



Teach a Man to Fish

A SAMPLE “GO FORTH” INITIATIVE

I was four years old when I learned how to fish. My brother was even younger, because I remember how easily he could slip out of that smallest of life jackets my grandmother had roped him to. If there was any duct tape handy, I’m sure that would have come into play eventually.

Of course we didn’t know the first thing about fishing, but our grandparents were dyed-in-the-wool pros by any standard, and both had the patience of Job. Oh, what fun we had... especially involving anything that had to do with a hook. Long story short, the world gained a couple of anglers that day, and it has lasted a lifetime.

Ever grimace at how many times throughout the day somebody asks you for help with something that they ought to be able to accomplish for themselves, with a minimum of fuss? Or how many times – after a quick calculation – you actually do it for them because you want to save time, minimize the the hassle, and get back to more important matters?

“Give a man a fish, and you will feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.”

That little nugget has been a staple of American folk wisdom for over a century — and for good reason. It just has the ring of plain truth to it. As simple as it is, don’t be surprised if they can stretch and bend that metaphor like a pretzel with all kinds of objections:

- The pond doesn’t have enough fish
- I don’t have access to the pond
- I don’t have a fishing rod
- I don’t like fish

By the time I was a teen, I was confident that I could catch a fish with darn near anything such as a supple branch, a t-shirt, and a shoelace. My kids thought I was telling them fishy tales, so I was once pulled over at the Salt River and went into MacGyver mode with a decent branch, some old fishing line I found dangling in scrub along the bank, the hook from one of many lures snagged in the rocks along the shore, a couple of small pieces of cheese from one of our sandwiches, and a simple stone for a weight.

Within 10 minutes I had caught 3 decent sized blue gills.

Teach a Man to Fish *(continued)*

Okay. What may seem like a simple task to us might not be all that simple for the next guy to pull off, and you might have to plow through the objections first. The more experience you have with something, the easier to rebut the objections and get on with the task of teaching.

TEACH WHAT YOU KNOW

It doesn't seem like the neighborly thing to say, "no," but just imagine how much time and frustration could be avoided if we simply knew how to say, "I don't know." Further, imagine not having an instant Google search handy to keep up the facade of being a Jack-of-all-trades. Sometimes it's just better to defer to actual experts, or maybe pull in other people to help if available. When a community is involved, everyone benefits!

You may just want to focus on those areas where you can pass along some useful expertise, when you're willing to charitably spend the time. If you're a professional and your livelihood depends on certain skills, don't always feel obligated. Perhaps it's better to make a basic list of things you're willing to share and teach people free of any compensation but the reward of good-deed-doing.

A GOOD PLACE TO PRACTICE FOR THE TOUGHER TIMES AHEAD

Check out one of CORAC's many specialty teams including:

- Health & Wellness
- Sustainable Living
- Prayer Teams
- Communications
- Education
- Defense League
- Crisis Scenarios

There's many ways to contribute and help build up the community.

Do you want to see your neighbor learn something new and flourish? Then get to know the people that need help and assume they have the capacity and good will to follow through. If they truly lack something, be sure to ask for specifics, exercise some healthy discernment, enable their abilities — and celebrate when they land the big one.

