

# Fish

**Memory Verse:** Jesus said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Matthew 4:19 (NRSV)

**Study Plan:** In studying this badge, you will learn about the fish and how it serves as a Christian symbol.



To earn the Fish Badge, you will need to do the following steps:

## Step 1: Difficulties faced by the people of God

Leader's initials: \_\_\_\_\_



Not everyone likes people who love and follow God. Here is a story about some hard times people have faced.

### Faithful Unto Death



As Edith came in from school, Mother saw at once that something was wrong. "What is the matter, dear?" she asked. "You look as if all the troubles in the world were on your shoulders." "Oh, Mother," cried Edith, "I'm tired of their teasing me, day in, and day out. It's always the same."

"What do they say to you?" asked Mother. "You mustn't mind a little teasing. Every little girl gets teased at school some time or other." "Oh, it isn't just ordinary teasing," said Edith. "It's the way they keep calling me names, just because I go to church. Why can't they leave me alone?"

Mother sat down and took Edith on her lap. "Let me tell you a story," she said. "Then you will feel much happier about it. It's about three young men who were taken away into a foreign country and made to serve a king who didn't believe as they did. It was very hard for them. They wanted to remain loyal to God and God's laws, but everyone around them worshiped idols. If they ever dared to speak of

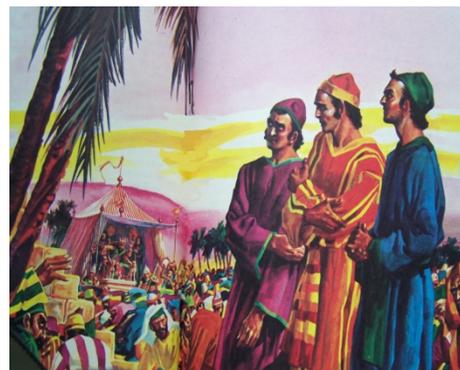
their religion, the people of the land would laugh at them. Because they tried to be good, the people would do all they could to annoy them and find fault.



"Then one day they were brought to a very severe test. The king got the idea that he would make a great golden idol. He was quite proud of it and determined that everyone in his kingdom should bow down to it. So he issued a decree that on a certain day the people should gather on a great plain around the idol and at a given signal fall down on their faces before it. To make sure that everyone would obey him, he threatened that if any should fail to bow down to it, he would have them cast into a red-hot furnace.

"The three young men knew that the biggest test of their lives had come. They could not avoid it, for they had graduated from the king's special school and lived at the king's court. So there they found themselves, in the midst of a vast crowd of people, facing the great golden image that stood in the center of the crowd. How their hearts must have beat as they waited for the signal to be given! People who knew them whispered together, wondering what they would do now.

"At last the king's band began to play. There was a great shout, and the huge crowd of people threw themselves face down upon the ground. Over all that vast plain only three figures remained erect. They could not have been more conspicuous. People began to look at them out of the corners of their eyes. The news spread rapidly from end to end of the multitude. 'The three Hebrew men have refused to bow down to the king's image.' What excitement!

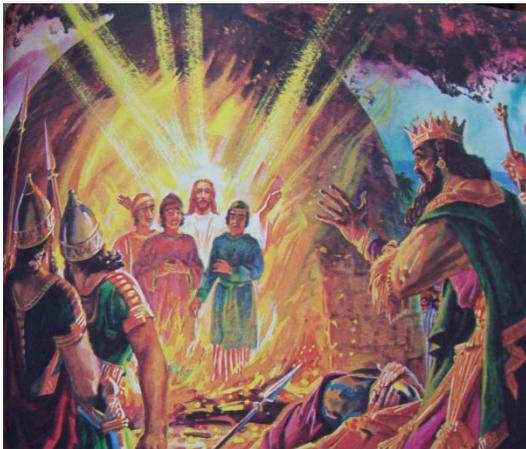


"There must have been a tremendous stir. Everybody knew what the penalty was, and they waited to see what the king would do. Meanwhile the three young men stood there, their faces pale and set, bravely waiting their fate.

"The king sent for them. He was in a bad temper. He asked them what they meant by disobeying his decree and warned them again of the fiery furnace.

Respectfully, but firmly, they replied, 'Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace; and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image which you have set up.'

"At this the king was still more furious and told his soldiers to heat the furnace seven times hotter than usual. Then the three young men were bound and cast into the furnace. That must have been a terrible moment for them. But they did not waver, not even when they felt the fierce heat of the fire upon them.



"Then a wonderful thing happened. The fire burned the ropes that bound them, but they themselves were untouched. Suddenly an angel appeared with them in the midst of the fire. The king saw the four figures walking there and was terrified. He called to the young men to come out of the furnace, and they did. The Bible says 'the hair of their heads was not singed, their tunics were not harmed, and not even the smell of fire came from them.' (Daniel 3:27)

"All the people witnessed the miracle and must have been greatly impressed. As for the king, he admitted that the God whom the young men served was greater than his image. 'There is no other god who is able to deliver in this way,' he said (Daniel 3:29). And so, because these young men were faithful and were not afraid to suffer even death for what they believed, the whole nation was blessed, and even the king was led to see the folly of his idolatry."

"I think I can see what you mean," said Edith. "I'm sure you can," said Mother. "You are God's witness to God's truth at your school. You must be loyal to God at all costs. You know that loving God and going to church is important. The others may tease you about it, but that doesn't matter. If you are loyal to God in spite of all the unkind things they say and do, Jesus will walk with you at school just as that angel did with the young men in the fiery furnace long ago."

"I think I feel better about it now," said Edith. "I'll try to be as brave as those three young men. Adapted from "Faithful Unto Death," *Bedtime Stories*, vol. 6, pages 54-57, by Arthur S. Maxwell. Copyright (1976) Review and Herald ©. Used by permission



Why were the children at school teasing Edith? \_\_\_\_\_

Why did the young men refuse to bow down to the golden idol?

What did the king do to the young men? \_\_\_\_\_

What happened? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever been teased because of your faith? How did this story help you?

**Step 2: The Fish** Leader's initials \_\_\_\_\_



The fish is one of the earliest Christian symbols. A long time ago, not too long after Jesus' death and resurrection, Christians were punished by the Roman authorities because they believed in Jesus. The Christians made secret signs so they could identify each other. Sometimes a person talking to a stranger would draw a fish in the sand or the dirt with a stick. If the stranger was a Christian, that would be a clue that he was talking to another Christian. The fish was sometimes drawn on walls and underground passages to show the way to where Christians gathered to worship.



**Challenge Yourself!**

The letters inside the vesica comes from an acronym. In an acronym, each letter stands for a word. For example, the UN is the United Nations, BFF is Best Friends Forever, WWJD is What Would Jesus Do? The word "fish" in Greek looks like this:

**ΙΧΘΥΣ**

The letters stand for Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior. In our alphabet, we would write this word I CH TH U S. The I stands for the Greek word for Jesus, Iesous; CH stands for the Greek word for Christ, Christos; TH stands for the Greek word for God, Theos; U stands for the Greek word for Son, Uios; and S stands for the Greek word for Savior, Soter.



❖ Take part in The Vesica Play. You could do the play in your GFS meeting or for an audience.

## **The Vesica Play**

**By Josephine Harell**  
**Revised 2003 by Margaret Nolde**

### **List of Characters in play**

Narrator

Two Traveling Christians

Two Farmers

Two Roman Soldiers

**Narrator:** Today we are in a farm area in Galilee, near Lake Galilee. It is several years after the crucifixion of our Lord, when Christians were being persecuted. Join us to see what it was like to be one of the first Christians.

**Soldiers:** Down with Christians! Our king is the only king. Christians are troublemakers!

Look! There are some more travelers. Let us watch them and see if what they do. If we can catch them acting like Christians, we can throw them in jail!

Yes! We must watch out for these crazy people.

**Travelers:** We have come a long way and it is hot. Let us rest by the side of the road until it is cooler.

**Farmers:** We are tired. Let us rest in the shade.

**Soldiers:** We know those farmers. They pay their taxes to our King. They are not bad.

**Travelers:** We are new here. We will talk to those farmers. (Walk over to the farmers.) Farmers! Is the land good here? (Draw half of a fish on the ground with a stick.) Do your plants grow well here?

**Farmers:** The soil here is good! (Draw the other half of the fish.) Our crops grow very well. Would you like to have dinner at our house tonight?

**Travelers:** Oh, yes! The sun is so high today.

**Farmers:** Yes, He is risen.

**Travelers:** He is risen indeed!

**Farmers:** Come along and share bread with us this evening. We will bear each other's burdens.

**Travelers:** Yes! We let us bear one another's burdens.

**Soldiers:** What a strange little group. All they did was scratch in the dirt and talk about the sun. Let us look somewhere else for some Christians.

- ❖ Some of Jesus' disciples were fishermen. Jesus asked them to fish for something else. Here's what it says in the Gospel of Matthew: As Jesus 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 fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him.



Draw a picture of Jesus calling Peter and Andrew.

### Step 3: How we use the fish as a symbol

Leader's initials \_\_\_\_\_

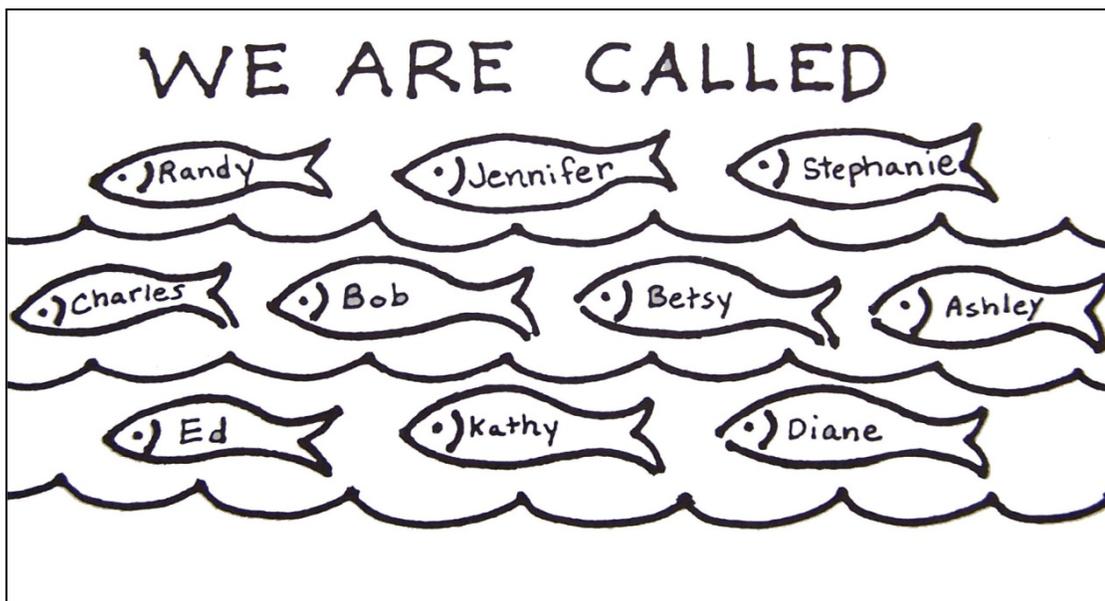


The fish shape, minus fins and tail, is called a vesica. We use it for our GFS pin and for our badges. It is also found in our Diocesan Seal.

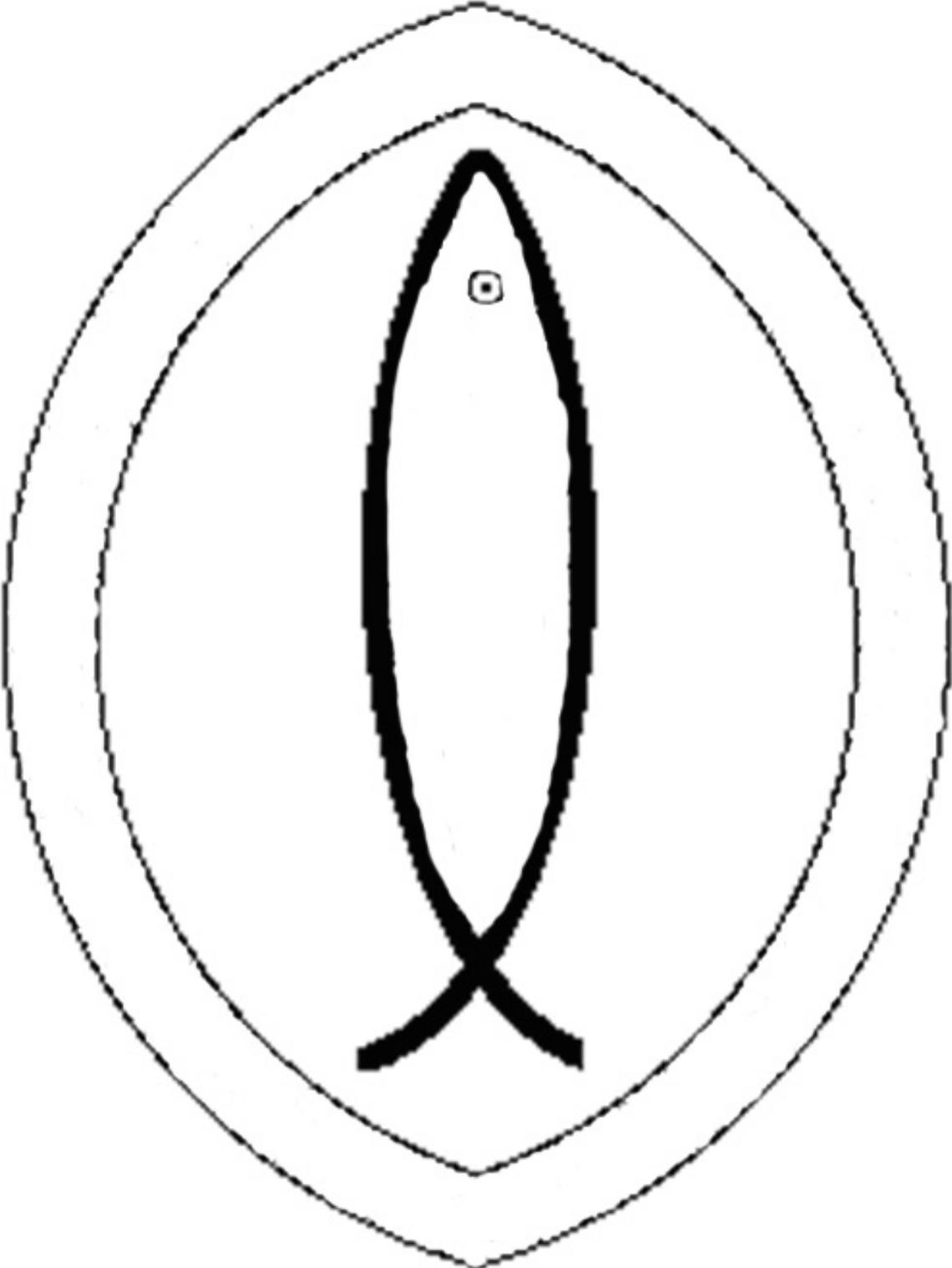


Do 2 of the following activities:

- ❖ Using cardstock, cut out a pattern of the vesica. The pattern is found in the Leader's List. Using your pattern, draw two vesica shapes in your notebook. Add fins and a tail to one of your drawings, and make a copy of the GFS pin on the other.
- ❖ Make a fish, using mosaics. You might use dried beans and peas, or beads.
- ❖ With your group, make a fish mural. On a large piece of butcher paper or posterboard, paint or use markers to make waves. Then make a fish, using construction paper and decorating it with markers, crayons, plastic eyes, and the like. Write your name on your fish, then glue it onto the butcher paper or posterboard background.

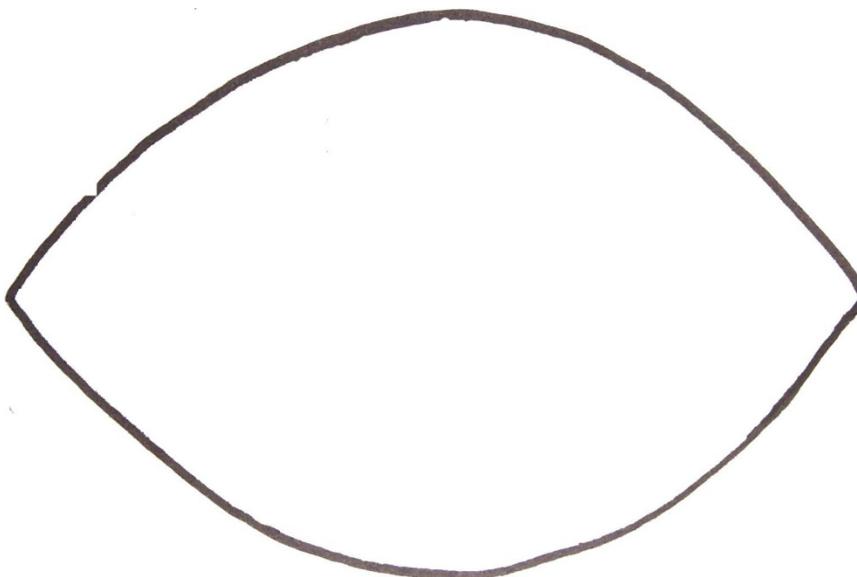


Color this Fish badge for your notebook.



## Leader's List

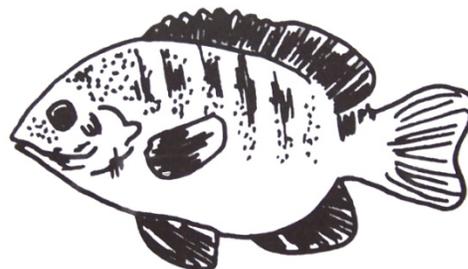
Pattern for vesica



### Fish Prints

Materials:

1. Butcher Paper
2. Tempera paint in a shallow baking pan
3. Interesting saltwater fish, small enough to fit on paper
4. Plenty of paper towels
5. Large piece of construction paper



Directions:

- ❖ Take fish and lay in about 1/8" to 1/4" paint.
- ❖ Layout butcher paper on a hard surface.
- ❖ Carefully lift fish out of paint – let excess drip off.
- ❖ Place fish in center of paper.
- ❖ Press down on fish firmly but not hard, being careful not to move fish (if moved print will be blurry.)
- ❖ Remove fish – place back in paint.
- ❖ Let dry a short time.
- ❖ Mount on construction paper.