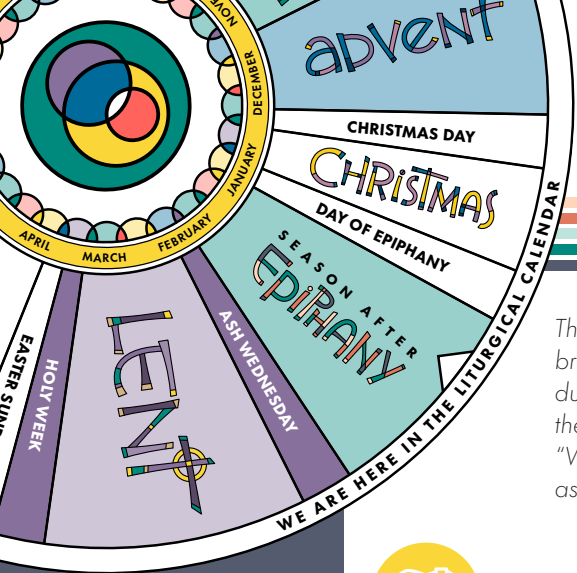


Matthew 4:12-23

Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Sunday between January 21 and January 27



The Season after Epiphany began with the three wise ones following the star and ends with the bright lights of Jesus' Transfiguration on the mountain. Epiphany means "showing forth," and it is during this season when we are called to look for how God makes Godself known throughout the world. In his poem, *Epiphany*, Biblical scholar Walter Brueggemann wrote the following: "We are—we could be—people of your light. So we pray for the light of your glorious presence as we wait for your appearing."



Scripture

Now when Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

"Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan, Galilee of the gentiles—the people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned."

From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw

two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishers. And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Jesus went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people.



Questions

- Who are the characters in this story, and how do they know each other?
- People who fish spend lots of time on boats and move from place to place to find fish. Have you ever been on a boat or moved from one place to another? Share a story of that time with the group.
- We are in the season after Epiphany, when we highlight how God's transformative good news is revealed in our world through Jesus. Both sets of brothers in this passage fished to make money for their families when Jesus came to them. Why were they willing to leave fishing behind and follow Jesus when he called them?
- What might it mean to be "fishers of people?"
- Jesus asks these fishermen to trust, travel with, and learn from him. Tell a story from a time in your life when you did something brave and learned something new from the experience.

Look it Up!

Today, our oceans are filled with plastic, but a new kind of net has been designed to clean up the seas.

Research the "Jenny" net, and brainstorm inventions that could be used to help care for God's creation.

mini
REVOLUTIONS





Activity

Materials:

Coloring utensils

Paper

Our story today takes place in the book of Matthew. In this book, Jesus travels to various places. He has been to Bethlehem, Egypt, Nazareth, and, as it says in our scripture today, Capernaum. From the beginning of his life until this moment, he has been living out God's path for him and following God's call. As he gets older and meets new people, he invites them to join his journey and his call from God.

Just like Jesus, we are also on our own journeys. We have been to many places that are important to us and have experienced God in many ways. We have met people who have joined us along the way, helping us to understand and experience God in new ways. One way to track these experiences with God is by drawing a Spiritual Journey Map.

Think about the places where you have had experiences with God. It could be at home, church, school, camp, a trip, or somewhere else. If it's helpful, write your list of places down. Once you have your list, draw a map with the places on it. Connect those places with a line to show the path you took to get there. If there were people there who were part of your journey, be sure you draw them too. When you're finished, reflect on your spiritual journey, and share it with everyone if you'd like. See how your journeys are similar and different, remembering that they all show how each of you have been called and are loved by God.

Alternate Activity

In our scripture this week, Jesus meets several new people. When he meets them, they are fishing. He tells them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of people." Upon hearing this, the people turn away from what they are doing and turn toward Jesus and his call from God. He doesn't just ask them to stop what they're doing for a moment; he invites them into a new way of living. Their lives take a new direction because they decide to turn around and follow Jesus.

Let's explore what it feels like to turn around and do something new by playing a game. The teacher or leader of the group will be "it." Everyone else will get to take part. The teacher will state what they want participants to do, but they must ask participants to "turn around" before they do it. For example, the teacher could say, "turn around and touch your toes," and the participant would turn around in place and touch their toes. If the teacher does **not** say "turn around" first, no one should follow their instructions. Play until everyone has had a turn to be "it."



Micropractice

Following Jesus means not being first in line. When you have the opportunity to hold a door open for someone or to let someone pass you in line, be mindful of the ways Jesus leads us while we follow.

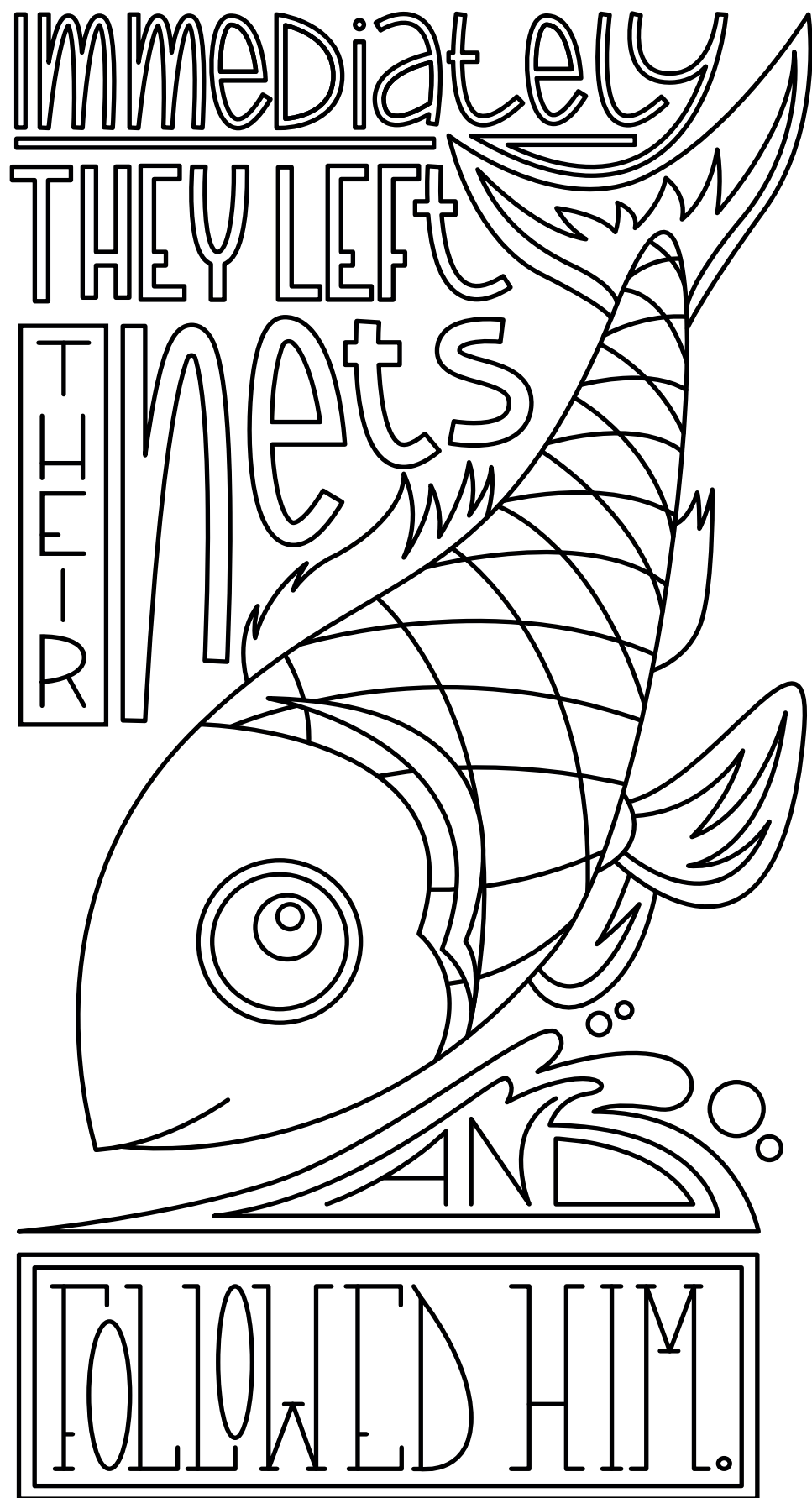


Download a graphic to share with your community and on social media. You can download it here: illustratedministry.com/minirevAAE3

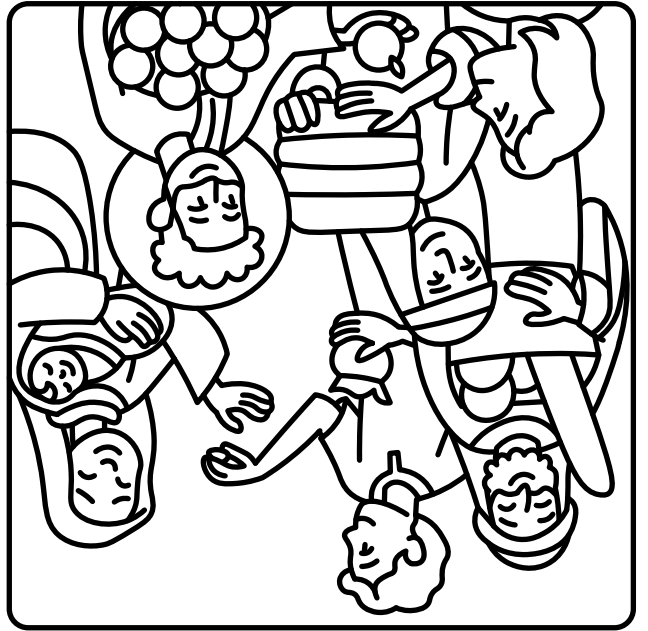


Prayer

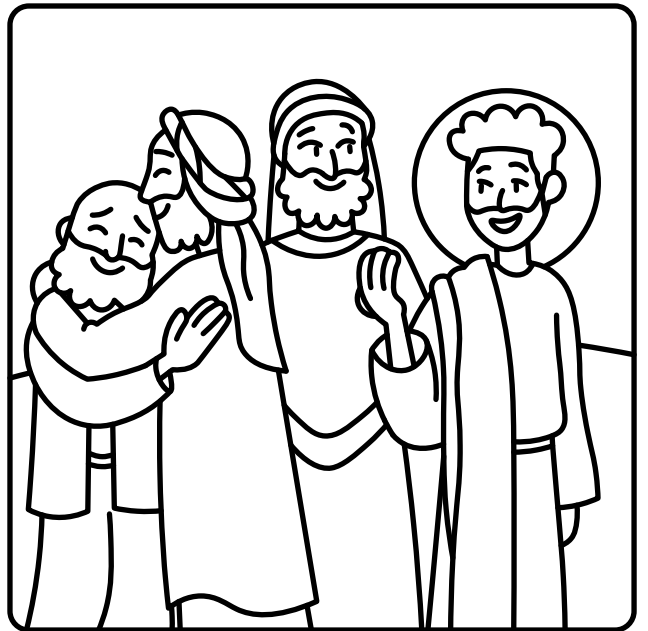
God of new paths, you call us to turn around and follow you. Help us to hear you and to answer your call. Allow us to be open to you and to be transformed by you. Amen.



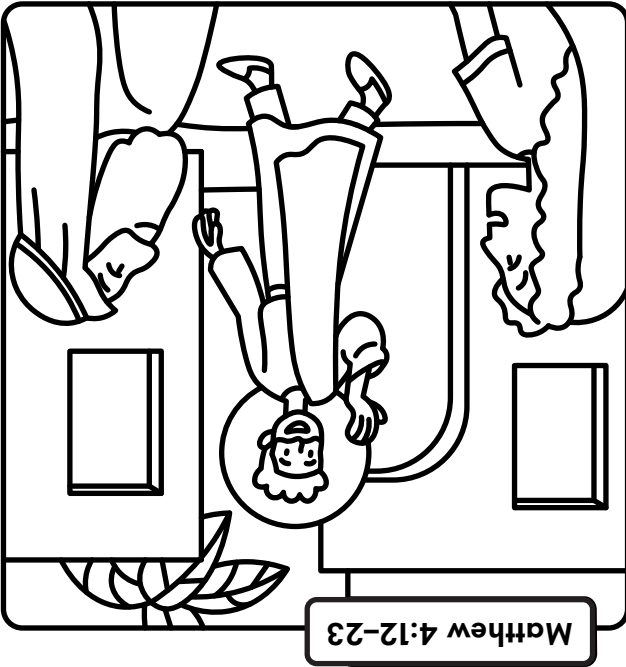
4. Jesus traveled through Galilee, teaching in the temples, sharing God's love with others, and healing sickness. His disciples joined in Jesus' work, following him as he taught about a new life in God's good future.



3. Afterward, Jesus saw two brothers, James and John, fishing with their father, Zebedee. Jesus called to the brothers. Right away, they left the boat and their father and followed him to lead a new life, proclaiming God's love.



1. Jesus had been traveling all over—from Bethlehem to Egypt, all the way to Nazareth. Now, Jesus was living in Capernaum, near the Sea of Galilee, looking for others to join him on his journey.



2. One day, Jesus was walking near the Sea of Galilee when he saw Andrew and Simon Peter fishing. He told them, "Put down your nets. Come with me, and I will make you fishers of people." And, they did.

