

Name: _____

The Boy Who Loved a Fish

There was a young boy who desperately wanted a pet. The trouble was that his mother was allergic to most furry animals, his father didn't like rabbits, and they had tried gerbils, guinea pigs, birds, and other caged animals that all made a mess. He finally talked them into a fish. A goldfish.

The mother took the boy to the pet store in hopes of fulfilling his latest request for a pet. Soon he was carrying home one goldfish, a little box of fish food, and a small glass bowl. He was excited to get to know his new pet. He filled the bowl with water, sprinkled a few flakes, and then stood by to watch his goldfish that he named Sparky. If you have ever had a fish for a pet, caught one, or seen any in an aquarium, you know that fish don't usually look very happy. Their mouths turn downward, their eyes bug out, and their expressions don't change much at all. In fact, they look bored, or downright unhappy.

The boy was sad that his fish seemed unhappy, and he wondered what he could do about it. So, he did some chores, saved some money, and returned to the store. He bought a bigger bowl, some plastic trees, and one of those castles that fish are supposed to have fun swimming in and out of. The boy watched his fish closely and realized that Sparky swam around the castle, but never through it. He still didn't look like he was having much fun. That upset the boy even more.

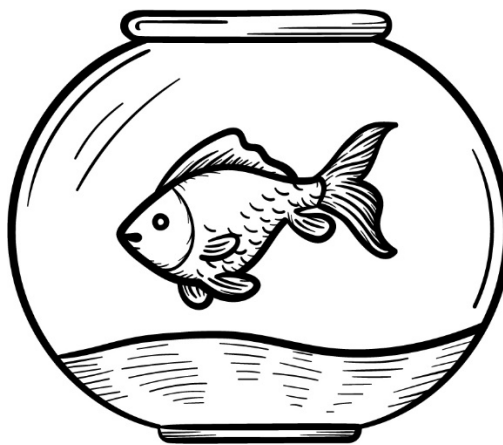
Back to the store a few weeks later, he not only bought a full aquarium with a pump, he purchased even more fish stuff—a light, a coral reef, and a ceramic mermaid. The little boy was pretty sure that the more toys you have, the happier you are, right? Or maybe not. His goldfish still seemed unhappy.

Then he had yet another idea. The boy decided that the fish needed a companion—another fish to hang around with. If there were two fish, they would both be happier than if they were alone. Again, he went back to the pet store, and this time he bought another little goldfish, naming her Goldie. Now he watched Sparky and Goldie swim around and around, not having much to do with each other. But suddenly one morning there were baby fish! Oh, yay! They would be a happy little fish family. Until the babies started to eat each other. Talk about sibling rivalry.

The boy was *really* frustrated now. No matter how hard he tried to make his fish happy—giving them fish flakes, creating a beautiful world for them, making sure he gave them everything they needed to live a happy fish life—they just weren't getting it. He was almost out of ideas when he thought of the perfect solution. If he could just become a fish for a short time, he could get in the aquarium and *show* them how to be happy; how to love one another as much as he loved them.

When he told his mother his idea, she gently told him that a boy could not become a fish. That would be impossible.

After all, he wasn't God.



Reflection and Discussion Questions

1. Make a list of some of the ways the boy tried to make his fish happy.
2. How do the things the boy did in the story relate to God's efforts to make the people he created happy?
For example, what were some things God did in the Old Testament that were supposed to make his people happy?
3. What are some examples of how God's people reacted to his efforts?
4. What are some stories in the Old Testament that show God's frustration with his people?
5. What are some ways God tried to get the attention of his people when they didn't "get it"?
6. How would you answer the question, "Why would God become human if he is an almighty, all-powerful, all-knowing being?"

Final Question

How does the Incarnation help us to live so that we can be happy in this life and supremely happy in the next? Give several specific examples from Jesus' life, applying them to your own life.

