

Tilly Tilapia Puppet Script
by Marilyn Alexander

Note: *Tilapia* is pronounced til **AH'** pee ah

Mrs. T: Of all the fish in the world, I wonder which one we should talk to today.

Tilly: Oh, I hope it's me!!! I hope it's me. I have so much to tell you.

Mrs. T: Well, okay. Who are you?

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

Mrs. T: I'm _____, and I teach children here at our _____. Why are you so excited to talk to me, Tilly Tilapia?

Tilly: Because I live in the Sea of Galilee. Maybe I'm the kind of fish in your Bible story today.

Mrs. T: Really?

Tilly: Yes. I'm a large fish that lives with lots of other fish. People call our close community *shoals* or *schools*.

Mrs. T: 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, Mrs. T. If we did, I'd like to learn how to stay out of the fisherman's net. Those guys catch a lot of us. Today, just as in Bible times, we 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.

Mrs. T: Okay. Tell me about yourself.

Tilly: I have lots of names.

Mrs. T: Lots of names?

Tilly: Yes. Wonder Fish, Nile Perch. Arabs call me *musht*, which means comb—like you *comb* your hair. That's because of my dorsal fin—this fin on top. *Musht* means comb, and my dorsal fin looks like a comb. Don't you agree?

Mrs. T: I guess so. What is another name you have?

Tilly: St. Peter's Fish.

Mrs. T: Do you mean you're named after one of Jesus' disciples?

Tilly: Yep. It might have been a tilapia that Peter caught with a coin in its mouth; so people call me St. Peter's Fish.

Mrs. T: Why do people think *you* carried the coin?

Tilly: Because of another name I have.

Mrs. T: What's that?

Tilly: Nurse Fish. You see, I take the little fish eggs that I have laid into my mouth until they hatch. I'm so protective of my babies after they hatch that I carefully watch over them for a few days, even scooping them into my mouth if an enemy is near.

Mrs. T: I get it. Since tilapias carry things in their mouths, maybe a tilapia had the coin in its mouth too.

Tilly: It's a possibility. I'm the only *large* kind of fish in the Sea of Galilee that swims in schools.

Mrs. T: How *large* are you?

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

Mrs. T: I thought that people like to brag about how much a *fish* weighs.

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

Mrs. T: And I see you're about a foot and a half long.

Tilly: That's right. Christ, my Creator, made me with a great digestive system, a better one than most fish have. That helps to make me grow, and it keeps me well.

Mrs. T: What do you digest? Larva? Smaller fish?

Tilly: Absolutely not! I'm a vegetarian!

Mrs. T: A vegetarian *fish*? You eat only plants and not smaller animals?

Tilly: Correct.

Mrs. T: 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. Remember that fish farm we had in Lamar? I could grow up in six or seven months there.

Mrs. T: You don't say!

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

Mrs. T: Why?

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

Mrs. T: I don't blame you, but I'd surely like to learn about nets. Won't you please tell us about fishermen's nets on the Sea of Galilee? . . . Please?

Tilly: Uh. Uh. Oh, well, I might as well. But you know this subject is very close to me.

Mrs. T: Yes, Tilly. How do fishermen use nets on the Sea of Galilee?

Tilly: Well, 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.

Mrs. T: Oh, I see. [make motion to show bringing in the fish]

Tilly: Then they sort the fish out, tossing back the, uh, inedible ones—which I'm not.

Mrs. T: 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. I wonder if tilapia really were the kind of fish in our Bible story today.

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

Internet sources:

testimony-magazine.org/back/jan2003/benson1.pdf
morningstarfishermen.org/fish.html
ctsp.co.il/LBS%20pages/LBS_sea_of_galilee.htm

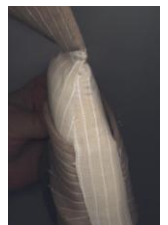
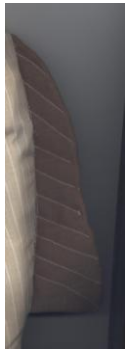
Instructions for Making Tilly Tilapia Glove Puppet

Materials:

- 1/4 yd. fabric that resembles a fish's color (I chose light brown with a stripe)
- about 1 1/2 square feet of a darker, stiffer fabric for the fins
- thread
- 14"x6" piece of foam rubber (cut to size and shape of the fish pattern)
- permanent marker
- 2 moveable "eyes"
- a glove (I used an old blue, to resemble water, gardening glove)

Instructions:

1. Cut the patterns from the paper and tape the pieces together at the dotted lines. Cut the fins from the pattern, noting which side attaches to the body of the fish.
2. Using the pattern to follow and adding about 1/2 inch all around for seams, cut two pieces of the fish body (without the fins) out of fabric. Cut another piece about 1 1/2 inches by 1 1/2 feet out of the same fabric.
3. Adding about 1/2 inch all around for seams, from another fabric cut the following from the fins patterns:
 - 2 dorsal fins (the top long fin)
 - 2 tail fins
 - 4 each of the other 2 sets of fins.
4. With right sides together and leaving the body side open, stitch around the other 3 sides of each fin. Trim seam to 1/4 inch and clip at curves. Turn right side out. Press. Stitch several parallel lines from body end to the outside of each fin. (See illustration.)
5. With right sides together, pin and stitch dorsal and tail fins in proper place to one side of the fish body.
6. With right sides together, pin and stitch the lower two fins to one side of the fish body. Repeat for the other two lower fins, pinning and stitching to the other side of the fish body.
7. With right sides together and fins inside, stitch the upper part of fish body from the upper "nose" of the fish to slightly past the tail, including all fins. Turn and press seam open.
8. With right sides together, pin one end of the 1/ 1/2-inch strip of fish fabric to the "nose" end of the fish. Stitch, beginning and ending 1/4 to 1/2 inch from the edge.
9. With right sides together, stitch one side of the strip to the fish body, tapering near the tail so that the strip narrows. (See illustration.) Repeat for the other side of the strip but leaving an opening toward the back.
10. Insert the foam rubber which has been cut to the shape and size of the fish.
11. Hand stitch to close the opening.
12. With a permanent marker, draw the features on the fish. Glue the eyes in place.
13. Hand stitch the back of the glove to the underside of the fish.



Here's a photo of my Tilly Tilapia:



