



Peter's Commission

(based on John 21:15-17)

After Jesus died and was buried, some women who were his friends found his tomb empty. Jesus appeared to his disciples. He was alive!

Seven of his disciples, not knowing quite what to do, headed home to the Sea of Galilee and went back to fishing. They were on their boat and fished all night long, but they didn't catch even one fish! Then they saw a man on shore who told them to cast their nets on the other side of their boat. Strange as it seems, they caught a lot of fish when they did this. John told Peter that it had to be Jesus on shore. Peter was so excited he didn't even wait for the boat to get to shore. He jumped in and swam to Jesus! Jesus had a little fire going, and he cooked fish and bread and invited them to eat.

After breakfast was finished, Jesus pulled Peter aside to talk.

Jesus said, "Simon, son of John." (Jesus was being kind of formal, but he was very serious, so he used Peter's full name; it was like saying, "Simon Peter Johnson.")

"... Do you love me more than these buddies of yours? More than fishing? More than anything?"

Peter was quick to answer. "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Then Jesus asked Peter a second time,

"Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter answered again, a second time, feeling deep relief that he could tell Jesus, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Tend my sheep."

Then Jesus asked Peter a third time: "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter felt hurt.

He wondered why Jesus was asking him the same question three times. Peter remembered the night Jesus was arrested. People asked him three times, "Weren't you one of the followers of Jesus?" and three times Peter said, "No!" Now Jesus was asking three times, "Do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said to him, "Feed my sheep."

Then Peter realized that Jesus loved him too. He understood that Jesus wanted him to care for the others who also loved Jesus. He knew that he would show his love for Jesus by loving and caring for others, just like Jesus had asked him.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Jesus knew Peter felt bad about denying him, and Jesus gave Peter a chance to profess his love for Jesus. Write or draw pictures expressing your love for Jesus.
- Watch the YouTube video “Feed My Lambs” (bit.ly/FeedMyLambs, 4:08) to recall the story and imagine what it means for us today.



Responding to God's Grace

- Wonder together what it means when Jesus says to “feed my sheep . . . tend my sheep . . . feed my sheep.”
- How might you help feed little ones—provide food for hungry children or feed them spiritually by nurturing their faith, perhaps by telling stories about Jesus?
- How might you take care of one another—thinking about what a shepherd does in Psalm 23. The shepherd provides nourishment, rest, care, and protection. What might that look like for your family? Could you give rest to someone who is a caregiver?
- How might you feed one another; how can we help care for God's flock, the church? Are there ways you can support one another by praying, helping another in need, sending a card, providing a meal, and so forth?

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Together make a sheep, in whatever manner you choose. Place it somewhere everyone can see it each day with a sign that says, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you!”
- Jesus gave Peter a job to do, with an unusual job description. Write or draw pictures of the job Jesus might give you to do.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Dear God, Jesus is our good shepherd and we are his flock. Thank you for loving us and taking care of us. May we help you by tending to and feeding one another. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.