



All about church

MEETING AIM

To take inspiration from Jesus for our churches today.

BIBLE PASSAGE

Mark 3:13-19

BACKGROUND

This might not be the most obvious passage to talk about church, but it reveals some fundamental pointers for our churches today. Jesus gathers a community around him – he chooses twelve and empowers them to go out into the world to preach and give freedom. None of us are in our congregations by chance - we are chosen and empowered to go out into our communities to tell the good news of Jesus. We are not meant to be inward-looking, but active in our neighbourhoods.

SIGNING IN

5 MINS

As people join your service, welcome them and ask them about their week.

WELCOME

5 MINS

OPTION ONE: Great groups

You will need: volunteers to share their stories

Before the service, invite two or three people to share the story of a group they are involved in. It could be a bowls club, a theatre company or a book group. In the service, ask them why they like about being part of their group. How do they attract new members?

OPTION TWO: Fantasy teams

Ask each household to come up with their fantasy sports team. They can choose whatever team sport they like and put together the best team they can think of to compete. They can choose athletes from different countries and times of history to create their team. Link together single-person households via WhatsApp or similar.

Ask for some volunteers to share their teams and explain their decisions.

BIBLE STORY

10 MINS

You will need: Bible; two large sheets of paper headed "CHOSEN" and "TASKS"; marker pen

Stick the two sheets of paper up behind you, so that they are visible on your camera. Read the Bible passage out and ask the congregation to imagine that they are there on that mountainside with Jesus. Ask them to think about how they might have felt.

Chat about the story, highlighting that:

- Jesus chose people to be part of the community around them. Write "The people he wanted" under "CHOSEN".
- He gave them instructions and power to go out and tell others about him. Write "Go and preach" under "TASKS".
- He gave them the power to drive out demons. You might not drive many demons out today, but Jesus offers that same freedom from other forms of oppression, and church should offer that freedom to others. Write "Bring Jesus' freedom to people" under "TASKS".
- Explain that Jesus' group of twelve includes people from lots of different backgrounds – fishermen, a tax collector, a rebel. Write the disciples names under "CHOSEN".
- Comment that we know lots of things about some of these chosen people, but nothing about others. Sometimes people make a real difference in church, but their efforts are not well known to outsiders. Yet their work is as important as those who are more visible.

Although there are no women mentioned here, women did form part of his community – you might want to read Luke 8:1-3. These women had found Jesus' freedom and were helping to spread the good news.

SMALL GROUPS

10 MINS

If your software allows, send everyone off into different breakout rooms made up of a few households. Put these questions into each group's chat box:

- How would it feel to be chosen by Jesus?
- How did Jesus' group feel to be sent out to preach and bring freedom?
- What impact does this story have on your own church community?
- What impact does this story have on your own role in church?

Give the groups time to chat about these questions, referring to the Bible passage in they need to.

If you can't put people into breakout rooms, ask individual households to discuss them, and link up those who live on their own using another messaging or video calling app.

REVIEW

5 MINS

Get feedback from 'Small groups', encouraging everyone to take part if they want to.

RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

10 MINS

Invite people to do one of these activities in response:

OPTION ONE: Ministry brainstorm

You will need: large sheet of paper and marker pen (or whiteboard facility on Zoom)

Ask one or two people to lead a discussion about what you can do as a church community to do what Jesus commands – preach the good news and offer freedom. They should write suggestions down on the paper or online whiteboard. Make sure these suggestions go to the church leadership for consideration and action.

OPTION TWO: Get to know Jesus

If people haven't yet met Jesus, invite them to join a discussion to hear more about him and the freedom he brings. Ask a couple of people to lead this discussion; you might want to invite a someone to tell their story about becoming a Christian. Try to make it a place where people feel they can ask any questions they have.

OPTION THREE: Creative response

You will need: art materials

Invite people to create a piece of artwork that represents their response to today's story. (If people don't have access to art materials, you might want to deliver some before the service.) Encourage them to chat as they create, to facilitate more reflection on what God is saying to them.

CLOSING

5 MINS

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone would like to share anything from the response time. Thank everyone for taking part and say an appropriate blessing to close the service.

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