**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 3 of 4

# On the beach

### MEETING AIM

To help the children understand that Jesus is with them throughout their whole days and nights, just as he appeared to the disciples at breakfast, and to discover what difference this makes.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 21:1-19

### 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 situation.

We all have good days and bad days. Sometimes our days can have trickier moments. Knowing the presence of Jesus in these moments is vital to grow our faith and our dependence on him. This session allows the children the space to think through their daily lives and invite Jesus to be with them.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments. Chat about the last time the children had a barbecue. What is their favourite food cooked on a barbecue? What’s the most unusual thing the group has had that has been barbecued?

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** four children’s fishing nets; two bags full of ‘fish’ (plastic balls, screwed-up newspaper, balloons etc); two boxes

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team two fishing nets and a bag full of ‘fish’. Some of the team are throwers and some are catchers. When you shout ‘go’, the throwers launch the fish into the air and then catchers must catch as many as possible and deposit them into a box. The fish should not be removed from the box, but if the fish fall to the floor without being caught, the throwers can pick them up and throw them again. The team with the most fish in the box wins the game.

If you don’t have much space, put together a fish picture quiz. Find pictures of distinctive sea creatures, such as sharks, starfish and jellyfish, and challenge the children to name all the different fish.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** one washing-up bowl / large bucket per team; story fish (one set per team, see below); fishing rods (string with a magnet attached at the end, one per team); paperclips; laminator and pouches; Bibles

Before the session, make the story fish. Cut out fish shapes from coloured paper (use a different colour for each team) and write out fragments of the story on each one:

Fish 1: Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together. “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said: “We’ll go with you.”

Fish 2: So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Fish 3: Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realise that it was Jesus.

Fish 4: He called out to them: “Friends, haven’t you any fish?” “No,” they answered.

Fish 5: He said: “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

Fish 6: One of the disciples said to Peter: “It is the Lord!”

Fish 7: As soon as Simon Peter heard him say: “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment round him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about 100m.

Fish 8: When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them: “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.”

Fish 9: So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn.

Fish 10: Jesus said to them: “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him: “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord.

Fish 11: Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Laminate the fish and attach a paperclip to the mouth end of each one.

Split the children into teams and scatter the fish over the floor. Give the teams a fishing rod and challenge them to catch all their fish. They then have to put all the story fragments into the right order. Give out Bibles to help them do this.

Once they have finished, read out the story together.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* Why do you think the disciples didn’t recognise Jesus?
* How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus told them to try again on the right-hand side of the boat?
* What does this story show us about Jesus?
* What difference would it make to us to know and recognise that Jesus is with us at all times of day and night?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** wooden barbecue skewers; cubes of different fruit

Allow the children some time to respond to this story and the presence of Jesus in our everyday lives. Give out the skewers and invite each child to make their own fruit kebab. All the chunks can come from the same apple or banana – that’s OK!

Each cube of fruit represents a different section of their day (eg breakfast, go to school, playtime, lunchtime, come home, tea time, bedtime, night). Each time you add another layer, ask the children to think about what it would be like to have the presence of Jesus with them. What difference would it make?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** pens and paper

Invite the children to draw out a ‘daily planner’ with the same routine as above in two columns. On one side of the column, write the times of the day. Leave the second column blank. Allow the children to think through their days again and write a prayer for each time of the day. This could be a thanksgiving prayer, or if there are certain moments in the day that they find more difficult, they could ask Jesus to help them.

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