

**Making a Memory**  
*February 7, 2010*  
(Epiphany 5 – Year C)  
Luke 5: 1-11

*St. Alban's Episcopal Church, Waco, Texas*

My wife, Susan, has made and updated baby books that documented the early years of both of our sons.

Susan received these baby books at a baby shower when she was still pregnant. Then, as events in our babies' lives occurred, she would document those things in the baby books.

In these baby books are the foot prints of both Scott and John that were made by pressing their tiny little feet in black ink and pressing them onto paper just minutes after they were born.

In these baby books, there are locks of hair from their first haircut.

In these baby books, there is a record of when they first smiled or took their first step or said "Da-Da" for the first time.

Of course, Scott's book is much more elaborately documented than our younger son's.

And one day, when Scott was a 7 or 8 year old little boy, he found his baby book and looked through it.

Susan turned the pages of the baby book and showed Scott his little footprints. Susan showed him his first lock of hair and all the statistics of the various firsts in his life.

Scott had a rather puzzled look on his face and you could tell that he did not understand why it was so important to keep a record of these things.

Then suddenly, his look of puzzlement turned into a big grin and he said: "Now I get it, Mama.

You are making a memory for me."

This morning, we are observing National Scout Sunday.

We are honoring those adults and young people who are participating in, or have participated in, various scouting programs in our country.

Scouting teaches kids about a world that is so much larger than video games and computers.

Scouting teaches our young people to value nature as God's creation.

Scouting teaches kids how to build a campfire and how to bandage a wound and how to tie strong knots in a rope.

But I think what is most valuable about scouting programs - is that scouting makes a memory for our young people.

When I was a boy, I was not a Boy Scout or a Cub Scout.

However, I was in the scouting program sponsored by the YMCA called Indian Guides.

Indian Guides was a father and son thing.

I remember putting on my Indian headband and feather with my Dad.

I remember my dad teaching me how to put an oar into the water to steer a canoe.

I remember going on our first campout and how all of the fathers and the sons ended up getting food poisoning.

Indian Guides, like Boy Scouts, made a memory for me and my dad.

Therefore, when my sons were in elementary school, I was in Indian Guides with them.

I remember a campout with Scott where we rented inner tubes and floated down the cold and clear Bandera River.

I remember a campout with John where I got our tent all set up, then a thunderstorm came and water poured into our tent.

John and I ended up that night by "camping out" in a hotel in San Antonio.

Being with my sons in Indian Guides made a memory for us.

As followers of Jesus Christ, God has made a memory for us.

God's memory for us is not recorded in a baby book.

Yet God has made a memory for us that is written down on the pages of Scripture.

These memories were not originally written in a book.

God's memory for us was originally an oral memory that was told around the campfire.

This memory was a collection of stories that was spread by word of mouth and passed down from one generation to the next.

In today's Gospel reading, we can almost hear the first Christians, those first young scouts, sitting around the campfire and begging the scoutmaster:

“Please, oh please tell us the story about when Peter caught that big, huge mess of fish.”

And then, around the campfire, the story begins:

“Once upon a time, long, long ago, Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret.

Now Peter and his friends had been up all night fishing and hadn't caught a thing. Yet that morning, Jesus told Peter to push out and to fish in deeper waters.

So they did.

And when Peter pulled up their nets, there was a ton of fish.”

Amazed, the people around the campfire ask:

“How many fish were in the nets?”

And the storyteller continues:

“There were so many fish that the nets began to break.

There were so many fish that it took two boats to haul in the catch.

There were so many fish that the boats began to sink!

Then, with catfish and flounder and perch pouring out of the nets, Jesus said to Peter:

‘Don't be afraid.

From now on you will be rescuing people alive.’

And do you know what Peter and James and John did then?

They left that whole mess of fish on the beach - and they left everything to follow Jesus.”

Around that campfire, those early Christians were making a memory.

Around that campfire, a memory was made that being a Christian means that we are to fish for others with gracious and open nets.

A memory was made that following Jesus means that we sometimes have to leave behind a whole mess of fish in order to follow Jesus all the way to the Cross.

And that memory was eventually written down by Luke in his Gospel.

And now we re-tell Peter's fishing story, over and over again, as we read the Bible now, in the year 2010.

What memory are you making for your friends and for our children?

When the story of your life is told around the campfire, what will people remember and re-tell from generation to generation?

I hope that, as adults, we are making a memory for children by canoeing down a lazy river and by sleeping under the stars and by catching fireflies on a summer night.

And I hope that, as Christians, we are making a memory by graciously opening up our nets to rescue people alive with the good news of love.

I hope that, as Christians, we are making a memory by leaving behind a great catch of fish in order to follow Jesus all the way to the Cross.

In a few minutes, we will gather, not around a campfire - but we will gather around Jesus' table for a meal of bread and wine.

We will remember his death and proclaim his resurrection.

We will remember the faith that was passed on to us, so that we in turn will share it with others.<sup>1</sup>

We will remember that Christ died for us - and feed on him in our hearts by faith with thanksgiving.

And as we walk away from God's Table after receiving the Body and Blood of Christ, our look of puzzlement will turn into a big grin:

“Now I get it, God.

You are making a memory - for me.”

AMEN.

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<sup>1</sup> See 1 Corinthians 15:3