

## The Great Canoe Fish - The Sugar Creek Gang - 2

*Simon Peter said, "I am going fishing." The disciples said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore; yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Do you have any fish?" They answered Him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and were not able to haul it in, because of the quantity of fish. When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, and threw himself into the sea. The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. John 21:3-6, 8*

The children loved the stories Mr. Padler told about the legend of the great canoe fish. When Mr. Padler's nephew, Barry Boleman, invited the whole gang and Mr. Collins to take a three day canoe trip they all wanted to go. Mr. Padler told them stories about how he had seen the great fish years before and what had to be done to catch it again. The children were willing to follow his instructions perfectly. Although the Great Canoe Fish story is pretend, there are lessons that we can learn from it about following directions.

Are you good at following directions? Do you listen?

The Bible tells us a real story of the disciples going fishing in John 21:3-8. They didn't catch anything, but then Jesus called to them from the shore and told them to throw out their nets on the other side of the boat. When they obeyed Him they caught so many fish that they couldn't even haul them all in.

What do you think Jesus wants us to do today? Do you read His word, the Bible?

The Till brothers, Tom and Bob, and their friend, Shorty Long, secretly followed the gang on their canoe trip, because they wanted to catch the big fish for themselves. The three hid behind bushes so that they could listen to what the others said. They stole food, tackle, and a sleeping bag from the gang.

Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you? Has someone stolen something from you?

The Bible calls the wrong things we do "sin". Romans 3:23 says, "*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.*" These verses mean that none of us is perfect. But we can be God's precious children because Jesus paid the price for our sins. All we have to do is ask Him to forgive us and believe in Him for salvation.

We've all done many wrong things. Jesus will forgive us when we ask Him.

We all know that fish can't really talk, but in the story Big Jim said the fish told him its time was almost over. Living and dying is part of life. Whether animals or people, we will all reach the end of our lives here on earth. When life is over God invites us to come and live with Him in heaven forever. He says that everyone who believes in Jesus will be saved.

If you ask Jesus to come into your life He will. He will always be with you and help you.

Even though the Till brothers and Shorty stole food, tackle, and a sleeping bag from the gang, Big Jim and Bill Collins were willing to help them build a shelter from the storm. In Luke 6:27 Jesus tells us to "*Love your enemies and do good to those who hate you.*" When we hold anger and bitterness inside it hurts us more than the people we are mad at. Ask God to take away any anger or bitterness that you have inside. Let Him set you free to live your life with joy.

*Dear Lord, thank You for giving us good directions for life. Help us to study Your word and follow where You lead us. Please forgive us for wrong things that we have done in the past. Take away any anger and bitterness inside of us. Give us pure hearts and right spirits that we will live our lives in peace and joy. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.*