



SESSION **3** OF 4

On the beach



MEETING AIM

To capture something of the extraordinary Jesus, who is with us in the ordinary.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 21:1-19



BACKGROUND

The session aims to capture something of both the extraordinary, understanding better who Jesus is through his miracles, but also that Jesus is still with us today in our own ordinary lives that begin with breakfast. Open the session with breakfast foods together, and enjoy the novelty and disruption of it, sharing something of the bizarre-ness of having breakfast with Jesus after the resurrection.

GATHERING TIME



This breakfast needn't be elaborate, but it should be a fun celebration. You could serve juice or tea and coffee with fruit salad and breakfast muffins, toast or pancakes, depending on your facilities! Open the session with the joy of having breakfast together as an introduction to the passage you're all about to delve into.

INTRO ACTIVITY



You will need: newspapers; fish shapes cut out newspaper

Split the group in two (or more if it's a large group) and give each group an old newspaper and a fish shape cut out of the newspaper. Have a race between the groups to see who can flap the paper fish with the newspaper sheets between two points as a relay race.

BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: study Bibles or similar

The passage in John 21 is resonant of other Bible stories, and everything that happened in it would have been so packed with meaning for the disciples based on their time with Jesus before his death and resurrection. Read the passage together and split the group into smaller groups to do a forensic study, thinking back to other Bible stories that help us understand this passage better. Give the groups Bibles with good indexes, and encourage them to use them, thinking about the different parts of the passage that give us clues about or remind us of other things Jesus is drawing on in these stories.

Get the groups to feed back their thoughts about what's going on by asking them to share the other stories that they thought of and why they might be linked to this passage. Ask them to share how they think these other stories help us understand who Jesus is and what might be going on for the disciples as they remember the things that have happened beforehand.

It might be helpful to fill in the gaps with this list of other stories today's passage overlaps with:

- The disciples' calling to follow Jesus with the first miraculous catching of fish (Luke 5).
- Peter walking on water (Matthew 14).
- The three times Peter denied Jesus (John 18).
- Peter's denial of Jesus foretold with shepherd imagery (Matthew 26:21-25).
- Shepherds visiting Jesus (Luke 2).
- Jesus' metaphor of being a shepherd to lost sheep (John 10).
- King David of the Old Testament being a shepherd (Psalm 23).

CHATTING TOGETHER



Explore the story further using these questions:

- What do you think the miraculous catch of fish says about Jesus?
- Why do you think he appeared to the disciples while they were fishing?
- What do you think Jesus was asking of Peter in their conversation? How do you think Peter would have felt about that?
- What would have changed for the disciples after that encounter with Jesus?
- What would you talk about with Jesus if you shared breakfast together on a beach?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: credit-card-sized cards with a fish outline drawn on one side and a lamb on the other; pens

In this passage we see the metaphors of fish and lambs. At the start of their journey together, Jesus asked the disciples to become 'fishers of men', and here he asks Peter to become a shepherd. If he didn't mean that literally, what did he mean?

Ask the group to consider who the 'fish' and 'lambs' Jesus would ask us to fish or shepherd today might be.

Give out your lamb / fish cards. Ask the group to take a pen and write the names of, or names of groups of people they might consider metaphorical fish or lambs in the world today. Encourage them to take the card and tuck it away somewhere, like a wallet or pocket, as a reminder of who Jesus asks us to be to these people as his disciples today.

PRAYER



You will need: A5 paper and pens

The idea of Jesus sharing breakfast with us on a beach is so beautiful. Through the Holy Spirit, we can share breakfast with Jesus in prayer and join in the celebration of him being alive with us today, but also start the day with a reminder that Jesus has left us his work to carry on with.

Ask the group to write their own breakfast prayers in response to everything you've spoken about today on sheets of A5. Ask them to stick the prayers somewhere they will encounter during their morning routines, like a mirror or on their cereal box. Encourage them to write prayers that capture some of the joy of sharing breakfast with Jesus, but also prayers that Jesus would help them continue the work he has left for us to do since his resurrection.

BECCA DEAN

is an experienced youth work practitioner and a doctorate student in Durham.