

Introductory note: The *Gone Fishing* devotional series has little to do with educators in Lutheran schools but everything to do with Christians who like to fish. Including those who teach in Lutheran ministries! This series replaces the *From the Past* series and will run for the summer weeks.

Fishing 2

Equipping the Tackle Box Part 1

Everyone who fishes needs a tackle box in which to carry stuff. It is proper to call it *stuff* because the well-equipped angler stuffs essential equipment into a box until it is so stuffed that another box is required in which to stuff more stuff. This is the first of a four-part series on stuff that should find repose in all tackle boxes.

One vital supply is a bologna sandwich. Fishing is hard work and rarely done anywhere near the local Chez Francois franchise. The sandwich should be bologna, which is the only traditionally recognized meat of anglers worldwide. Besides, if fishing is so good that hunger pangs disappear, a few days or more of 90 degree weather in the tackle box will render the sandwich into excellent catfish bait. It will also help to get you away for fishing if the tackle box is in the garage. Family will indeed bless—and hasten—your next excursion.

Christians need their own kind of tackle box. What would you expect to find?

You never can stuff too much forgiveness into you stash of equipment. Consider this exchange between Jesus and one of His fishing disciples: “Then Peter came up and said to him, ‘Lord, how often will my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? As many as seven times?’ ” Jesus said to him, ‘I do not say to you seven times, but seventy-seven times’ ” (Matt. 18:21–22 ESV).

Christianity is filled with much good stuff. Like fishing tackle, you may lose some of it, or at least misplace it. You cannot identify yourself with Christ through perfect application of good deeds. The vital equipment of an active faith is forgiveness—both forgiving yourself as Christ has forgiven you and forgiving others as Christ has forgiven you.

God has forgiven you through Jesus Christ. No bologna here!

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