**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# Who is Jesus?

### MEETING AIM

To discover that Jesus is special.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 16:13-20

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

In the Gospels, sometimes it seems that the disciples have no idea what’s going on. Despite having been with Jesus for a considerable time, they don’t understand what he has been teaching them. However, here Peter has a moment of remarkable clarity, when Jesus asks who the disciples think he is: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” The children in our groups can be a little like the disciples, but they, like the twelve, are in the process of working things out and it may take a lifetime to get there! Don’t despair if you never get that moment of remarkable clarity – be sure that God is working in the children’s lives.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and ask the children to share about the week they have had. Ask the children who is special to them – it could be their parents or carers, brothers or sisters, other family members, friends or pets!

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** free-play equipment

Set out all the toys and free-play equipment and invite the children to play with whatever they would like. Join in with the children’s play if they invite you!

If you have any play equipment, such as animals or people doing different jobs, see if they children can recognise them and give the names.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** travelling dressing-up clothes and equipment, such as coats, scarves and hats, bags and suitcases, walking sticks or poles

Show the children all the travelling equipment you have brought. Encourage them to dress up as if they were going on a journey, and choose a bag or suitcase to carry with them or pull along behind them. Chat about where you might be going together.

Explain that Jesus and his friends had been travelling all over the place. They had walked a long way to the north, not far from the Mediterranean Sea. Encourage the group to walk around the room as you say this. Say that they had also sailed on a boat, back and forth across Lake Galilee. Pretend that you are sailing on a boat – ask the children how they would act, how they would stand, what might happen if the waves were big.

Finally, walk to another part of your room and sit everyone down. Tell this story:

Jesus and his friends were up in the north of the country, near a town called Caesarea Philippi. He asked them: “Who do people say I am?”

His friends answered: “Some people say that you’re John the Baptist. Other people say that you are Elijah or Jeremiah or another of the prophets.”

Jesus asked his friends another question: “Who do you think I am?”

Peter said: “You are the one God promised us, the special saviour called the Messiah. You are the Son of the living God.”

Jesus was happy about what Peter said: “Yes! You are very special, Peter. I am going to use you to tell lots of people about me, and about the wonderful things God has done. I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven!”

Lots of people didn’t know who Jesus was, but Peter did. Jesus is very special – he is the Son of God!

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Continue sitting in your picnic area and eat the crackers. As you do so, ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* What was your favourite part of the story?
* What words would you use to describe Jesus?
* Who do you think Jesus is?
* What does this story tell you about Jesus?
* Do you want to ask Jesus anything? What do you want to ask him?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** large pieces of paper; art materials

Beforehand, collect a range of art materials and set them out ready for the children to use. At this point in the session, show the children the art materials and encourage them to create a picture that represents what they think about the story, who Jesus is or anything that they are thinking about today.

As they work, chat about the story and encourage the children in their creativity. This is space for the group to process what God has said to them today. It doesn’t matter if they produce a finished picture or even if the picture seems to have nothing to do with the story. God will be speaking with the children and working in their lives – the picture they create is almost incidental.

If any children want to show their pictures to the rest of the group, let them do so.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

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

If you did the prayer activity in Session 1, then use the same piece of paper. Ask the children how God has answered some of the prayers you wrote down in that session. If you didn’t, start afresh today with a new piece of paper.

In the centre of the paper, write “Jesus is amazing”. Ask them to think about if Jesus is amazing, what do they want to talk about with him today? Write each suggestion down on the paper and pray a short prayer asking Jesus to help with that. After the first two or three suggestions, ask the children if they would like to pray a short prayer about each suggestion, rather than you doing it.

When all the children have told you what they want to talk to Jesus about, say a closing prayer, thanking Jesus for being amazing and caring about us. Keep the sheet of paper safe for next week.

**ALEX TAYLOR**

is resources editor for *Premier Youth and Children’s Work*.