

IDEA #70 Story: "A Fish Tale" Fable

Every spring, for as long as anyone could remember, melting snow from the mountains would cause torrents of water to rush through the valleys forming a great river that flowed into the sea.

But over time the climate changed and this particular river began to dry up and many freshwater fish eventually were forced to swim out into the ocean.

The saltwater fish were not pleased about having to share their waters with these strange newcomers. "How funny looking these river fish are," said an old salt. "They don't belong here."

He announced to his school, "We have more cartilage, but they have mostly bone. We have live births, but they lay eggs. We can tolerate the cold, but they like warmer waters."

A huge spray of bubbles was caused when the entire school in unison said, "They must go!"

The freshwater fish were angered by these remarks. They also pointed out how the other school differed from them. One responded, "We eat plant life while you swallow other fish. We rely on our sight, but you judge things by more by smell. We have many pretty colors, but you are gray and drab."

A huge spray of bubbles was caused when this entire school in unison said, "We belong here. You should go!"

A nearby salmon overheard this arguing and swam closer. Salmon are special fish and have been living in both rivers and oceans for a long time. The wise old salmon, who had known both kinds of fish all her life told them to stop their bickering. "How silly of you to focus on these differences when it's clear that our similarities are far greater. Can't you see that? We are all fish. We swim. We live in the water. We travel in schools. We have gills to breathe. We have fins to navigate. We are covered with scales. Let's focus on these things instead."

The salmon made everybody think about this and asked all the fish to get to know one another before they made any decisions about those in another group. Though all of them were still aware of their differences, they soon realized that these differences didn't really matter much. Once they got to know those who looked different from them, they understood that looks weren't that important. Soon they began to mix, darting about happily among each other.

. . . The next time you go fishing, look closely how the fish puckers his mouth after he is caught. If he seems to say to you, "I am just a fish," no matter how strange he looks, then you know he has been well schooled.