



SESSION 1 of 4

The fishermen

MEETING AIM

To explore what the fishermen noticed about Jesus when they met him.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 5:1-11

BACKGROUND

The fishermen were probably the least likely people to become followers of Jesus. Yet Jesus revealed something of himself to them before offering a simple invitation to join him in his ministry, just as they were. This session reminds us that we don't need to know all the answers to see who Jesus is.

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CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and share out your refreshments. Ask the children to think of someone they know who they enjoy spending time with. It could be a friend or a family member. What is it that makes them want to be around that person?

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INTRO ACTIVITY

Sit the group in a circle and ask one volunteer to briefly leave the room. While they are out of sight and earshot, choose a 'leader' from within the circle. Explain that the rest of the group should follow whatever actions the leader performs without letting the volunteer know who they are following. Actions should be simple and easy to follow, such as clicking fingers, blinking and tapping your head.

Get the group following the leader before bringing the volunteer back into the circle. Your volunteer has three attempts to successfully guess the leader in the group before their turn expires. You can play this game a few times with a different leader each time.

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BIBLE STORY

You will need:a large inflatable dinghy

Set up a large inflatable dinghy for everyone to sit in as you tell the story. Alternatively, arrange chairs in a boat shape.

Gather the children in the boat and tell them to imagine that they are a group of young, strong, smelly fishermen who have been out all night fishing in the lake. You are tired, but your nets are empty. There wasn't a single bite!

You bring your boats back to shore to clean up your nets, but all you want to do is go to bed. You notice a crowd is gathering on the beach, so you look to see what's going on. You notice that man, Jesus. You've seen him around a few times recently, speaking to crowds of people. You can hear a few things he says: "Kingdom of God", "Father God", but you can't hear much because the crowd is getting bigger and the sound is muffled.

Suddenly, you realise Jesus has got into your boat.

"Can you take me out a bit?" he asks.

You're tired and the last thing you want to do is go back out in the boat. But there is something about the way this man looks at you that makes you want to do as he says. You row the boat out just far enough to give Jesus some space to talk to the crowd.

You settle the boat and sink down a little, ready to have a rest while Jesus speaks, but you can't sleep through this! You listen to every word he says. His teaching is incredible. You've never heard anyone speak about God like this before!

You're thinking through everything you've heard him say when you notice the crowds are walking away. Jesus leans down towards you and the boys.

"Sail out into the deep water and put your nets down," he says.

"We've been fishing all night and caught nothing," you say, but you catch Jesus' eye again and something about him makes you want to do exactly what he says.

You and the boys put the nets out again and you can't believe how quickly they fill up with fish! Beautiful fish!

What is it with this Jesus? He's too special to be around the likes of you, and you tell him so.

But Jesus doesn't reject you. He's chosen you. He invites you and the boys to leave your nets behind and go with him to "fish for people". You're not sure what he means, but you just want to do it. This Jesus really is something else!

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CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute:

- Why do you think the fishermen wanted to follow Jesus?
- What does this story tell us about him?
- What questions would you like to ask the other fishermen?

15

CREATIVE RESPONSE

You will need: digital cameras; laptop and projector; selection of costumes and props

Invite the children to work together in small groups to create a freeze frame of one scene from the story that particularly interests them. Encourage them to think about the emotions and feelings the people they are portraying might have been experiencing and how they can best demonstrate these. Following safe practices, take photos of the freeze frames before gathering the children together to show them each scene in turn, using the projector. Talk to them about the characters in each picture and what they notice. How does this help them to better understand the story?

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PRAYER

You will need: small fish shapes cut out of card; paper clips; magnetic fishing rods from a fishing game; pencils

Give each child a few card fish and ask them to write their own name on one, and the names of some of their friends and family members on the others. Put a paper clip on each fish.

Gather the fish together in the centre of the group and take turns to 'go fishing' with the magnetic rods. Ask each child to hold their fish out in their hands as you pray together for the names written on each of the fish. Pray for any specific needs as well as asking Jesus to reveal himself to each of these people, just as he did to the fishermen.

Ask the children to take their card fish away with them and continue to pray for those people in the next week.

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