

# Abandon Your Nets - A Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

This Abandon Your Nets lesson plan on what needs to be left behind delves into the significance of Jesus calling His first disciples, many of whom were fishermen by trade. This choice was not arbitrary; being a fisherman required not only determination and persistence but also a deep understanding of the tools of the trade, such as boats and nets. These items were not mere accessories but vital to their livelihood, intertwined with their daily existence. Reflecting on this, we begin to see the symbolic weight of what the apostles were asked to leave behind when they followed Christ.

Our scripture reading from Mark 1:14-20 on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B, vividly depicts this moment of calling. Jesus invites Simon and Andrew, then James and John, to become 'fishers of men.' The passage emphasizes a pivotal moment: they left their nets behind. This action speaks volumes, symbolizing a departure from their old lives and the trust they placed in Jesus' call. It invites us to ponder on what we, too, might be called to leave behind in order to follow Him more closely.

The discussion in this lesson revolves around the metaphor of the nets. Just as nets catch fish but also unwanted debris, our lives are filled with elements that, while seemingly beneficial, may hold us back or bring negativity. The disciples' act of leaving their nets symbolizes a profound trust and commitment to a new path. Similarly, we are called to discern what needs to be left behind in our lives for a more authentic following of Christ. It could be a lifestyle, a habit, or even an attitude. This lesson invites us to reflect deeply on what 'abandoning our nets' means in our own spiritual journey.

## Opening Game for the Abandon Your Nets Lesson Plan

Start this lesson plan by playing [Donut Fishing](#). In this game, players try to feed each other donuts on a "fishing pole". See the [complete instructions here](#).

Follow up with a few questions:

- Was it easier to be the person holding the pole or the person trying to eat the donut?
- Do you think catching real fish requires skill and good equipment? Which is more important?
- What do you think are important qualities for fishermen to have?

This discussion naturally leads to considering the skills and equipment necessary for actual fishing, emphasizing qualities like skill, patience, and the right tools.

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If possible, have a [fishing net or some netting materials](#) to use as a visual aid during the discussion.

As we transition to the scripture reading from Mark 1:14-20, our focus sharpens on the apostles, many of whom were fishermen by trade. This passage transcends a mere historical account, unveiling the qualities Jesus recognized and valued in these men – qualities such as determination, persistence, and an in-depth understanding of their craft.

These virtues, which were subtly explored through the Donut Fishing game and the ensuing discussion, set the stage for a more profound engagement with the scripture. The passage invites us to ponder deeply on the significance of what it meant for these fishermen to leave behind not just their nets but their entire way of life. This act of leaving behind their essential tools and source of income symbolizes a radical shift, a complete trust in the new path laid out by Christ.

Reflecting on this scripture, we understand that the act of leaving behind their nets was not a mere physical action, but a metaphor for a deeper spiritual journey. These fishermen were called to abandon what was familiar, comfortable, and secure, to embark on a journey of faith, trusting in Jesus' promise of a new kind of 'fishing'.

This narrative resonates with each of us on our faith journey, challenging us to discern what we need to leave behind to follow Christ more closely. It might be certain habits, relationships, or even mindsets that, like the nets of the fishermen, have become integral to our identity. This scripture reading, enriched by our earlier activities and discussions, becomes a reflective mirror, urging us to contemplate the nets we are called to leave behind for a life of greater faith and dedication to the path Christ has set for us.

## Scripture Reading for Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

[Mark 1:14-20](#) (Jesus calls the brothers Simon and Andrew) - the Gospel Reading for the [3rd Sunday in Ordinary Time - Year B](#)

After John had been arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God: “This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

As he passed by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting their nets into the sea; they were fishermen.

Jesus said to them, “Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men.”

Then they abandoned their nets and followed him.

He walked along a little farther and saw James, the son of Zebedee, and his brother John. They too were in a boat mending their nets. Then he called them. So they left their father Zebedee in the boat along with the hired men and followed him.

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## Discussion for this Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

In considering the metaphor of nets, it's essential to recognize how they, much like certain aspects of our lives, can be a source of both sustenance and entanglement. Nets are designed to catch fish, providing nourishment and livelihood. However, they also inadvertently capture debris, unwanted fish, and other detritus, making them burdensome to clean and maintain. This dual nature of nets invites us to reflect on elements in our own lives that, while seemingly beneficial, may simultaneously ensnare us with negative consequences.

For instance, consider the pursuit of academic success. It's commendable to strive for excellence, yet this ambition can sometimes entangle us in a net of stress, excessive competition, or neglect of our spiritual and personal well-being. Or think about relationships and social circles. While they offer companionship and support, they can also become nets that trap us with peer pressure, leading us away from our moral and spiritual values.

Reflect on aspects of your life where some things might need to be left behind:

- Can you think of any examples of good things which are also catching some not so good things at the same time?
- What are the costs of the negative things?
- Are there 'nets' that are holding you back from a closer relationship with Jesus?

The act of the disciples leaving their nets behind as they followed Jesus is profoundly symbolic. Their nets represented not just their jobs, but their identities, security, and the known world. To leave these behind was an immense leap of faith and trust in the Lord's plan. This gesture was necessary for their complete dedication to Jesus. In our lives, we are often faced with similar decisions.

What are our 'nets' that we cling to for security or identity? Are they material possessions, certain lifestyles, or even outdated beliefs and prejudices? Reflecting on this, we realize that to follow Jesus wholeheartedly, certain aspects of our lives that are comfortable yet ultimately hindering our spiritual growth might need to be left behind.

Thus, abandoning our nets can look different for each of us. It might mean re-evaluating our priorities, changing certain habits, or letting go of relationships or pursuits that lead us away from our faith. It's a call to discernment, to identify what truly brings us closer to God and what keeps us entangled in the shallow waters, away from the depths of a profound spiritual journey. This act of leaving behind is not just about loss; it's about freeing ourselves to fully embrace the call of Christ, much like the disciples did, with faith and trust in His path for us.

## Reflection Questions for this Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

- What are the specific things in your life that are holding you back from following Jesus and need to be left behind?
- Identify the practical steps necessary to abandon these hindrances. What actions and decisions are required to leave them behind?
- Reflect on how your faith can be a source of strength in your effort to leave behind these obstacles. In what ways can prayer, scripture, and your relationship with God assist you in this process?
- Consider the role of the Christian community in your journey. How can being part of a faith community support your decision to leave behind what hinders your spiritual growth?
- Think about the sacrifices involved in leaving behind these aspects of your life. What are you afraid of losing, and how does that compare to what you gain in your relationship with Christ?
- How might leaving behind these barriers impact your daily life and relationships? What positive changes do you anticipate as a result?
- Ponder the long-term benefits of abandoning these obstacles. How do you envision your spiritual life transforming as you leave these things behind?
- Lastly, consider who in your Christian community you can share your journey with. Who can be your partner in accountability and encouragement as you work to leave behind what is holding you back?

## Challenge for this Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

This week, embrace the challenge of identifying and working on one specific thing in your life that needs to be left behind to foster a closer relationship with Jesus. This could be a habit, an attitude, or perhaps a relationship that hinders your spiritual growth. The goal is to consciously make an effort to let go of this aspect of your life.

Reflect deeply on how this particular thing has impacted your journey with Christ. Is it a source of distraction, a cause of stress, or something that pulls you away from living out your faith? Acknowledging its hold on you is the first step in the process of leaving it behind. As you work on this challenge, remember that leaving something behind often involves a series of small, consistent efforts rather than a single dramatic gesture.

Moreover, as you strive to let go of this aspect of your life, consider the freedom and peace that comes with being unburdened and more aligned with Jesus' teachings. Imagine how your

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spiritual life will flourish once this barrier is left behind. This process may not be easy and could involve moments of struggle and doubt. It is in these moments that your faith becomes crucial.

Lean on prayer, scripture, and the support of your Christian community to guide and strengthen you. Remember, leaving something behind for the sake of following Jesus is not about losing a part of yourself; rather, it's about shedding what prevents you from fully embracing the life He has planned for you. Embrace this challenge with faith and openness, trusting that what you leave behind pales in comparison to the spiritual richness and fulfillment found in Christ.

## Prayer for this Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

Close by praying the [Suscipe prayer - Take Lord, Receive](#).

In closing, let us collectively and prayerfully recite the Suscipe prayer. This prayer embodies the essence of our discussion and challenge, inviting us to surrender wholly to God's will. As we utter these words, let them be a genuine offer from our hearts, symbolizing our readiness to leave behind whatever holds us back from a deeper relationship with the Lord. In saying "Take, Lord, Receive," we are not just offering our possessions or achievements but also our attachments, fears, and even those parts of our identity we have clung to tightly.

This prayer is a powerful act of trust and surrender, a declaration that everything we have and are is a gift from God, and we are willing to leave behind anything that does not lead us closer to Him. Let this prayer be a commitment, a moment where we willingly hand over to God all that we are, trusting that what is left behind is nothing compared to the grace and love that God has in store for us.

## Resources for the Lesson Plan on What Needs to Be Left Behind

[More Themes](#)

[Background Material](#)

[Music Suggestions](#)

[More Youth Ministry Lesson Plans and Reflections](#)

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