

The Lure of Fishing

In this month's story, a man and his son take a special fishing trip. This story is perfect for reminiscing about nature, family, and fishing.

Preparation & How-To's

- Distribute [large-print copies of the story](#). Ask volunteers to read a section or read the dialogue of the characters like a script.
- Read the story and use the [Discussion Starters](#) at the end to spark a conversation.
- [Pictures](#) can be printed or [displayed on a television](#) during the activity.



The Lure of Fishing

The young boy whistled a familiar tune as he began to change the old fishing line. His grandfather and father whistled the same song every time they were getting their gear together for a day of fishing. The young boy was just around nine years old with freshly washed hair that stuck up all over. He was happily cleaning out the old metal tackle box that had sat in the garage, untouched, all winter.

Today was a bright and sunny and special day. The boy was heading out with his father to a “super-secret” spot that had been his family’s favorite fishing spot for many years. But it was a long hike, and he had not been ready before. This year was different, though. The young boy was finally old enough for the two-mile hike into the woods. He was grinning as he thought about it. He appreciated how much time he and his father and grandfather spent in nature whenever they had a chance, but today was extra exciting for him.

His father entered the garage all smiles, thinking about the sweet smell of spring in the woods that they were about to hike into. He thought of the splendid silence of woods, the sweet scent of honeysuckle and jasmine reaching up and out from between brambles, the soothing sound of the river lapping against the shore, and the wind whispering with the refreshing breath of pine.

It had been a few years since the boy’s grandfather had been able to walk up the narrow path to the lake that sat deep within the forest. Today was the first time the father would take his young son to the spot he loved the most. He felt a little sad that his own father could not go, but he was excited to bring back some fish for supper.

As the father started to unpack his own tackle box, he gave his son a tousle on the head. “Grampa is going to love eating whatever we catch today. He even left this new tackle box just for you to take today. He says it has a surprise and not to open it until we get up there. What do you think the surprise is?”

“Hmmm. Maybe worm cookies?”

“Ha! Maybe. Or maybe just some of grandma’s brownies with walnuts.”

“Oooh. I hope it’s brownies! Do you think the fish’ll be biting today?” the young boy asked.

“Oh, of course. This is a very secret special place your grandfather found. The fish are always biting there. Like magic!”

“Why don’t we always go to this spot then?” asked his son.

“Well, you shouldn’t use magic every day, or else it’s not so special anymore,” his dad laughed.

In reality, it was just a challenging hike, and it took a long time to get in and out. But that did mean that few people fished there, so it was a good spot to go if you had the time and energy. The water was calm and shallow, with smooth rocks along the shore. It was perfect for wading out into the water and cooling off after the hike. When you stood in the water and stood very still, you could feel the small fish swish past your toes and watch the hawks overhead as they flew from one side of the trees that ringed the water to the other.



The father dipped his hand into his old metal tackle box and smiled. There was a bright red lure, shiny with flashy red and golden feathers. They were his own father’s signature lure colors. He let his mind wander as he remembered the first lure his father had ever made just for him. Red and gold. That day his father had taken him to the secret fishing hole and helped him tie it to a line.

Like his own son today, he recalled being most worried about whether the fish were biting. He wanted to catch a monster-sized fish and really impress his dad. But before even helping him to cast his line, his father had taken a knee to have a chat with him.

“Fishing, especially up here, is not just about bringing home dinner. Although your ma always likes to have a fresh fish fry. But here’s the truth, son: it’s all about taking a moment to be silent and still. To really see nature. See how the trees move, how the water seems to breathe in and out as the waves roll up on the shore. It’s a good time to just be with yourself and the people you take with you. If we catch a fish, we’ll be happy. But if we don’t catch a fish, we’ll also be happy, okay?”

Today, as the young father and his bright-eyed son stood on the rocky shores of the mountain lake, the father breathed in deeply. The walk had been long, but his son had been filled with the energy only a nine-year-old can have. He had been at a near run for the entire two-mile uphill hike into the woods.

“Do you think fish wish they had legs? Like maybe they would like to hike?”

“I dunno. Do you wish you had fins?”

“I can swim without fins! Can I? It’s so hot!”

The father laughed. Even though he knew it would disturb the fish and scare them off for at least a little while, he couldn’t deny that it was very hot after that hike and that taking a dip in the lake had always been his favorite part of the trip to this particular spot.

“Let’s do it! Let’s see if we can ask the fish if they want legs.”

Watching his son gleefully run into the water, splishing and splashing, he remembered what his own dad had always taught him: that fishing was more than just fishing; it was enjoying the moment with those you brought with you. The two counted the hawks that flew overhead.

They chased frogs and skipped rocks. From across the lake, they watched a graceful doe and her two awkward, dappled fawns take long drinks from the water. It was truly a sight to behold.

Eventually, after a swim, a snack, and a light nap in the sun, the pair were ready to regroup. It was barely noon, with plenty of time to do some fishing.

The father picked out the beautiful red and gold lure from his tackle box. Setting up his son's rod and readying it, he thought about the first time he had ever cast a line. He had so nervously moved the rod slowly behind his head, double-checking and then triple-checking to make sure he had positioned it just right. He had caught his own father's patient and encouraging smile in the corner of his eye. With that silent encouragement, he had used all his strength to swing the reel forward, releasing the line at just the perfect moment. It had flown gracefully for a full 20 yards downstream, and he had silently screamed with joy. He had slowly wiggled and dragged that line back to him, trying to encourage a fish to bite, and lo and behold, came a tug on the line!

But as he had tried to pull the line slowly and carefully back to him, he realized as he tugged harder and harder that it wasn't a fish at the end of the line. The lure had just been snagged on a rock or something else hidden below the surface. He remembered crying and struggling, so upset that he had made such an error on his very first try.

His father walked over to where the line had hit the snag. Taking his pocketknife out, he quickly severed the lure from the line. The boy started crying almost immediately.

"I am so sorry, Dad. I lost the lure you made me."

His father had laughed. "We all lose lures. I lose them all the time. Why do you think I am so good at making them? What's nice is that we are here and we are together. The sun is out, we have sandwiches, and plenty of time to catch some more fish. Or, if you want, we can go ahead and dip our toes in the water and just take a swim ourselves? Maybe we'll even find where that lure went."

Today, the young father missed his own father. Although they still went on regular fishing trips together, relaxing on a dock or in the small boat his father had bought after his retirement, the older man could no longer make the trek to this special hidden lake. He sighed, thinking about how his young son would miss out on having his grandfather show him the tree that they could hang a rope swing from or show him how to cast that perfect line.

His son ran over to him, his tackle box bouncing wildly in his hand.
"Dad, look! Look what Grampa did for us!"

Upon opening the little green tackle box and lifting up the three trays, the two found row after row of carefully made fly-fishing lures. One entire tray of the tackle box was simply red and gold lures, with flecked feathers, just like the one that had been lost many years ago.



There was a small note folded up amongst the lures.

Lose as many as you can. The fun is in finding them.

--Grandpa

The End

Discussion Starters

- Do you have any similar childhood memories?
 - What makes trips enjoyable for you?
 - What small items from your past do you treasure?
 - How does being in nature make you feel?
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