



SESSION **3** OF 4

On the beach



MEETING AIM

To help the children understand that Jesus is with them, just as he was when he appeared to the disciples at breakfast, and to discover what difference this makes in our lives.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 21:1-19



BACKGROUND

We all have good days and bad days. Sometimes our days can have trickier moments. Knowing the presence of Jesus in these moments is vital to grow our faith and dependence on him. This session allows the children the space to think about their daily lives and invite Jesus to be with them

**+** CIRCLE TIME



Welcome the children by name as they arrive and invite them to join your circle. Share your refreshments and chat about the last time the children had a barbecue. What is their favourite barbecue food? What's the most unusual thing the group has eaten from a barbecue?

**+** FISH GAME



**You will need:** four children's fishing nets; two bags full of 'fish' (plastic balls, screwed-up newspaper, balloons etc); two boxes

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team two fishing nets and a bag full of 'fish'. Some of the team will be throwers and some will be catchers. When you shout 'go', the throwers launch the fish into the air and the catchers must catch as many as possible, depositing them into a box. The fish should not be removed, but if they fall to the floor without being caught the throwers can pick them up and throw them again. The team with the most fish in the box wins the game.

**+** BIBLE STORY



**You will need:** one washing up bowl / large bucket per team; story fish (one set per team, see below); fishing rods (string with a magnet attached at the end, one per team); Bibles

Before the session, make the story fish. Cut out fish shapes from coloured paper (use a different colour for each team) and write out fragments of the story on each one:

**Fish 1:** Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together. "I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them. They said: "We'll go with you."

**Fish 2:** So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

**Fish 3:** Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples didn't realise it was Jesus.

**Fish 4:** He called out to them: "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered.

**Fish 5:** He said: "Throw your net out on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they struggled to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

**Fish 6:** One of the disciples said to Peter: "It is the Lord!"

**Fish 7:** As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment round him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, as they were only about 100 metres from the shore.

**Fish 8:** When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them: "Bring some of the fish you have just caught."

**Fish 9:** So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153 in total, but even with so many the net wasn't torn.

**Fish 10:** Jesus said to them: "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him: "Who are you?" They suddenly realised it was the Lord.

**Fish 11:** Jesus took the bread and gave it to them, then did the same with the fish. This was the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Laminate the fish and attach a paper clip to the mouth end of each one.

Split the group into teams and scatter the fish over the floor. Give the teams a fishing rod and challenge them to catch all their fish. They must put all the story fragments in the right order. Give out Bibles to help them do this.

Once they have finished, read out the story together.

**+** CHATTING TOGETHER



Chat about the story using these questions:

- Why do you think the disciples didn't recognise Jesus straightaway?
- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to try again on the right-hand side of the boat?
- What does this story tell us about Jesus?
- What difference would it make for us to know that Jesus is with us at all times of the day and night?

**+** CREATIVE RESPONSE



**You will need:** wooden barbecue skewers; cubes of different fruit

Allow the children time to respond to this story and the presence of Jesus in our everyday lives. Give out the skewers and invite each child to make their own fruit kebab.

Each cube of fruit represents a different section of their day (for example breakfast, going to school, playtime, lunchtime, coming home, teatime, bedtime, night). Each time you add another layer, ask the children to think about what it would be like to have the presence of Jesus with them all the time. What difference would it make?

**+** PRAYER



**You will need:** pens and paper

Invite the children to draw out a 'daily planner' with the same routine as above in two columns. Write the times of day in one column, leaving the second column blank. Allow the children to think through their days again and write a prayer for each time of the day. This could be a thanksgiving prayer or, if there are certain moments in the day that they find more difficult, they could ask Jesus to help them.

**HELEN HODGSON**

leads the children's and youth work at Grace Church Bromsgrove and is a freelance writer.