to himself. So he just up and blurted out to Jesus, “Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!” That is as to say, ✓“We fishermen know there aren’t any fish here now.” Then, however, ✓Peter might have called to mind the miraculous signs he had seen Jesus do—making water into wine, casting out a demon, healing his mother-in-law. ✓He might have thought, “Jesus said to let down the nets; maybe I’d better do what He says even though I doubt if it will do any good.” So he said to Jesus, “Okay. Because you said so, I will let down the nets.”

Miraculous Catch

[Teacher, say in a ho-hum way.] Cast, cast, cast. [Pause.] ✓“Wait a minute! What’s going on here?! Look at all those fish! I’ve never caught so many at one time! Let’s pull them in. Pu-u-u-ll! Pu-u-u-ll! We can’t pull them in! There are too many! Oh, no! The nets are breaking! [Teacher, lift your eyes as if seeing something beyond.] Hey, James! John! We’ve got too many fish to bring in by ourselves. Come help us! Help! Help before our nets totally break!”

✓“We’re coming!” answered James. When James and John arrived at the busy scene, they helped Peter and Andrew pu-u-u-ll, pu-u-u-ll, pu-u-u-ll the nets filled with fish into their boat. “Our boat is sinking deeper into the water!” shouted James and John.

✓“So is ours!” cried Simon and Andrew. [Teacher, keep acting as if you are pulling hard on nets.] “There, now, I think we have gotten them all. Whew!”

Peter’s sinfulness

Overcome with this miraculous catch of fish, knowing who caused it to happen, Simon Peter, fell down at Jesus’ knees. ✓Aware of the perfection of Jesus and doubly aware of his own sinful heart, Peter cried, “I am a sinful man; You are perfect. I can’t stay in Your presence!”

“Yeah,” said the others. “We’ve never seen anything like this before!”

“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus said to Simon. “From now on you will be catching men.” Again, what does that mean? [They would be telling the good news that Jesus saves from sin. Men and women would be saved.]

It was time now for these four disciples to leave everything behind. The Bible states, “When they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him.” They left their fishing business ✓in the hands of Zebedee, the father of James and John and became true disciples of Jesus Christ, the Saviour.

Lessons from This Lesson:

- Jesus is God: He knew where the fish were (Luke 5:4–6).
- In the miraculous draught [pronounced *draft*] of fishes, He makes Himself known to the conscience of

Peter, who sees . . . himself a sinful man unfit for His presence. This is always the effect of the revelation of God to us, and indeed of nothing else (JND CW 25.189 in Online Bible). Even the *best men* are *sinful men*, and should be ready upon all occasions to own it, and especially to own it to Jesus Christ (MH in Online Bible).

- “Jesus speaks words of grace, ‘Fear not.’ From henceforth he should catch men” (JND CW 25.189).

Activities:

- Play dough: fish; nets; boats
- Sing “Jesus Makes Us Fishers of Men When We Follow Him” (the same old song with altered words).
- Play “Net the Fish” game. Using nets, “pull, pull, pull” easily with empty nets. When teacher puts paper fish in the nets, pretend to “PU – U – U – L – L – L” slowly with effort.
- Do puppet play, “Tilly Tilapia,” found at the end of this lesson. (This activity is also suggested for Lesson 28.64a, where instructions for making the puppet are found. The scripts are slightly different for each of these lessons.)
- Before class print and prepare take-home booklets for this story. The online source for ordering or downloading for \$12.99 is <https://www.carsondellosa.com/products/0499--New-Testament-Take-Home-Bible-Stories-Resource-Book-0499#/?book%20media%20type=f389e45b92884d48844baaf09d49e3c5>. The book is less expensive at other sites, but those sites do not offer the ebook.
- Using fish puppets, play a “talking fish” game. If fish could talk, what would they say about the following:

Jesus: “Jesus made me”; “Jesus knew where I was when the fishermen threw in nets.”

Jonah: “God made a big fish to swallow Jonah”; Jonah stayed in a big fish’s belly three days and three nights”; “A big fish spit Jonah out on shore.”

Tilapia: “The kind of fish the fishermen probably caught”; “good to eat”; might have had Peter’s coin”; “protects its babies.”

- Play act the story: Put chairs in a row as if a boat. Throw net as if at night; throw net as if at Jesus’ command; put all fish puppets in net; ask “Is this enough fish?”; say, “Call the other boat.”
- Have goldfish crackers for snack.
- Review Questions: (Game: Print review questions on fish. Attach a paper clip to each fish. Have students use a pole/stick with a string attached and a magnet attached to the string in order to “fish” for questions.
 1. How did Jesus solve the problem of the people’s crowding too close to Him? [Got into Peter’s boat and preached from there.]
 2. Why weren’t the fishermen in the boats? [They were mending their nets.]
 3. When Jesus had finished speaking to the crowd, what did he say to Simon? [“Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”]
 4. What was Simon’s objection? [“Master, we toiled all night and took nothing!”]
 5. How did Simon correct himself? [By saying, “But at your word I will let down the nets.”]
 6. When the fishermen had obeyed Jesus, what happened? [They caught a large number of fish.]
 7. What happened because there were so many fish? [Their nets were breaking, and they had to call the other boat to help. The boats began to sink.]
 8. What was Simon Peter’s response when he saw this miracle? [He fell down at Jesus’ knees, saying, “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.”]
 9. What did Jesus say to reassure Simon Peter? [“Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.”]

10. Why did these four fishermen leave their boats and everything in their business? [To follow Jesus.]

Handwork:

- Color the clipart page below; then glue produce netting (cut from soft bags in which grocery produce, like apples, are sold) over the net.

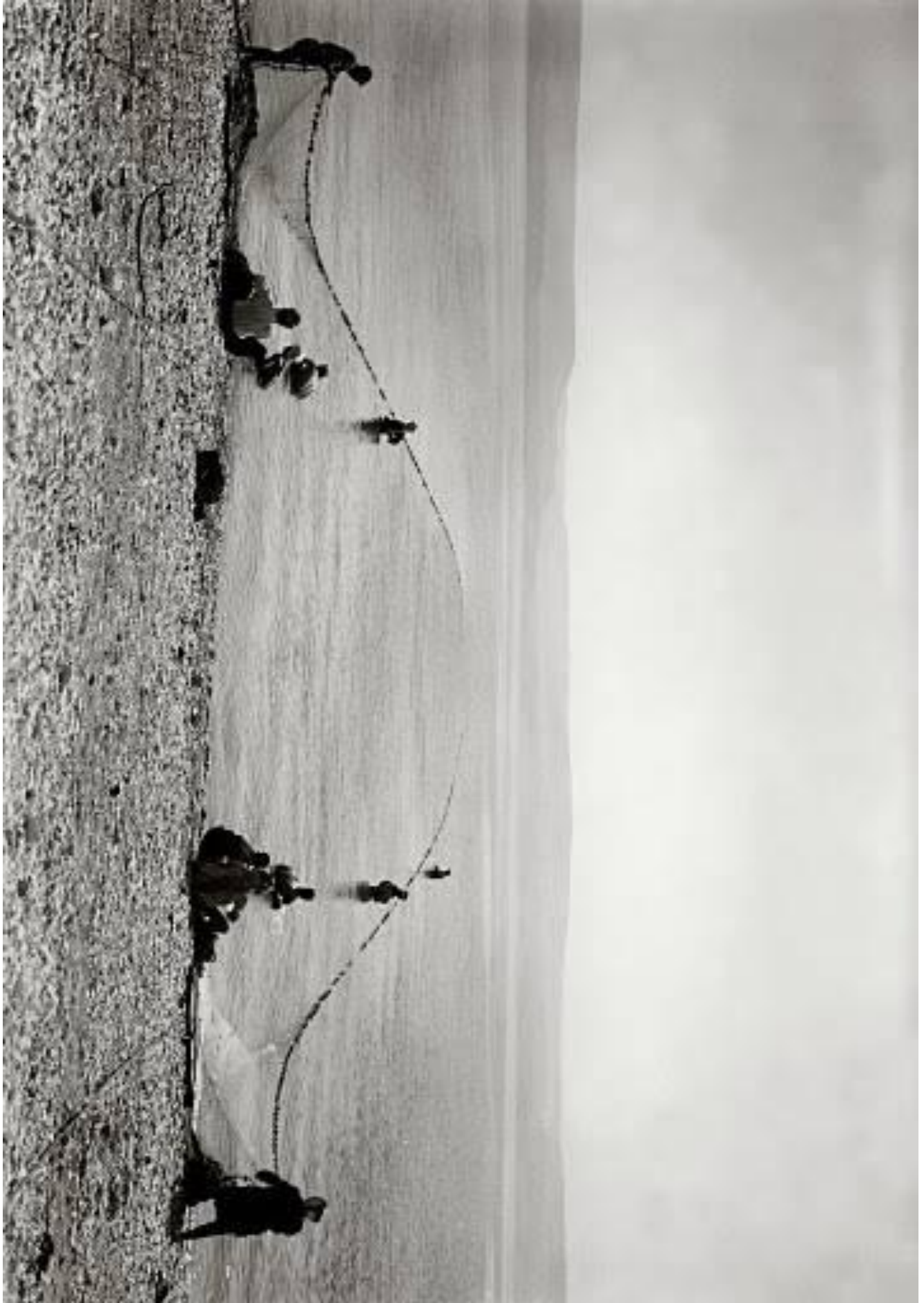
Memory Verse:

- Luke 5:11—[Peter, Andrew, James, and John] they left everything and followed [Jesus].



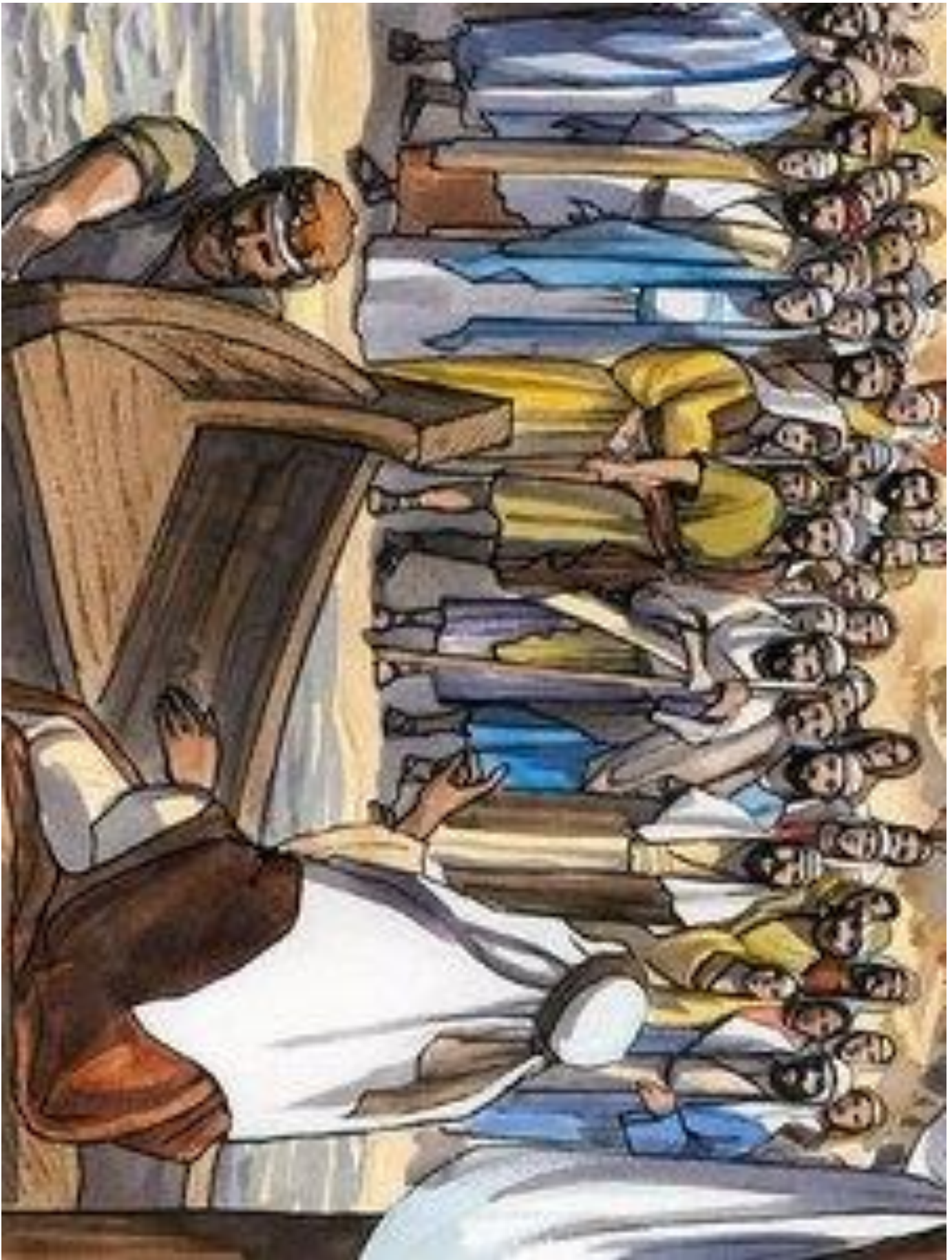
Casting the *dictua* net into the Sea of Galilee

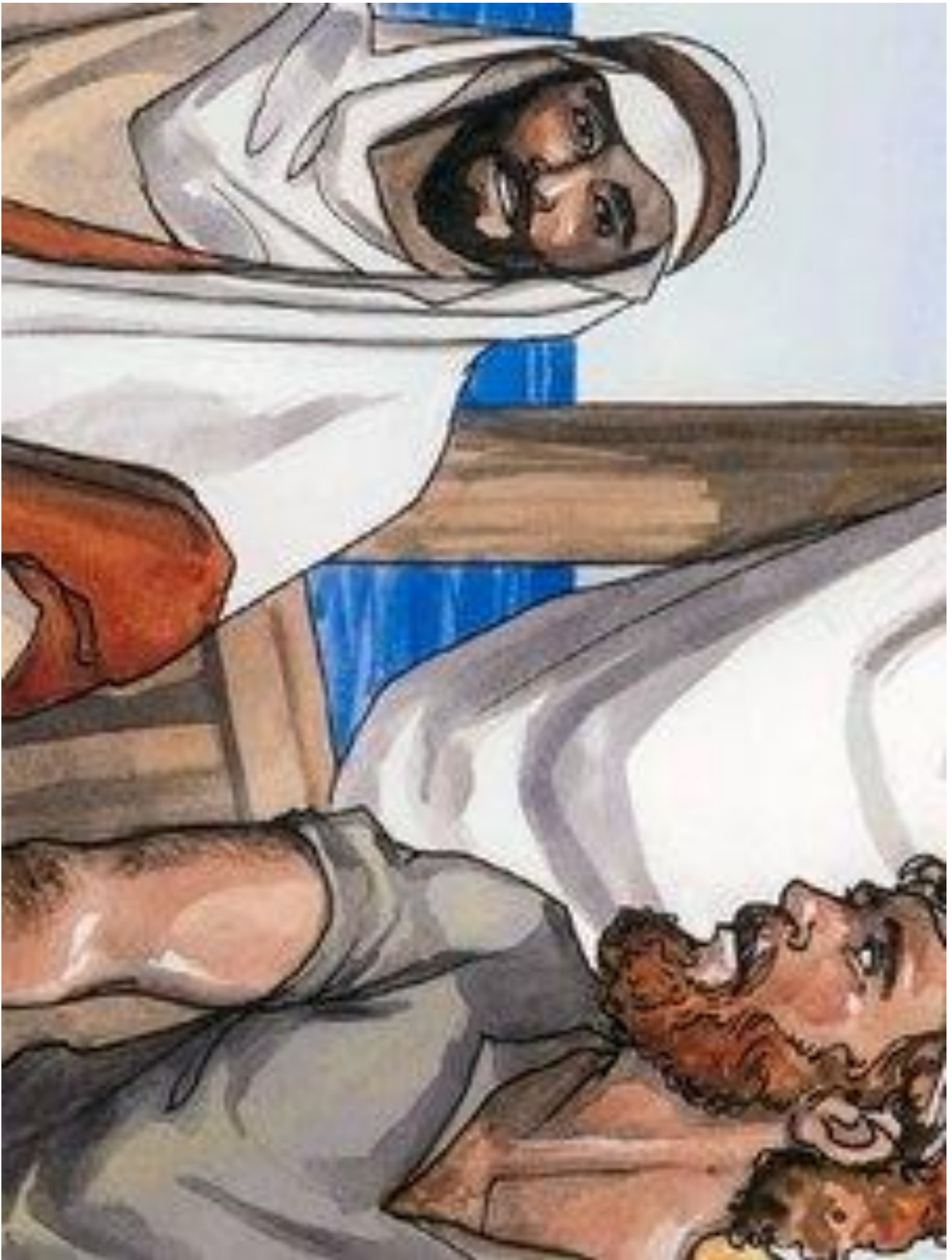




A drag net (*amphiblestron*) being dragged in at the Sea of Galilee

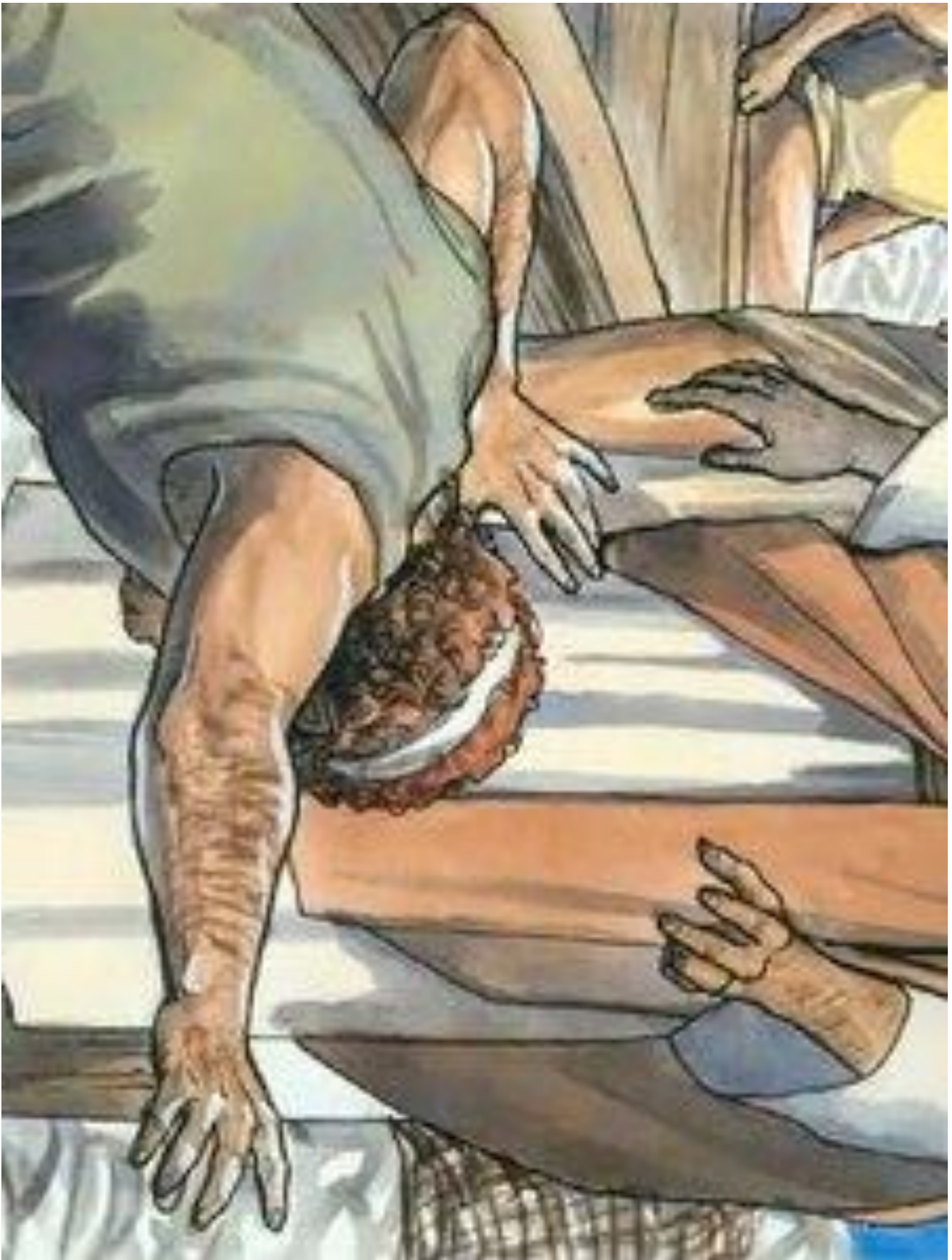
<https://blog.bibleplaces.com/2009/12/dragnet-on-sea-of-galilee.html>













Tilly Tilapia Puppet Script
by Marilyn Alexander

Print two copies of this script, one for the interviewer and one for Tilly. (*Tilapia* is pronounced til **AH'** pee ah.)

Interviewer: Who are you?

Tilly: I'm a fish called a tilapia; so you can call me Tilly Tilapia. And who are you?

Interviewer: I'm _____, and I teach children here at our _____. Why do you want to talk to me, Tilly Tilapia?

Tilly: Because I'm the only large kind of fish in the Sea of Galilee that swims in schools.

Interviewer: I've always thought it was strange that they called groups of fish *schools*. Do you learn things in your schools as these kids do in their schools?

Tilly: No. If we did, I'd like to learn how to stay out of the fisherman's net. We tilapia are one of the best fish in the Sea of Galilee to cook and . . . uh, eat. I'm pretty tasty, they say. Also, I'm easy to fry because I'm flat. I don't have many small bones; so that makes me easy to . . . uh, eat. But I'd rather not talk about eating me. Let's talk about something else.

Interviewer: Okay. Tell me about your many names.

Tilly: Yes. Wonder Fish, Nile Perch. Arabs call me *musht*, which means comb—like you *comb* your hair. That's because my dorsal fin—this fin on top—looks like a comb. I am also called Nurse Fish.

Interviewer: How *large* are you?

Tilly: [Indignantly.] Are you asking about my weight? It's very impolite to ask a woman how much she weighs, you know.

Interviewer: I thought people like to brag about how much a *fish* weighs.

Tilly: Okay, okay. I weigh almost three and a half pounds.

Interviewer: And I see you're about a foot and a half long. How fast do you grow?

Tilly: I can grow from fingerling to *eating* size. . . oops, I said that word *eating* again . . . in about ten months here in the Sea of Galilee, but in a fish farm it takes only six or seven months.

Interviewer: You don't say!

Tilly: But I do say. What I don't *want* to say has to do with nets.

Interviewer: Why?

Tilly: Because . . . you know . . . nets have to do with catching me and . . . eee. . . . Oh, I just can't say that word again.

Interviewer: I don't blame you, but I'd surely like to learn about fishermen's nets on the Sea of Galilee?

Tilly: Oh, well, I might as well tell you, but [sadly] you know this subject is very close to me. This is how they do it. Fishermen spread out a long wall of netting about 300 feet from shore and parallel to it. They tie towing lines to each end of the net, and fishermen on each end bring the lines into shore. They move towards each other, gradually drawing the net together with all kinds of fish in it. Then they sort the fish out, tossing back the, uh, inedible ones—which I'm not.

Interviewer: Well, Tilly Tilapia, thank you for being such an interesting guest today. You have taught us a lot about yourself and about fishing on the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus and His disciples spent a lot of time.

Tilly: You're welcome. Read and study the Bible, kids. It is God's Word, and we need to know it.

