

# **Yesterday. Today. Forever.**

## **Module: Living Out Your Faith: The Life of Peter**

### **Lesson 4: Swimming Back to Shore**

#### **Objectives:**

- Students will gain a better understanding of the breadth of God's grace.
- Students will understand that God doesn't want us to avoid him when we sin, but wants us to come back right away.
- Students will develop a more complete idea of how to respond to God's call.
- Students will see the importance of fellowship.

#### **Materials Needed**

- ☐ 1 Bible per student (or at least per 4 students)
- ☐ 2 coats
- ☐ optional: 5-6 small prizes
- ☐ 1 copy of Appendix A (divided into 2) per 4 students

## Minds On

**Prompt:** We're going to play "Race to the Shore". In a moment, I will divide you into two teams. Each team will select a "Peter". Everyone else on the team will form two lines facing each other. They will cross their arms and hold hands with the person across from them. "Peter" will be at the start of the line sitting. When the race begins, "Peter" will put on their assigned coat and then lie backwards on the crossed arms. "Peter" will do "back strokes" along the people's arms (you can help him down the line but you cannot let go of your partner's hand). The first "Peter" to reach the end of the line wins.

Ask students to collectively repeat your instructions.

Divide the group into two even teams. Allow each team to select their "Peter". Set up the teams for the race.

**Leader's note:** A few things to consider:

- It is preferred that "Peter" be a male.
- It is recommended to have adult leaders be "spotters" for each Peter.
- If your group is not big enough to have two long lines of people you can have the people at the beginning of the line run to the end of the line after Peter has swam past them to extend the line.
- If your group is too small to accomplish this you can simply have piggy back races. In that case you may want to add obstacles or designate people as sharks who send Peter back to the beginning.

## Action

**Ask:** Based on the previous weeks, what's been going on in Peter's life so far?

Who is he? What's he done? What makes him so special?

(You will be looking for answers like: "He was a fisherman. He was a disciple.

He's walked on water. He's performed Miracles. He denied Jesus 3 times. He was just ordinary and God wanted him to be extraordinary.)  
optional: You may want to award a small prize for each correct answer.

**Prompt:** Some of you may be familiar with the story that continues after the passage we read last week. Ultimately, Jesus was condemned by the religious leaders and had the Roman soldiers crucify (i.e. execute) him on a cross. However, the Bible tells us that on the third day, God raised him from the dead, demonstrating that Jesus has the ultimate power, even power over death. After Jesus was resurrected, he visited many people, including his own disciples. The passage we're looking at today is one of those encounter.

**Ask:** When Jesus first appeared to Peter, what do you think was going through Peter's head?

Divide all the students into four groups. (**Leader's note:** If each group has more than four people, you can further divide them into six or more groups.) Assign each group a number from 1-4. Distribute the "John 21:1-9" part of Appendix A to the odd-numbered groups, "John 21:15-19" to the even-numbered groups. Give them five minutes to complete the questions. Each person must be ready to report their group's answers.

Afterwards, students must gather in groups where each number is represented (i.e. each group must have at least 1, 2, 3, 4 but no more than 7 people). Have each person share their previous group's answers. In addition, have each group discuss the following two questions: "What do you think this tells us about our relationship with God? What does this tell us about how we are supposed to approach God after we mess up?" Have each group select one spokesperson reporting their group's answer to the larger group.

**Prompt:** Often we assume that when we mess up God doesn't want anything to do with us. But he isn't avoiding us, he's waiting on the beach cooking us breakfast, wanting us to continue partnering with him in his purpose to restore creation to his original intent!

Ask students to identify an area of their life that they think they could turn into ministry (it might help if the leaders go first). This could be an area they are gifted in (arts, sports, music, academics, etc.), a cause they are passionate about, or a call they feel God has placed in their lives. Then encourage students to share what they might be; students can pass if they wish. After one student shares, suggest another person in the group either pray for them in that ministry and/or encourage them in what they shared (ie: “You are so loving and compassionate, I know if you follow through on this that God will do great things, just trust in him”). Afterwards, another person can share if they wish.

**Leader’s note:** Be attentive and provide as much as time as you feel appropriate. When ready, re-gather the large group together.

## **Consolidate and Debrief**

**Prompt:** We have focused on Peter over the past few lessons because he is a great example of your average person. He wasn't anything special when he was called, he doubted God and himself, but he was chosen to do extraordinary things. That doesn't mean he was always right or did things perfectly, he messed up just the same as we do, but God had amazing plans for his life. Jesus even told him that he was the rock he wanted to build his church on.

Close in prayer, asking God to help your students realize that they are called to extraordinary things and that they have incredible value in the eyes of God, and that he has invited each of them to be a part of HIS story!

## Appendix A

Read John 21:1-9

**Ask:** What's happening in this verse?

What's going through Peter's mind when he goes out to fish?

Why do you think he puts his coat on before jumping in the water?

(It could be because he expected to be sent out right away)

Read John 21:15-19

**Ask:** What do you think of the conversation Peter and Jesus have in this passage?

What about it stands out to you?

Why do you think Jesus asks Peter if he loves him three times?

(it could tie back to the denial, or it could be for emphasis).

Why does Jesus tell him to feed his lambs each time?