

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR

What have you caught?

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

"I'm going fishing!" Peter announced. It was a beautiful evening. The Sea of Tiberias was calm. The breeze was gentle.

"I'll go with you," Thomas said. "We will too," said Nathanael. John, James and two other friends of Jesus shook their heads in agreement.

The seven friends of Jesus went down to the shore. They prepared their nets. They packed their ship. As the sun set over the hills, they pushed their ship out into the sea.

The wind blew them gently out toward the middle of the sea. They were excited to be fishing again. But they missed Jesus. They wondered if they would ever see him again.

Soon it was dark. A full moon seemed to sail in and out of the dark clouds. It was very quiet.

Jesus' friends fished, and fished, and fished. All night they kept throwing their nets into the dark waters, only to pull them in empty. It was very discouraging.

Finally the cool light of dawn began to chase night's darkness away. Jesus' friends began to sail back toward the shore. They had not caught even one fish all night.

They noticed a man standing on the shore. He called out to them in the morning stillness. "Did you catch anything?"

"No!" James shouted back. "Nothing!"

"Throw your net off to the right side of your boat," the

stranger on the shore suggested. "You'll find some fish there."

"What can we lose?" Thomas said. "Let's throw in the net."

They did. And they caught so many fish they could hardly pull the net back in.

"It is the Lord!" John shouted to Peter. "The man on the shore is Jesus!"

Peter was so excited he dove into the water and swam to shore. The other six rowed the boat slowly to shore, towing the net full of fish.

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire burning. There was bread cooking. Jesus was cooking for them.

"Bring some of the fish you just caught," Jesus called out to them. Peter pulled the net full of fish onto the shore. They counted 153 large fish.

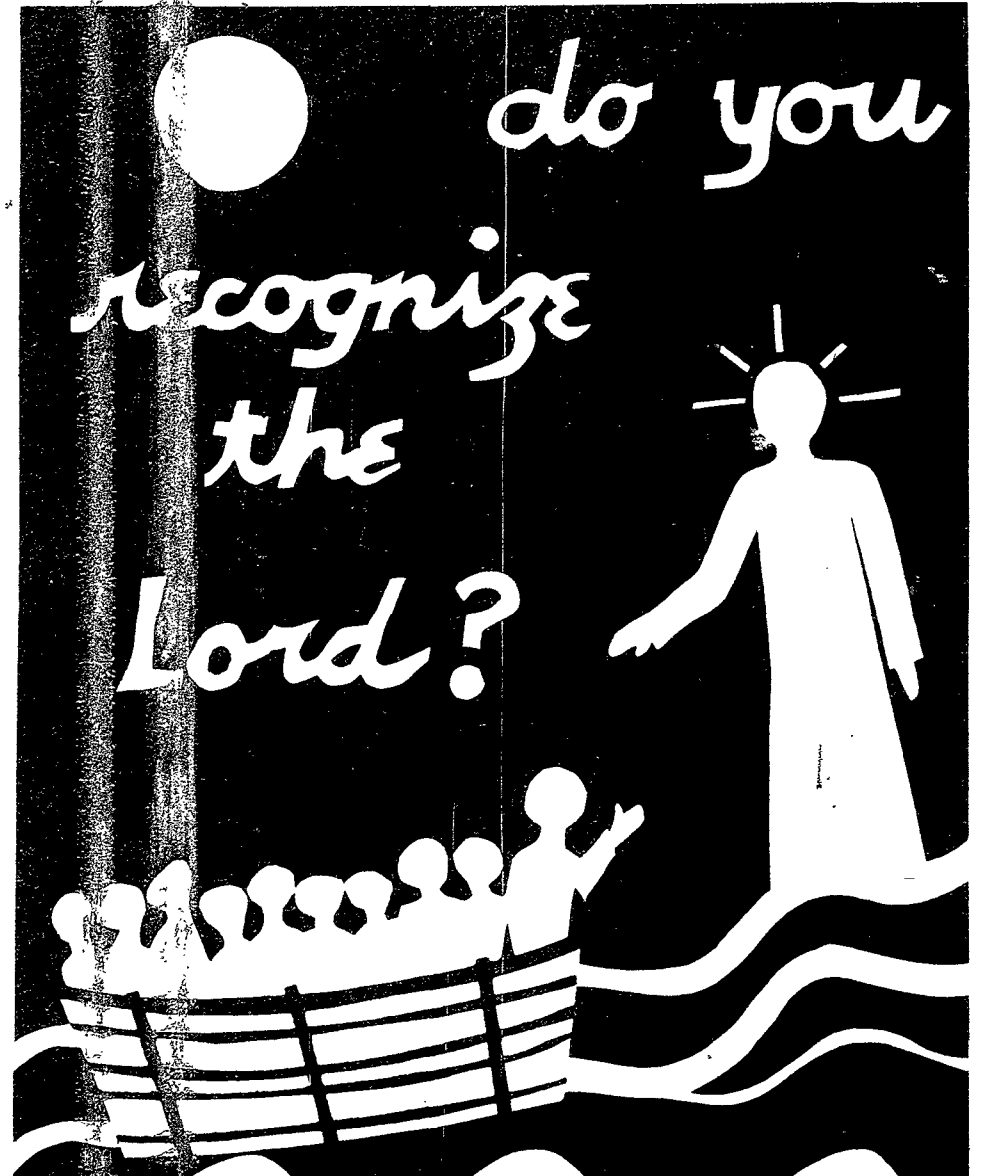
"Come and eat," Jesus invited. The seven sat down around the fire. They were hungry after their night of fishing. The food smelled very good.

Once they were all settled on the sandy shore, Jesus took bread. He blessed it, broke it and gave it to his friends.

Then Jesus and his friends ate and talked for a long time. They were so happy to be with Jesus again. It was like a picnic.

Story hour biblical quotes — this week from John 21:1-14 — are paraphrased.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of numerous catechetical books and articles for children.)



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HOW ABOUT YOU?

- What makes you feel discouraged? Who can help you when you feel that way?
- How do you think the friends of Jesus felt after fishing so long and catching nothing?
- Why do you think the friends of Jesus were so glad to see him on the shore?
- Draw and color a picture about a time when you saw someone helping another person.

Children's Reading Corner

Sometimes when we do things our own way, something happens that discourages us. We end up feeling sad and even angry. Then someone comes along to help us. And things turn out far better than we could ever have imagined. "Daniel's Duck," by Clyde Robert Bulla, is about that kind of situation. After you read it, talk together about discouraging times and about people who were friendly and helpful. (Harper and Row Publishers, 10 E. 53rd. St., New York, N.Y. 10022. Paperback, \$2.95.)



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