

trinity *Tidings*

trinity
lutheran
reaching hearts, touching lives

Ice Fishing

I'll be the first to admit it. I know almost nothing about ice fishing because I've never done it. I didn't grow up with it and now, well, now I simply don't like the thought of being cold, even if it's comfortable in those ice shanties.

With no first-hand experience, there are a few things that seem logical enough to provide a teaching moment to those who enjoy the sport and those like me who pursue other means of relaxation.

Cut a Hole

Maybe I've never been there done that, but it only seems logical to me that, if you're going to go fishing on the ice, you need to get beneath the ice.

While you're sitting on the ice or even if you're not, ponder this thought, "Aren't the lives of many around us like that ice? Cold. Frozen. Don't you know at least one person whose heart is as cold as ice?"

As we encounter those "cold-hearted" people, God's encouragement is to find a way to soften their hearts, to break a hole through that icy shell they have created. We need to get inside, to get to the other side before God can use us to warm their hearts.

Attach the Bait

Don't know for sure, but I only assume that ice fishing requires bait. I don't think the fish are stupid

enough or desperate enough to simply take the hook out of pure curiosity.

Returning to those icy hearts, it doesn't matter what has caused the ice. What matters to God is that, once there's a hole, we provide suitable bait. Notice I said, "suitable" bait. We're not playing games with people's lives and neither is God.

Once we find a tiny hole to enter their hearts, we need to provide comfort, encouragement, reassurance, hope, assurance, compassion, concern, and care. We need to provide the words and actions that will begin to soften the heart, to enable them to open up their heart so that they can experience a better, more enjoyable life.

Meeting them where they are, meeting their perceived needs, that's how we provide the bait that God will use to change their lives.

Reel In

I can only assume that when a fish takes the bait, you reel them in. They move from under the ice to above the ice.

It may take weeks, months, even years of gentle encouragement, of offering care, of demonstrating value. But however long it takes, we need to be ready when they finally take the bait, when their hearts melt away enough ice so that they can emerge on the other side. And as they emerge, we continue to offer our care and concern as their heart discovers what it's like to live in the warmth of God's love and grace.

So whether you're on the ice or not, remember what God can do through you when you are willing to go ice fishing for Him!

