



SESSION **3** OF 4

On the beach



MEETING AIM

To share in Jesus' invitation to follow him.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 21:1-19



BACKGROUND

This story is one of incredible parallels, starting with the first time Jesus met the disciples (Luke 5:1-11) and inviting them to put down their nets and follow him. After three years of following Jesus, the disciples once again found themselves at their nets.

In this encounter, Jesus challenges the disciples to realise that their work isn't over, but has only just begun. Together with the children we serve, we have the opportunity to put down our nets and follow Jesus, even when we cannot see where he will lead

CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and give out your refreshments. Encourage the children to share their stories and news from the week and celebrate special events that have taken place, such as birthdays. Ask the children whether they have ever been to the beach. Encourage them to share their stories of the things they did there, and what they liked about it.

INTRO ACTIVITY



You will need: disposable barbecue; fish fingers; bread rolls; plates; butter; water

You will need to carry out a risk assessment before the session for this activity and take the appropriate safety measures. Take the group outside and sit around together as you cook the fish fingers on the barbecue. As you prepare the food, ask the children if they have ever had a barbecue on the beach before. When the fish fingers are cooked, serve them to the children in bread rolls before safely extinguishing the fire.

If circumstances do not allow you to do this, set up a role play area with a 'camp fire', together with a boat and fishing net, where children can role-play catching and cooking their own fish.

BIBLE STORY



You will need: a boat (an inflatable dinghy would work well); a large piece of net

If you have a small group, you could tell this story as you all sit in the boat. Alternatively, gather the children together as though sitting along the seashore and stand in the boat as you tell this story:

I wonder if any of you remember what happened when Jesus first met his disciples. Some of them were fishermen who had been out all night trying to fish, but they hadn't caught a thing. Jesus came along and told them to throw their nets out on the other side of the boat. *You could act this out as you talk.* The fishermen were amazed when their nets filled up with fish. They chose to leave their nets behind and become Jesus' disciples.

A long time had passed since then. The disciples had learnt a lot from following Jesus, but now they were on their own again. They had seen Jesus die on the cross and then had seen he had come back to life again, but he wasn't with them every day and they weren't sure what would happen next.

So the disciples went back to fishing. One night, seven of the disciples went out in their boats, trying to catch some fish. But when morning came, they had caught nothing! A man, walking along the beach shouted to the men: "Put your nets out on the other side of the boat!" So they did. *Act this out again.*

Once again, their nets were filled with fish, just as they had been all those years earlier. The disciples realised it was Jesus and brought their fish to the shore, ready to share a fish sandwich breakfast together.

And just like the first time, when Jesus saw these men out fishing, he invited them to follow him again. Jesus wouldn't be with them on earth for much longer, but he still had important work for them to do. Now they would learn what it really meant to follow Jesus, even when they couldn't see him.

CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute:

- What is your favourite part of this story?
- Is there anything you don't understand about?
- Why do you think Jesus chose to appear to the disciples in this way?
- What would you ask Jesus if you saw him?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: pebbles; acrylic paints; paintbrushes; clean-up and cover-up equipment

Invite the children to select a pebble and paint something on it from the story. Some children may choose to paint an image such as the boat or fish as a reminder of the story, while others may paint a word or symbol; something that has spoken to them through it.

Once completed, gather the pebbles into the centre of the group and look at them together. At the end of the session, invite the children to take their pebbles away and choose what to do with them. They could display them at home as a reminder of the story or perhaps pass it on to someone else to share the story with them.

PRAYER



Invite the group to hold to the edges of the net together in a circle. Lead the children in a prayer, as follows:

"Thank you, Jesus, for your invitation to follow you. Thank you for the disciples who left behind their nets to follow you and share your story with the world. Thank you that we can also follow you and share your story with the people we know and love. Amen."

As the children keep their eyes closed, suggest that they can choose to let go of the net as a symbol between them and God that they want to follow him, if they so wish. Leave a silent space for them to pray for themselves as you close.

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