



SESSION 1 of 4

# The pearl

## MEETING AIM

To encourage the children to think about 'counting the cost' of following Jesus, but also to reflect on the treasures they receive from him.

## BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 13:45-46.

## BACKGROUND

As followers of Jesus, we are called to count the cost. However much we value the things we give up, they offer no comparison to the riches of knowing Jesus and his salvation. This session is designed to help us explore the cost of following Jesus and the treasures we gain through doing so. Help the children explore the preciousness of the kingdom of heaven.

## 5 CIRCLE TIME

As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and share out any refreshments you have brought. Ask the group about their week, celebrating their triumphs and sitting with them in their disappointments. Chat about the funniest moment of their week, and share one from yours if appropriate.

## 10 INTRO ACTIVITY

**You will need:** two shopping baskets or trolleys; different items (or pictures of larger or more expensive items) with a range of values

Before the session, spread your items around the room. Try to have some cumbersome items (such as large inflatables) as well as smaller items to make the basket or trolley slightly more difficult to carry or steer!

Divide into teams and give each team a shopping basket or trolley. Point out all the items around the room, but don't give any indication as to the value of the items.

Give each team one minute (or more if necessary) to go around the room and put as many items as they can in their basket or trolley.

When they have filled their trolley they must work as a team to line up the items up in order on the floor from the cheapest to the most expensive. When they are happy with their order, discuss as a whole group the values of the items and the order they've lined them up in. Some might surprise them.

## 10 BIBLE STORY

**You will need:** a pearl necklace (or a picture of one); a mallet or auctioneer's gavel; a wig; ten wrapped sweets per child; larger sweets, eg a box of chocolates, a bag of lollies, a chocolate bar or a bag of marshmallows

Show the group the pearl necklace (or the picture) and explain that pearls are made in shells in the sea and are very precious. They can cost thousands of pounds and are considered real treasures.

Read Matthew 13:45-46 aloud to the group. Give everyone ten wrapped sweets to use as their currency. Explain that they can choose to keep their sweets or spend them in an auction to bid for something larger.

Display the larger sweets at the front. Choose a child from the group who is confident to be the auctioneer, and give them the gavel and wig. Explain how an auction works to those who are unsure. They must bid (using the currency they have) on each item, and the highest bidder wins the prize.

Auction off the larger sweets one at a time, with the auctioneer enthusiastically describing each item. Children can use their sweets to pay for the larger sweets, though some may choose to keep their ten sweets and not bid for anything larger.

Wonder together about the similarities and differences between the story Jesus told and how they acted in the auction. Did they want something more? Something bigger? Were they prepared to exchange everything they had to get something they thought was better?

If you don't want to use sweets, you could use fruit. Start with ten grapes or blueberries and have a punnet of strawberries, a large apple, a banana or even a melon as the largest prize!

## 10 CHATTING TOGETHER

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to contribute (if you have lots of children, split into smaller groups to give everyone a chance to speak):

- Was the man in the story right to swap everything he had for the pearl? Why / why not?
- Was the seller right to sell the pearl to the man? Why / why not?

- What do you think the man did after buying the pearl?
- Why do you think Jesus says this is like the kingdom of heaven?
- In what ways does it sometimes feel like we are giving up our own precious things to follow Jesus?
- By "selling everything we have", what is the treasure that we gain?

## 10 CREATIVE RESPONSE

**You will need:** two shopping baskets or trolleys from 'Intro activity'; £10 notes from a game such as Monopoly; pens; pictures of a treasure chest; reflective music and the means to play it

Play some gentle background music. Place the two shopping baskets or trolleys in the middle of the room and put the pictures of a treasure chest in one. Give each child a fake £10 note and a pen. Invite them to write or draw on the note something they might want to 'sell' or give up to follow Jesus. Give them a few moments to do this and then invite them to place their note inside the empty basket or trolley.

When they have done so they can take a treasure chest out of the other and write on it some of the treasures they have received from God by following him. This could be something practical such as community or friends, or something more eternal, such as being Jesus' friend or eternal life. They can keep this and take it home as a reminder of the kingdom of heaven.

## 5 PRAYER

**You will need:** reflective music and the means to play it; treasure chests from 'Creative response'

Continue playing the reflective background music and invite the children to hold their treasure chest in their hands. Encourage the groups to pray aloud, one at a time, thanking God for the treasures he has given them.

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For the rest of this month's sessions go to [youthandchildrens.work/together](http://youthandchildrens.work/together).