

SESSION **4**

Year of Jubilee



MEETING AIM

To discover why Jesus began his public ministry in this way and what it teaches us about the nature of God.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 4:14-30



BACKGROUND

This story teaches us about the first time Jesus taught in the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth. He used this time to preach a most significant message, hiding from nobody who he said he was and what he had come for. Exploring this text will help the children understand how significant this message was, both in terms of the content and the proclamation Jesus made, and celebrate what this tells us about the priorities of God and his kingdom come on Earth.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and ask them to talk about the people they enjoy listening to: perhaps a teacher who really captures their attention or a celebrity they like watching on TV. What is it that makes them want to listen to that person? How do they remember what they had to say? How do they make sure other people listen to them when they have something to say?

+ FREEDOM GAME



Invite the children to stand in a circle facing inwards and put both arms into the centre of the circle, where they should take the hands of two other players. All the players will now be tangled as one group.

On the signal to begin, the children should begin twisting and turning, without letting go of one another's hands, to untangle the group and reform as one complete circle. With larger groups, you may wish to have two smaller circles. Talk about how it feels to be set free again.

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: a scroll with the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 written on it

This storytelling will involve all the children playing parts in the story. You will need one child to play the part of Jesus (who should be able to read aloud confidently in front of the group) and the rest to play the various crowd roles. If you are able, it may work well to go into your church building to act out the part that takes place in the synagogue. Try to verbally intervene very little, using visual cues to signal movement and action from the children as you tell the following story.

After Jesus came back from the time of testing in the wilderness, he began teaching the people all about God and the way his kingdom would come to Earth. *(The child playing Jesus should mime speaking to the crowd.)*

Then he returned to Nazareth, his home town, where he went into the synagogue. *(All move into the church, or another space with a lectern set up.)*

It was Jesus' turn to read the scrolls, so he stood up and read from the prophet Isaiah. *(Prompt the child playing the part of Jesus to read from the scroll, perhaps standing at a lectern.)*

When he had finished, Jesus rolled the scroll up, but instead of sitting down as they expected, he told the crowds that on this very day, this ancient prophecy had been fulfilled. Jesus himself was the answer to the prophecy given by Isaiah!

The crowds did not like what they heard. *(Encourage the children to jeer.)*

Who did this Jesus think he was? But Jesus did not stop here. He continued to talk to the crowds, teaching them more and more about the way God's promise was for all people. The crowds were horrified! Jesus could not say such things! They believed this went against God's teaching and were not ready to learn from him. *(Encourage the children to become more enraged.)*

They drove Jesus out of the synagogue and through the city, up to a high cliff, where they intended to throw him off! *(Direct the children to move back through your building to a suitable point.)*

But miraculously, Jesus managed to escape from the crowd and was not harmed. *(Perhaps another of your leaders could squirrel the child playing Jesus away, as you move through your venue.)*

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- How do you feel about this story?
- Why do you think the crowd responded in this way?
- Why do you think Jesus chose this text for his first teaching?
- What do the words of Isaiah 61:1-2 teach us about who Jesus is?
- What do you want to say to God after hearing this story?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: text of Isaiah 61:1-2; newspapers and magazines; poster paper;

scissors; glue

Arrange the children in pairs or small groups and give each pair a copy of the text of Isaiah 61:1-2. Invite them to take a look through the magazines and newspapers and cut out words or images that illustrate elements of the text, putting these together on the poster paper to create a poster that visually retells the prophecy.

When the children have had enough time to complete their posters, display them on a wall so everyone can see them. Invite the children to talk about the posters and what they tell us about who Jesus is and what he came to Earth to do.

+ PRAYER



As you draw together to pray, invite the group to stand together in a circle with arms linked. Invite the children to pray prayers of thanks for the freedom God has given us: "Thank you God that because of you we are free to..." "Thank you God that we are free from..." or prayers asking God to bring freedom to those who are trapped, perhaps echoing the words of the reading from Isaiah 61:1-2, or using their posters as a prompt to pray. As the children add their own words to the prayer, invite them to unlink their arms, showing that we are free in Christ.

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