

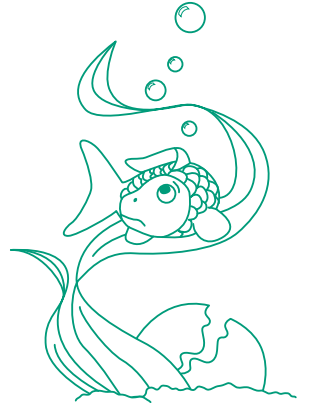
The Little Fish with Invisible Wings

Teachers: Read the story and then ask the children the age-appropriate series of questions. (Note that if many of your listeners are confused by the little fish's flip-flopping gender, you can begin to substitute the pronoun "it" for all the "he's" and "she's.")

The little fish didn't know fish could have invisible wings. Most fish you'll ever see have fins. Some of them will look like wings, and some like hands, a few like shovels, a lot like fans. Some fish can get out of the water and crawl around on their fins, even though they won't win many races. Some can even break out of the water and fly for a little while.

But the little fish had never seen a fish with invisible wings. At least she didn't think so. Or he didn't. You see, the little fish didn't even know if she was a he, or he was a she. Nobody had ever told the little fish, maybe because nobody ever noticed him. Or her. Tell you what. Since we don't know whether the little fish was a boy or a girl, I'm going to call her a him one time, and call him a her the next, OK?

And while I'm at it, I may as well tell you that The Little Fish isn't the little fish's name. You see, when the little fish was born, the rest of the Fish family paid attention to all the other newborn fish, who were all bigger than the little fish. And before you know it, they'd stopped giving out names, so the little fish didn't get one. But since everyone called the little fish the little fish, pretty soon the little fish started figuring that's who she was.

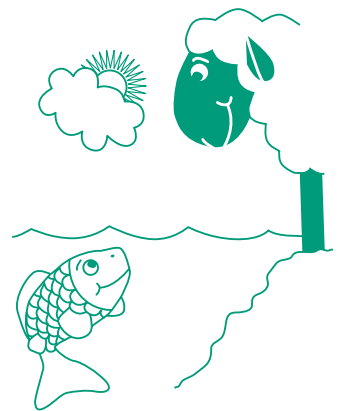


Well, this is the story about how the little fish found out about his wings. Well, as I said, nobody paid a lot of attention to the little fish. Deep down, it didn't make her feel so good. He would really have liked it if someone had told her, "Don't go out in the big wide ocean alone, and never go out when the big fast fish are swimming by. They'd like nothing better than a little fish snack." But nobody told him what to do, so she had to learn these things on his own. Sometimes she hung out on the edge of the reef where the big ocean fish liked to stop in and tell stories. She was so little, most of them didn't notice him, so she just listened to their stories.

One day, a big old codfish was telling a story of a close call he had just had. "I was off the coast of India when I heard a big boom. The next thing I knew, I was at the top of a 30-foot wave, running really fast toward the shore. I tried to get out of there, but the wave was moving faster than I could swim, so before I knew it, I was lying on the beach there, with all kinds of smashed up houses, while the wave kept on going farther up on the land. Just when I thought I was a goner, the wave washed back out to sea, carrying me with it. Me and a lot of cows and houses and people, and they were all calling for help."



When he heard this, the little fish felt a funny, dizzy feeling inside. If you've ever been seasick, you'll kind of know what it felt like. But fish don't get seasick, so the little fish didn't recognize the feeling. Before she knew it, he was in a strange place, with a lot of things floating all around her. He saw a strange four-legged thing splashing around and realized it couldn't swim. She was too small to do anything by himself, but she called some of the other little fish, and together they pushed and pushed and pushed, and before long, they had pushed the lamb (for that's what it was) into shallow water where it could run back up onto land.



Then, just as fast, the little fish found himself back at the edge of the reef. She wondered what had happened. Then he saw an old flounder winking at her from the floor of the ocean. "First time you ever did that, I'll bet," the flounder said. "Scared me,

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Name the
Little
Fish



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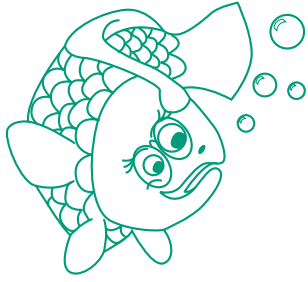
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first time it happened.”

“But what *was* it that happened?” the little fish asked.



“Oh, you just found your heart wings,” said the flounder. “You heard something that made you feel sad inside. When that poked a little hole in your heart, your heart wings sprouted out and flew you there in an instant. You must have a pretty big heart. Most fish can’t fly that far their first time.”

“Were you there too?”

“Yes, I was there along with a lot of others, helping to push some of those animals and people back to land. You didn’t think all those fish just showed up by accident, did you? They came from all over the world when they heard about that terrible wave and everybody that was in danger from it. Together we all helped to save a lot of lives.”

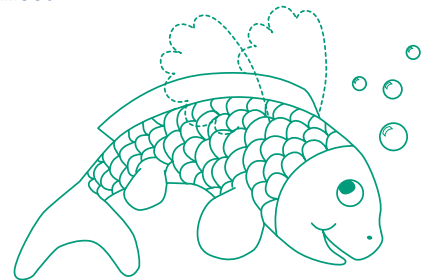
“Do all of us have heart wings?” the little fish asked.

“Well, all of us can grow them, but some of us don’t know it and don’t ever give them a chance to grow,” the old flounder said. “They get stronger the more you use them; but some of us don’t like that funny feeling. I expect you got that feeling just before you flew to India, right? You got sad and your heart reached out and took you there. Well that feeling makes some of us pretty uncomfortable, so they never get to know what it’s like to really use their heart wings.”

“By the way, I’m Wise Old Sole. My real name is J. Gustavus Phlatfyshe Sole, but most folks call me Wise Old, ’cause I’ve been around so long. What’s your name?”

The little fish felt very embarrassed. “I—I guess I don’t really have one. But most everyone calls me the Little Fish.”

The flounder laughed. “Yep, I guess that sounds like a pretty good name for now. But I expect that as you grow up, you’ll find the name that fits you—or it will find you.”



Questions for younger children (ages 4-7):

Did the little fish have a name? How would you feel if you didn’t have a name?

Who took care of the little fish? How would you feel if there was nobody to take care of you?

Where did the little fish go?

What did the little fish learn? How did the little fish learn it? Does everybody have heart wings?

Questions for older children (ages 8-11):

How would you feel if you didn’t have a name?

How would you feel if you didn’t have anyone to take care of you?

Do you know anyone at school or church who is often left out or ignored? How do you think they feel?

You can help give the little fish a name. Think of the best name you can for the little fish and send it in on the attached card. If your class is one of the ones that suggests the name chosen for the little fish, we’ll send you a large stuffed Little Fish for your classroom.

Our name for the little fish: _____

Reasons why we think this is the best name for the little fish: _____

Name of class _____ Name of teacher(s) _____

Name of church _____ Phone number _____

Address of church _____ e-mail address _____

City/State/Zip Code _____ / _____ / _____

You can use this card to send in your suggestion for the name of the fish, or you can send your answer in to mboone@ctr.pcusa.org. If you send it by e-mail, please put Name the Fish in the subject line of the email.

Thank you.

