

The Call of Peter**John 1:19-2:22; Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11****Memory Verse:** *“Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.” Mark 1:17 (ESV)***Background Helps:**

We now embark upon a 13-week study of Peter, apostle of Jesus Christ, encompassing both his life and his two letters. Peter is one of the most vividly portrayed characters in all of Scripture—we are in for an exciting 13 weeks! Our study naturally divides into three parts: (1) Peter in the 4 Gospels; (2) Peter in the book of Acts; and (3) Peter’s two letters. Probably the main lesson you should seek to teach over this 13-week period is the power of Jesus Christ to transform an individual life. Peter is changed from shifting sand to sturdy rock, from an unstable fisherman to a strong apostle. His story of transformation should provide inspiration and encouragement to every student in your class. During our six weeks of study in the Gospels, notice how Jesus trains Simon the fisherman to become Peter the apostle. During our four weeks of study in the book of Acts, notice how the Spirit of Christ empowers Peter the apostle to lead the early church in fulfilling its mission. During our three weeks of study in Peter’s two letters, notice how the Lord inspires the apostle Peter to strengthen his brothers (Lk. 22:32) and feed Christ’s sheep (John 21:15-17).

To aid you in your study and lesson preparation, we recommend the classic biography, *Life of Peter: Fisherman, Disciple, Apostle*, by F. B. Meyer. Also, you are encouraged to consult the article on Peter (and his letters, 1 Peter and 2 Peter, in a good Bible dictionary. Most of all, do not neglect to study carefully the Scriptures themselves. The Bible reading schedule will include virtually every reference to Peter in the New Testament. In a few cases in the Gospels, you may find some additional details about Peter by referring to parallel accounts.

Notice that in the first week of Bible readings we learn the following interesting facts about Peter: he was brother to Andrew, who introduced him to Jesus (John 1:40-42); his given name was Simon (or Simeon, Acts 15:14; 2 Pet. 1:1), but Jesus called him Cephas (Aramaic) or Peter (Greek), which mean “rock” (John 1:42); his father’s name was John (or Jonah, John 1:42; Matt. 16:17); he was originally from Bethsaida on the Sea of Galilee (John 1:44), although he seems later to have lived in Capernaum (Mark 1:21, 29); by trade he was a fisherman (Mark 1:16); and with his brother Andrew, he was a business partner with James and John, sons of Zebedee (Luke 5:1-11). We also learn in Mark 1:30 and 1 Corinthians 9:5 that Peter was married.

Lesson Helps:

The call of Peter to be a disciple of Christ took place in three stages: (1) his introduction to Jesus in John 1:35-42; (2) his call by Jesus to leave his fishing business (Mark 1:14-20; Luke 5:1-11); and (3) his appointment by Jesus to be an apostle (Mark

3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; Matt. 10:1-4). We will cover the first two of these stages in this first week's lesson. A possible lesson aim: My students will learn about the call of Peter to be Jesus' disciple, so that they will also respond to Jesus' call to discipleship in their own lives.

Your lesson should probably be based on the fullest account of Peter's call in Luke 5:1-11. However, in your introduction, you will want to include the story of how Peter first met Jesus in John 1:40-42. Notice the important role of his brother Andrew in this introduction. Notice also Jesus' first words to Peter in John 1:42. Although the character of Simon at this point is still shifting sand, Jesus encourages him by giving him a new name, Peter, the Rock—what Simon will become by the transforming power of Christ. Jesus saw Peter's potential.

In Luke 5:1-11, trace the increasing commitment of Peter to Jesus: First, he allows Jesus to use his boat (v. 3); then he obeys Jesus' seemingly irrational instruction (vv. 4-5); then, in awe and amazement, he confesses his sinfulness to Christ (vv. 6-9); finally, in response to Jesus' call, he leaves his fishing business to follow Christ and become a fisher of men (vv. 10-11).

Possible discussion questions: Does following Jesus ever involve "irrational obedience" today (Luke 4:4-5)? Why is conviction of sin (Luke 5:8) a prerequisite for becoming a serious disciple of Jesus Christ? What does it mean "to catch men"? How do we become "fishers of men"? (Work on the memory verse, Mark 1:17.) What does it mean in our day to leave everything and follow Christ (Luke 5:11)? Like Peter, will you commit yourself to be a whole-hearted disciple of Christ?

A good way to introduce Peter to your class is by means of an interview of a prepared class member dressed in 1st century garb. Or simply have "Peter" introduce himself.

Home Assignment:

 Read Mark 1:29-39; 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16; 8:40-56; Matthew 9:35–10:16; 14:22-33.

 Memorize Matthew 9:37-38.