



## All about church

### MEETING AIM

To discover how we are all part of church and chosen to do God's work.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Mark 3:13-19

### BACKGROUND

Jesus chooses a team to train and work with at the start of his ministry. He commissions them to preach the good news and to bring freedom to people. This team is made up of different people from different backgrounds, from fishermen to tax collectors and rebels. None of them were the best of the best, but they were chosen and used greatly by Jesus. Children might feel on the margins of church, but they are called to be full members. How can we empower children to feel part of and contribute to the life of the Church?

### STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning).

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

**You will need:** people shapes cut from card; art and collage materials

Before your session, cut out 13 people shapes from card (or get 13 pre-cut shapes, available from craft and discount shops).

Share out the people shapes, and invite your family to decorate them all differently to create a group of people – Jesus and his disciples. Make them as varied as you like; have some that look like you and some that don't. As you work together, chat about how everyone is different. What gifts and skills do your family members have? Are they all the same?

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** card people from 'Intro activity'; name cards for Jesus and all the disciples named in verses 16-19; Blu Tack  
Read Mark 3:13-19, using the card people to enact what is happening:

Stick Jesus to a wall at the start of verse 13. Add Jesus' name label.

Place the other twelve card people below Jesus as if they are listening to him.

Add name labels to all the disciples, deciding between you who is who.

Read verses 14-15 again and ask your family members to imagine what might happen if and when the twelve went out to preach. You might want to concentrate on the freedom given by driving out demons, rather than the demons, but don't sweep any questions about this under the carpet. Invite your children to choose two disciples and take them to another part of your room or house, to imagine telling others about Jesus. When they return, ask the children what they imagine happened.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Encourage some discussion by asking these questions:

- Which bit of the story do you like?
- Which of the disciples would you most like to be? (Encourage all children to choose, but if any would like to be a woman, rather than a man, read Luke 8:1-3 together. Remind children that God uses us all in church, not just people of one gender or another.)
- What does this story tell us about church?
- Imagine you yourself have been chosen by Jesus to tell others about him. How does that feel?
- Share a story of how you have told other people about Jesus. What was it like?

### CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

**You will need:** lots of card people (the same as in 'Intro activity'); art and collage materials; Jesus and disciples from 'Bible story'; large sheet of paper

Together, make lots more card people from lots of different backgrounds – these can be people from your own church or family, or inventions of your children! As you work, chat more about the Bible story and about your own church. Comment that all the disciples were chosen to be part of the team, indeed all the people described in Acts and beyond were also chosen to go out and spread the message of Jesus. Ask the children if they feel chosen to be part of your church.

Once you have a good group of card people, ask your family to choose one card person to represent them, and write names on the chosen people. Stick all the card people, including Jesus and the disciples, to the large sheet of paper and stick it up somewhere in your house.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** card-people collage from 'Creative time'

Stand and look at your card-people collage. Chat about how different everyone looks, but each one is called to be part of Jesus' Church. Pray for your own church; pray for those who are out telling others about Jesus using words, but also pray for those who are bringing freedom to other people – such as working with the homeless, helping families in difficulty, or donating to food banks.

Finish your time together by chatting about what your family might do to bring the good news and freedom of Jesus to other people, particularly within your local restrictions.

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## Living stones

### MEETING AIM

To think about the Church as a living community.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

1 Peter 2:4-10

### BACKGROUND

The pandemic has forced us to think of Church very differently. Not meeting in a building has diminished the idea that Church equals a building. While some yearn to meet back in our buildings, the driving force for many has been to meet together as a community face-to-face, rather than being in a particular building. Now is an ideal time to think about how Church is the people rather than bricks and mortar, and this includes children and young people, as well as adults.

### STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). If you did Session 1 of this series, look at your collage of card people and talk about any thoughts that come to mind.

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

**You will need:** a foodstuff you can carve easily (such as hard cheese, raw potatoes or carrots, bread rolls), knives; stiff card; strong sticky tape (such as gaffer tape)  
Carve your food into wedge shapes (the kind that make up a brick arch). Create an arch using a strip of card, taping each end down to the table. Try to construct an arch with your food wedges using the cardboard arch as a support. You might want to check out online how brick arches are made. Which is the most important piece / stone / brick? Once you have made your arch, can you remove the card, leaving your arch in place?

Make sure you eat the food you have carved; don't waste any food!

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** pictures of cornerstones, in your own area, if possible; The Message Bible paraphrase

Show your family pictures of cornerstones – many are inscribed by the people who laid them (usually members of the local council). Why do you think they are important? Comment that they support all the other stones or bricks, just as your keystone (or key cheese or key potato) was the vital piece in your arch.

Read 1 Peter 2:4-10 from *The Message*. Talk about who might be the cornerstone being talked about in this passage. Why do your family think that this cornerstone was thrown out? If this cornerstone is Jesus, who threw him out? What did that look like? Let the children wonder about what this means, rather than giving them your ideas or 'the answer' immediately. Your children might have some interesting, insightful thoughts without much input from the adults in the family. Be careful not to squash or trample on your children's ideas!

Go on to consider the idea that if Jesus is the most important 'stone' in the Church, can we be stones too? What does that mean?

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Encourage some discussion by asking these questions:

- Which bit of the passage do you like?
- What does it mean to be a "building stones for the construction of a sanctuary vibrant with life"?
- What does this story tell us about church?
- What is your church like? Has it changed since the pandemic started?
- What do you think about your church?

### CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

**You will need:** rectangular stones made from paper or card; marker pens; Blu Tack  
Gather together lots of rectangular pieces of paper or card. Write 'Jesus' on one and stick it up in the bottom corner of a wall or window in your house. Go on to write your own names on stones and stick these up too, building a wall, using Jesus as the cornerstone.

On more bricks, write the names of some of the other people in your church, and stick those up too, building on your wall further. Once you have run out of bricks, stand back and admire your wall. Chat about all the members making up your 'church wall'. Comment that a church is not a building but made up of all the people in it. Ask your family what they think of this.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** wall from 'Creative time'; emojis drawn or printed out on paper; Blu Tack

Look at the wall you 'built' in 'Creative time'. Show the children the emojis you have and encourage them to choose one to stick to the different bricks in the wall. Encourage them, as they stick the emojis up, to use their chosen emoji as a prayer for that person in your church. A smiley face or thumbs up might represent a blessing or saying thank you for that person. If someone is ill, you might choose a hug emoji or a doctor. For those who feel lonely, you could add lots of different faces and ask God to send people to be part of their lives.

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## Passing it on

### MEETING AIM

To explore the Church's mission to tell people about Jesus.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 1:29-42; Matthew 28:19-20

### BACKGROUND

This story from John gives us two different ways to tell other people about Jesus. John the Baptist preaches about Jesus to a large crowd, whereas Andrew tells just one person – his brother Simon Peter. While the children in our family or group aren't likely to have the chance to preach like John the Baptist, they can certainly do the same friendship evangelism that Andrew demonstrates here. How can our children tell their friends about Jesus, particularly in today's tricky circumstances?

### STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning). Ask when the last time was that everyone heard some exciting news.

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

Share your stories about how you first heard about Jesus. Invite children and adults to share that story. What did they think of this story of Jesus? You might have other people you can ask, via a video calling app – wider family members or members of your church. How did the leaders of your church first hear about Jesus? What about members of the coffee team? Or the person who plays the piano? Chat about the different ways of passing the story of Jesus on that you hear about.

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** costume for John the Baptist

Before you start, find lots of things you could use to create a costume for John the Baptist – brown pieces of material, sacking, a leather belt, a long wig or some wool for hair and a walking stick.

Read Mark 1:1-8 and think about what John might have looked and sounded like. Dress up a volunteer like John, and read out John 1:29-34. If your John is a confident reader, they could read this themselves.

Encourage everyone to imagine they have never heard of Jesus, and they are in the crowd listening to John. What would they think? Who might he be talking about? What do they think of the way John is dressed?

Ask the children to imagine they are walking with John the Baptist with their friend Andrew. You're going to read out a story where two disciples are mentioned – they are one, and Andrew is the other. Read John 1:35-39. Ask the children to imagine what Jesus might say and do when they and Andrew go to where he is staying. You might want to remind everyone what John said about Jesus. What might Andrew decide to do next?

Finally read John 1:40-42. Why might Andrew have gone to tell his brother Simon Peter about Jesus? If you were Simon Peter, what might you have thought when Andrew told you about Jesus? And when you met him?

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Encourage some discussion by asking these questions:

- Which bit of the story do you like?
- What might it have felt like to have seen and met Jesus for the first time?
- When was the first time you met Jesus? What was it like?
- Have you ever told anyone about Jesus like Andrew did? What happened?
- What does this story tell us about the way your church should work?

### CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

**You will need:** large sheet of paper; marker pen

Read out Matthew 28:19-20. Explain that Jesus was telling his friends to spread the news of Jesus at end of his physical time of earth, just as he inspired Andrew to do at the start of his ministry. As followers of Jesus, we too need to tell people about him!

Chat together about who you might like to tell about Jesus, just as Andrew told his brother. Write some names down on a sheet of paper and then go on to think about different ways you might share the good news with these people. Because of the varying restrictions in different areas, you will have to be creative in your ideas as you won't be able to hold a party at church or invite lots of people to your house!

Write all the suggestions down on your paper and then decide what you might want to do together. Start planning what you've decided to do and make sure that you follow through, so that you have time in your family to do what you have planned.

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** sheet of paper from 'Creative time'

Stand around the sheet of paper on which you wrote all your ideas, and the people you want to tell about Jesus. First pray for the names you wrote down. Encourage children to pray out loud for these people. You could have a starting sentence, such as: "Thank you, Jesus, for [name]. Help us to tell them about you when we..."

Finally, pray for all the plans you have made, asking Jesus to be with you as you tell your friends about him. Pray that they will have a surprising a meeting with Jesus as Simon Peter did!

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## Community

### MEETING AIM

To discover the community aspect of church life.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Acts 2:42-47

### BACKGROUND

The earliest Church shared everything. People sold their belongings, even their houses, and gave the money to the poor. They did everything together as well, sharing food and praising God. What does this tell us? When we explore this passage, what is our response? Do we ever go beyond the bounds of generosity with our money, our food, our time? This kind of community demands much of us – as we explore this story with children, they might challenge us too as the way we live our lives. How open are we to hearing God's word through their revelation?

### STARTING OUT

5 MINS

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and chat about what your children have found exciting today (or yesterday, if you're doing this in the morning).

### INTRO ACTIVITY

10 MINS

**You will need:** lots of three different kinds of food (such as carrot sticks, sultanas and sweets)

Give a volunteer in your family two or three carrot sticks. Ask them if they would like to share these with everyone else. Keep giving more and more carrot sticks until the volunteer decides they would like to share, and how many they would like to give away. Follow the volunteer's idea of how much to share.

Do the same with the sultanas and then the sweets. Did the volunteer(s) keep more sweets than they did carrot sticks? Were they more reluctant to share one food rather than another?

### BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

**You will need:** bread; grape juice; cups; money; 'possessions' (use whatever you have around your house – not fragile items!)  
Gather your family together and tell this story:

Jesus' friends were busy, and very excited. After Jesus had died and come alive again, and after he had gone back to heaven, they were scared, but that had all changed when God sent his Holy Spirit to help them. Suddenly they had gone from scared to brave, and were telling everyone about Jesus!

Everyone who followed Jesus (and there were already thousands) listened to the disciples' teaching. Everyone was filled with wonder at the signs performed by the disciples! They remembered Jesus' death and resurrection when they eat bread and drank wine. *Share out the bread and pour the grape juice in cups and give those out too. Invite them to think about Jesus' death and resurrection as they eat their bread and drink the juice. You may need to recap the Easter story if they children aren't familiar with it.*

The followers of Jesus spent all their time together and shared everything they had. They sold property and possessions. *Get one family member to sell your possessions to another for money. They shared this money with anyone who was in need. The family member should share the money with everyone else.*

They ate together and praised God!  
*Sing a song together that you all know.*  
Every day, more and more people became friends of Jesus, because God was using all the believers.

### CHATTING TOGETHER

5 MINS

Encourage some discussion by asking these questions:

- Which bit of the story do you like?
- What might it have been like to be part of that earliest church?
- If people looked at your family and church, would they know you followed Jesus? Why? Why not?
- How can you invite people to join in this adventure of following Jesus?
- What does this story tell us about the way your church should work?

### CREATIVE TIME

10 MINS

**You will need:** large sheet of paper; marker pen

Think about different ways you can invite others to join your church community. You will need to make sure you stay within whatever lockdown restrictions your parish or area is under at the moment – you may need to get creative in order to reach out! Your ideas might be as simple as baking a cake and delivering it to your neighbours or organising a Zoom quiz for different families in your community. You could give some money or donate some groceries to a local food bank. Let your imagination run riot – it's likely that your children will have some wonderful ideas (and some outlandish ones too, but that's OK).

Write all these ideas down and choose some that you can do. Then plan how you're going to do them!

### PRAYER

5 MINS

**You will need:** a picture of people in your church (you could use your church website as a starting point); art and / or collage materials

Look at the pictures of your church community and / or your church website. Ask the children what they would like to ask God for with regards to your church community. Encourage the children to pray for your community using their words or creating a piece of artwork that represents their prayer. If you create pieces of art, then stick these up around your house so that you can continue to pray for these as you walk past.

Remember to pray for your plans to share community with others. Return to your prayers in weeks to come to see how God has answered them.

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