

MAY - JUL 2022



weekly@

LECTIONARY RESOURCE



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WELCOME

Welcome to our Weekly@ lectionary resource which has been created to support your children's ministry by providing ideas which sit along side the themes within the weekly gospel lectionary reading.

You will find that many of our suggested activities come with adaptations, which vary from age adaptations, to budget and even location adaptations, making sure you're fully equipped to be able to modify Weekly@ to suit your group context.

GUEST WRITER



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Sarah is passionate about children knowing Jesus for themselves. She is the founder of Adventures With Jesus seeking to equip children and their grown ups to explore faith and encounter Jesus in exciting, engaging ways. Sarah has over 20 years of experience working in churches, schools and summer camps, and is currently the Early Years Lead at Vinelife Church, Manchester. She is married with three children and loves running, gardening and baking brownies! You can subscribe to receive her inspiring emails [here](#).



We love seeing the way you use this resource so make sure to share with us on Facebook and tag us in @BDBEUpdates.

Aim: To know and experience that Jesus loves us and forgives us so we can follow him.

OVERVIEW

This passage takes place after Jesus has risen from the dead - it is the third time he appears to his friends. The disciples had gone back to their previous occupation of fishing, probably not expecting to see Jesus for breakfast that day. Despite being experienced fishermen, fishing through the night, Peter and the other disciples had caught nothing. They'd experienced this exact situation with Jesus providing their catch many years ago when they were first called to follow him (Luke 5:1-11). On that occasion they'd questioned him, but this time, it was a bit different! They instantly knew it was Jesus and perhaps they were reminded of their calling all those years ago. Jesus invites them to breakfast on the beach and recommissions them as his followers, especially Peter. He wanted them to know they were still his chosen friends, forgiven and loved, they were still his followers and still part of his wonderful plan for the world.

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for your constant love and forgiveness. We open up our hearts to receive your wonderful love and to experience your forgiveness and grace. Please show us what it means to follow you each day. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Bring some delicious breakfast foods like pastries, fruit, and yogurt, etc. to show to everyone. If you can, have these set up on a table, with a nice cloth and juice and cups and other things to make it look really special. Ask: 'Who likes breakfast? Would any one like to share this delicious breakfast with me today?' Invite a few people up to the front to enjoy some of the food together. Talk to those who have come forward, or encourage the whole congregation to talk in small groups, asking: 'Who would you like to have breakfast with? What would you eat?' Collect and share some of the different responses. Say it could be a famous person, a close family member you've not seen for a while, a best friend or someone from history. And describe what yummy food would be eaten too!

But I wonder if you would choose to have breakfast with someone who had upset you or let you down? Or what about someone who had betrayed you and turned their back on you when you were in need, someone who had rejected you? That breakfast would feel quite different...

You might remember that Jesus had been rejected by Peter. He had denied he knew him not once but three times. All the other disciples had run away when Jesus was arrested, leaving him on his own to face accusations, a trial and ultimately a lonely and painful death on the cross. Yet in today's Bible passage, Jesus sought Peter and the disciples out for breakfast on the beach! He showed them that no matter what they had done, he still wanted to be with them. He forgave them and he restored them. He also recommissioned them and said, 'follow me!' again, just like he'd done many years previously on another occasion of a miraculous catch of fish! (Luke 5:1-11)

Jesus is still the same today. He continually loves us, and he desires for us to be with him and know his love. His death and resurrection mean we can be forgiven, as all our mistakes and hurts are paid for. We just need to accept his invitation to be with him and to follow him, like the disciples did that morning on the beach. Will you have breakfast with Jesus today?

SONG

[WAY MAKER | Kids Worship Lyric Video - Christian Songs for Kids - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

In advance of your session, set out a rug with breakfast laid out on it. You can either use real (be mindful of any allergies) or pretend food. As they arrive, invite the children to join you and chat through some of these questions: I wonder what your favourite breakfast food is? Who would you like to have breakfast with? What's the strangest place you've ever had breakfast? Have you ever had breakfast on a beach? Today's story is about one morning when the disciples had breakfast on the beach with Jesus! I wonder what that would have been like...

DISCUSSION

Make sure the children know when this event took place and a few key details before telling the story: such as Jesus had died and risen from the dead. This was the third time he'd appeared to his disciples. Peter had let Jesus down badly on the night he was arrested.

Tell the story from John 21 in a fun, interactive way using the children as key characters and with some simple props such as a toy boat, paper/plastic fish, sand in a tray (you can use this sand for the response activity too) and play food. You could re-tell it in your own words or use the bible. Alternatively, you could watch the story on YouTube. Take a look at:

[Breakfast on the beach - A Resurrection Story of Jesus - YouTube](#)

OR

[Three Friends and the Miracle Man - Our 2019 Easter story for children - YouTube](#)

Ask: Does anyone at home ever ask you the same question over and over? Do you like it? Jesus had a long chat with Peter after their beach breakfast. I wonder why? What had happened? Why did Jesus ask him **THREE** times if he loved him? Explore how Peter had let Jesus down when he was arrested. He had denied that he knew him **THREE** times. Jesus was supposed to have been his best friend AND he'd already confidently proclaimed that he'd **NEVER EVER** let him down: check out John 13:37

However, now Jesus was giving Peter another chance! He was forgiving him and reminding him he was still his friend. And that he still had a plan and an important job for Peter to do: to look after his sheep, meaning to look after his people! He was trusting him again with a **BIG** job.

DISCUSSION CONT.

Wow - how do you think Peter must have felt before and after Jesus spoke to him? Explore these contrasting emotions together - you could encourage the children to make different facial expressions to match his feelings. Emphasise how Jesus restored Peter. Peter didn't need to stay feeling guilty or sorry for himself or like it was all over for him. He had a fresh start and I wonder if he felt excited about the future ahead of him...

Jesus is still the same today: he offers us his love and forgiveness; a fresh start when we mess up and he **ALWAYS** has BIG plans for us! I wonder if you knew that!

TAKE HOME

Invitations Chat about who the children might like to invite round for breakfast? Is there anyone that Jesus is showing them they could reach out to in friendship as a family? Provide the children with materials to be able to create an invitation for this person. You could offer a variety of different paper shapes for the children to choose from, such as fish or heart shapes. Remind them to include name, place, date and time and an RSVP option where the invitee can say if they have any allergies, etc. You may decide to make a template with these elements already laid out for younger children. Decorate the invitations with stickers and glitter pens, etc. Ask the children to pray for the person they would like to invite over!

RESPONSE

Sandy Prayers Provide a tray of sand. Invite the children to draw hearts and fish shapes in the sand whilst you chat about times when we may have let Jesus or others down. You could offer some scenarios to help the children think about the times this happened at home or at school, such as not telling the truth or being unkind to someone or ignoring a parent/carer. Remind the children that Jesus will always love us, and he wants to forgive us - just like he loved and forgave Peter. Pray for the children to receive this love and forgiveness by imagining you are with Jesus. Tell him about anything you are sorry for. You could imagine giving this to him. See his kind face as he looks at you. Hear him say he loves you and forgives you. Receive this like a present from him. Thank Jesus for being with you.

ACTIVITY

Follow the Leader Jesus told the disciples to follow him! Play fun follow the leader games. One person could be the 'leader' deciding on different ways to move around the room or space, such as hopping, tip-toeing, jumping or they could do different actions with their arms, hands or bodies. Everybody can either follow them in a long line or have the 'leader' at the front with everyone copying. Alternatively, sit everyone in a circle and take it in turns to copy one person: they could do simple actions or clap a rhythm to repeat back. Spot the children who are copying exactly and praise them for looking, listening, and following so carefully.

GAME

Catch of Fish Game Use lots of plastic fish and sea creatures or cut out simple fish shapes from paper. Split your group into teams and provide each with a net or bucket. Place the fish at one end of the room and teams with their net / bucket at the other. The children must take it in turns, as a relay, to collect a fish one at a time and bring it back to their net. Call out different swimming strokes for them to do the actions for, such as front crawl, breaststroke, butterfly, back stroke (go backwards). Ensure you demonstrate these beforehand, so they are familiar with the actions. Which is the first team to fill the net/boat with fish? Or who can get the most in 2 minutes. You could vary the game by having the teams standing in lines and they have to pass their sea creatures down the line into their net!

ALTERNATIVE

Provide the children with paper sheep shapes. Jesus requires us to give him our time, skills, talents, energy, money and passion to serve him. Ask the children to prayerfully write or draw things they could do to help care for Jesus' sheep (other people) on their paper sheep shape.

ALTERNATIVE

Give the children whiteboards (or laminated pieces of white paper) and whiteboard markers. Ask them to write or draw pictures that represent mistakes they've made. They can then use a cloth to wipe the board clean. We all make mistakes - but if we say sorry to God he will forgive us and help us make a fresh start.

ALTERNATIVE

Provide every child (or each team) with a fish shape cut out of paper and a rolled up newspaper. Challenge the children to 'flap' their fish using the newspaper from one end of the room to the other. They can compete as individuals or in teams as a relay to find a winner, or simply give each player a cheer when they pass the finish line.

1ST MAY 2022

BREAKFAST ON THE BEACH

JOHN 21: 1-19

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

There was a breakfast on the beach in today's bible passage. I wonder who you would like to have breakfast with and why?

What would breakfast with Jesus be like?

LET'S PRAY

Jesus always forgives and loves us. We can receive his love when we make mistakes and start again. Pass a cushion around your family and take it in turns to hug it. Tell each other that Jesus' love for them is like a great big hug! Pray together:

Thank you, Jesus, that even when we make mistakes or hurt you and others, you still love us and forgive us. Help us to feel your love now. Thank you that we receive forgiveness and a new start from you. Help us to stay close to you and follow you each day. Amen

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Aim: To learn that we belong to Jesus and so we can listen to him and learn to know his voice.

OVERVIEW

People were constantly asking Jesus questions. Some were genuinely curious and seeking to find out more about him. However, there were others who were trying to trick Jesus, or see if he would support their views and ideas. This was one of those occasions when people were hounding Jesus again. Despite the healing and kindness he'd demonstrated to many people, these questioners didn't really believe he was God's Son and were seeking to trip him up to make him prove himself. Jesus always remained calm and focused on God's plan in the face of such traps and queries. Who we say Jesus is, is one of the most important questions we need to deal with. We can look at his life, his words and his actions for these answers. Jesus is inviting us to listen to his voice and believe. Let's do that today!

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, that we belong to you and it's the safest place for us. Help us to tune into your voice, like the Wi-Fi connects or the TV tunes in... Please show us one thing we need to know about you today. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

As you're beginning your talk, arrange to be interrupted by someone most people know well, primed to call your name from across the room. Ask 'Did you hear something?' Then shrug and carry on talking only to be interrupted again! 'Is someone calling my name? Let's listen again - can you help me to listen?' The voice calls again more loudly! 'Oh yes - I can hear my name and I think I recognise that voice. It's ____! Please come and tell me your message.' When the person comes forward, get them to tell you something important that's relevant to your church or where you're going to have lunch or where to get a drink and biscuit later! 'I'm so glad I stopped to listen and heard that news! Phew. The more I listened, the clearer it was!'

Show the congregation some sea shells. Explain that they help you to think about listening because you have to stop and take notice when you listen. Demonstrate or invite a couple of volunteers forward to listen to the shell and to describe what they can hear. Encourage everyone to think about how well they stop and listen to others. When having a conversation with someone at home, work or school do we listen carefully or are we thinking about other things or planning what to say back when it's our turn to speak? Think about the voices you know really well... Often it is the voices we've stopped and listened to a lot. I wonder if we know Jesus' voice well? I wonder if we are ready to stop and listen to him when he speaks to us. And I wonder what he wants to show us... In today's passage Jesus said his sheep, his people, would listen to his voice (v27) and follow him.

Let's spend some time listening to Jesus today. He speaks in many different ways such as through pictures or movies in our minds, through the bible or thoughts, through feelings, colours, memories... Often it is the first thing that pops into our heads! We are all learning to recognise his voice and this is a safe place to practice. Encourage everyone to relax and get comfy. Invite the Holy spirit to be with you. Let's ask Jesus to show us one thing about us that he is excited about. Wait... Afterwards, thank Jesus for speaking. If you have time, you could ask a couple of people to share what they saw, heard or felt, or encourage them to tell a friend.

SONG

[Nothing Is Impossible](#) from Planetshakers Kids
OFFICIAL LYRIC VIDEO MOV - YouTube

SET THE SCENE

Play a game where the children have to collect as many sounds as possible that they can hear in your space. They can either do this on their own and write or draw them. Or listen together as a whole group and see how many you can find. Depending on your space you could set up things that make sounds and the children could go and find them like a sound treasure hunt. If this isn't possible, simply listen to the sounds that are naturally around your environment. Draw their attention to how they had to listen carefully to hear all these sounds.

DISCUSSION

Read today's bible passage and chat simply with the children about how Jesus promised that his sheep, which means his friends, would know his voice and would be close to him and God the Father. Nothing could take them away from him. That's good news, isn't it?

Jesus wants **us** to listen to him and he promised that we would know his voice! Hmm - I wonder what Jesus' voice sounds like? Spend time wondering with the children. Jesus is always loving and kind, so what he says will be too. He speaks to us in many ways (you could hold these up written on speech bubbles), such as through pictures or movies in our heads, thoughts, through the bible, feelings, memories, colours and through other people. Let's have a go at listening to Jesus now. We can ask him to show us more about his love...

This is called an Adventure Time ([Adventure Times - Adventures with Jesus](#)) where we use our imagination for good to meet with Jesus. Let's get comfy. You could provide rugs for the children to lie on and be in their own space and you could play some quiet music. Keep it light and fun but be expectant!

Pray slowly with pauses:

Thank you, Jesus, that you love us and want us to recognise your voice.

Thank you, Holy Spirit, that you are here with us now and we can see, hear and feel you.

In Ephesians 3:18 it says: May you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is.

DISCUSSION CONT.

Imagine you are in your favourite place, where you feel so safe and happy. What can you see, hear or sense around you? Then, Jesus comes to find you! He loves to be with you so much. He says he wants to show you how big his love is for you... Can you see his love? What is it like? How high, wide, deep or long is it? What is Jesus saying about his love for you? Ask him to show you more... How do you feel? Spend time receiving and exploring God's great, big, wonderful love for you... Wait...

Who would like to share their Adventure Time. Tell us about it... Validate all responses and celebrate all progress. Afterwards, you may like to encourage the children to draw or write about what Jesus showed them.

TAKE HOME

Listening Ears Provide the children with the materials they need to be able to create a 'Listening Ears' head band - (87). [Pinterest](#). Cut out the ears and long strips of paper that will fit around the children's heads. Encourage the children to decorate their ears / headbands first before sticking everything together. If you have older children, they might prefer to design their own 'I can listen to Jesus' headphones using card circles for the speaker cups and strips of card, pipe cleaners, string or ribbon to attach them together. They can decorate their headphones with some of the things they've learnt or experienced today. Invite the children to take their creations home as a reminder to listen to Jesus so we can get to know his voice.

RESPONSE

Close to Jesus Experiment with magnets and show how they stick together or can attract some metals to them. When we are friends with Jesus, it's like we are stuck close to him, like these magnets. We can be with him forever! Chat about some of the ways that we can be close to Jesus, during our day such as by praying, thinking about him, reading our bibles, remembering who he is and that he is with us, being thankful, helping others. Invite the children to share their ideas too. Be reminded that Jesus loves us, and will care for us, so when we give our hearts to him we know that we are safe and nothing can snatch us away from him, but we must listen and follow his instructions.

ACTIVITY

Super Shells Provide a range of seashells for the children to listen to, explore and chat about. Encourage wonder and awe and give them time to share how they feel or what memories they bring up. Discuss what the children can hear when they listen carefully to the shells and reinforce the aim of the session about listening to Jesus. Allow them to use stickers and permanent markers to decorate their own shell to take home or use for a display in your group's space. They could write 'I can listen to Jesus' or 'I know God's voice' or other key declarations or bible verses such as John 10:27 from the session on their shell if they wish to.

GAME

What is it? Bring a selection of items that make a noise, such as musical instruments, keys, rice/pasta in a pot, crinkly paper/foil and so on. Place these items in numbered boxes or small bags around the room for the children to go round on their own or in pairs to listen to the sounds in each box and write down what they think they are on paper. After the children have listened to each item, bring everyone back together to share their guesses and reveal the objects. Point out that the children needed to listen carefully to help them identify the sounds and decide what each object was.

ALTERNATIVE

Draw and cut out a giant hand shape using paper. Ask everyone to write or draw things on the hand shape that they would like to place in Jesus' care, e.g. people or situations. Once everyone is done, fold the fingers and thumb into the palm to symbolise placing the things in God's hands.

ALTERNATIVE

On thin strips of paper, write down things that help us to listen to God, e.g. having some quiet time when we pray / reading the bible regularly. Roll the paper up tightly and add a dab of glue on the end to stick it down so it becomes compact like a bead. Put the paper beads inside a container with a lid in order to make a percussion shaker.

ALTERNATIVE

Create an obstacle course using chairs, hula hoops, cones, etc. Attach a jingle bell to each obstacle. The children must work in pairs to navigate the course; one child is blindfolded, and the other must guide them by ringing the bells on the obstacles one by one. Everyone will need to be quiet in order to allow people to listen. Did they find it easy or hard to listen and follow?

8TH MAY 2022

LISTENING TO THE SON OF GOD

JOHN 10: 22-30

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Jesus said his friends would listen to him. In what ways has Jesus spoken to you?

Do we find it easy to listen to Jesus? I wonder what gets in the way. I wonder what would help us.

LET'S PRAY

As a family, play a game where you play some movie sound clips that are likely to be familiar and everyone has to try and guess who is speaking. Whose else's voices do we know straightaway without having to see their face? Why do we know them? They are familiar to us because we've heard them many times. Jesus wants his voice to be familiar to us too! We can learn to listen to him. Pray together:

Thank you, Jesus, that you speak to us. Help us to listen to you and for your voice to become more familiar. Show us one thing you love about us now! Amen

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Aim: To discover Jesus' commandment to love others as he loves us.

OVERVIEW

The context of today's passage is when Jesus was spending a last meal with his disciples before he was arrested, put on trial, and then crucified. Therefore, these are some of Jesus' last words to his friends and they are very important! Jesus was wanting to communicate key truths of his kingdom to help the disciples in the coming difficult days, to enable them to stay true to him and follow him. One of these key truths was this new commandment. Commandments are important as they provide clear ways to live out a message. Jesus says this is a new commandment: it is not new in commanding us to love, but it IS new in commanding us to love like Jesus loves. Jesus was the embodiment of God in human flesh - he came to show us the Father, to show us who he truly is, to show us how to truly live and love.

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, that you love us so wonderfully and that your love enables us to love others. Help us to receive your love now. Give us the power to follow your incredible example and show us who we can love today. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Before the service, devise an 'Old and New' quiz which you will use to introduce today's Bible passage. For example: The congregation can come up with matching pairs of one thing old and one thing new for different categories, such as cars, toys, clothes, communication, music. **Or** you could name some Bible characters and the congregation must sort them into who is in the Old and who is in the New Testament. **Or** challenge everyone to come up with as many words as possible that mean the same as Old and New (synonyms).

After the quiz, introduce the NEW commandment that Jesus was giving his followers in today's Bible passage, which was some of his last words to them. The OLD commandment was 'Love your neighbour as yourself' (Lev 19:18) but Jesus' NEW commandment was to love others as he loves us. What's the difference? Our love can waver, we can struggle to love ourselves, we can depend on our feelings or in our own strength...

So, how does Jesus love us? Collect ideas from the congregation. Highlight how incredibly Jesus loves us with different examples: sacrificially, patiently, graciously, kindly, powerfully... If you can, invite a couple members of the congregation (make sure you check this is ok beforehand) to share short testimonies of the way Jesus has loved them, how this has impacted their lives and the way they love and reach out to others. Their love for others was dependent on Jesus' love for them.

Jesus says we can do the same as him! That we can love others how he has loved us. This may sound impossible, and it probably is! However, if Jesus said it then he will enable us to do it! We can be like Jesus to others. We can love like he does with the power of the Holy Spirit. And the wonderful promise is that people will know we follow him, when we love like he does. End by inviting people to thank each other for the way they've loved them, or you could invite generations to pray for each other to know Jesus' love and to love like he does in all the different places they go.

SONG

[Love the Lord | Kids Worship Motions with Lyrics | CJ and Friends - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

Have some silly rules written on pieces of paper and hide them around the room for the children to find. Some suggestions: Always say hello three times when you meet someone, you must eat exactly 300 Cheerios for breakfast, you must stand on one leg to brush your teeth, don't forget to blink four times whenever you say yes! Once the children have found them all, read them out and chat together about the difference between silly instructions and important rules and commandments. Today we are learning about one of Jesus' rules or commandments that he told his disciples.

DISCUSSION

Begin by having a special Circle or Chat time. Pass around an object, for example a heart shaped cushion. The children can talk when they are holding it and should listen carefully when they aren't holding it. (Remember how much we learnt about listening during last week's session?) Invite each child to share the name of one of their friends and what they really like to do together or talk about... Make the point that what our friends say and do is important to us, isn't it?

In today's Bible passage, Jesus was having a last meal with his best friends. This was before he was going to be arrested and die on the cross. Do you think these last words and instructions from Jesus to his followers would be super important? Hmm, I wonder...

To look at the bible passage, sit around like you're having a meal together (or incorporate into a snack time if you have one). One leader can be Jesus, welcoming all the disciples by name and giving each of them a name sticker and paper plate, showing them where to sit and telling them it's their last meal together. You could ask someone to be Judas and creep out, then Jesus says the important words in John 13:33-35 and tells them some of the many ways he's loved them.

How has Jesus loved us? Chat with the children about this and remind each other of the many ways he loves us. How can we love others in this way? Help the children to see that Jesus came to LOVE. This is his number one aim!

DISCUSSION CONT.

Write LOVE ONE ANOTHER on a big piece of paper and come up with lots of ideas of ways to love others in the coming week. Help the children to think and chat in pairs if that helps. Be practical and intentional! Such as: I will forgive my brother, I will be patient with _____, I will help my mum when she_____, I will pray for _____. Write your ideas on the big piece of paper.

Give time next week to revisit this and share how you got on! Celebrate all progress!

TAKE HOME

On my Heart Give each child a heart shape cut out of card or purchase wooden ones. [Heart Wooden Decorations - Baker Ross](#) Chat about what it means to be Jesus' friend: How he loves us... cares... listens... helps... forgives... Help the group to consider the ways Jesus loves us. Invite them to decorate one side of their heart shape with them and Jesus as friends and any illustrations/words to remind them of this. On the other side think about **who** they can love in the way Jesus loves us: how they can care, listen, help, forgive. They could draw them or write their name. Thread the hearts onto some ribbon so the children can hang them up at home and pray for their friend every time they see it!

RESPONSE

Who is on Jesus' heart? Help the children to ask Jesus to show them someone he wants them to love, saying: 'Dear Jesus, thank you for loving me. Thank you that I am always on your heart. Show me someone else on your heart who I can pray for and love. Amen' Invite the children to pray and then be aware of the first person that pops into their head. It might be their name that they think of, or they might imagine being with someone or just start thinking of them. Give each child a small card circle for them to draw that person on. Stick them all onto large piece of paper for everyone to see. Pray for these people together. Say their names out loud. Pray for help and ideas and strength to love them like Jesus loves us.

ACTIVITY

Jesus Loves Me Wheel Give each child a card circle shape or use the paper plates from the Discussion section. Depending on their age, draw straight lines on the circles to split them into 4, 6 or 8 segments (have more sections for older children). Ask the children to draw/write on the different sections either aspects of their day, (sleeping, eating breakfast, going to school, having lunch and so on) or they could choose different feelings and emotions to illustrate, (happy, sad, afraid, worried, peaceful, lonely). Give each child a card arrow shape that is either pre-labelled with 'Jesus loves me' or they can write it on. Attach the long end of the arrow with a split pin to the middle of the card circle/plate. Spin the arrow to see that Jesus loves us all the time!

GAME

Memory Verse Game Divide the children into teams. Have John 13:34 written or printed out on different coloured card and cut it up to separate the words. Use a different colour card for each team. Hide or stick the words up around the room for the teams to find. They need to collect them all and put the verse in the correct order together. Give praise for teamwork! Then allow the teams five minutes to devise some actions to go with the words to help them learn the verse, or they can create a rap or song instead. Can each team say the verse to the rest of the group from memory? You could do this last part at different times during your session to see if they can remember it.

ALTERNATIVE

Provide the children with some different scenarios and ask them for suggestions of how they might show love in that situation. Examples include: someone in their class is often left out and doesn't appear to have any friends / an elderly person is struggling with their shopping in the supermarket, etc.

ALTERNATIVE

Using air drying clay / salt dough, make circular discs with a small hole at the top for the children to place a ribbon through once dry. Ask the children to make a heart shape in the clay/dough using their thumb print. See here for an example: [\(87\) Pinterest](#) Suggest the children give their decorations away to someone they love!

ALTERNATIVE

Instead of playing the pencil and paper game, noughts and crosses, split into pairs and play hearts and crosses. The player who succeeds in placing three of their marks in a horizontal, vertical, or diagonal row wins the game. You could perhaps organise this so everyone plays in a knock-out style tournament in order to narrow it down to an individual winner.

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Jesus came to LOVE. Can we think of three ways that Jesus loves us?

Who could we love this week as a family? What shall we do for them?

LET'S PRAY

As a family, notice all the things you do for each other this week. Be thankful for how you are loved by your family. Each day seek to say thank you at mealtime or bedtime for two things. Have a think and each choose something you are thankful for, to do for someone else to share God's love. Each time you say thanks, you could say this prayer together:

Thank you, Jesus, for your incredible love. Help us to receive it now in our minds, hearts, and bodies. We pray you would give us strength to love others the way you love us. Amen

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

Jesus came to LOVE. Can we think of three ways that Jesus loves us?

Who could we love this week as a family? What shall we do for them?

LET'S PRAY

As a family, notice all the things you do for each other this week. Be thankful for how you are loved by your family. Each day seek to say thank you at mealtime or bedtime for two things. Have a think and each choose something you are thankful for, to do for someone else to share God's love. Each time you say thanks, you could say this prayer together:

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Aim: To learn and experience that God's kingdom is one of peace, of our hearts and minds.

OVERVIEW

Jesus lived in a nation that was occupied by another ruling force from overseas, the Romans. Many of the Jewish people wondered if Jesus had come to overthrow the Romans, so they would no longer be ruling over them and they'd be free. There are many different occasions of Jesus being asked questions about this, however, Jesus was continually revealing that God's kingdom is completely different to the kingdoms of the world. In today's passage Jesus shows that his kingdom: Father, Son and Spirit work beautifully together. They are continually loving, honouring and deferring to each other. They are the perfect team, the perfect family. Jesus is revealing that God's Kingdom is one of peace! And that this peace is also different to the world's peace. It is not just freedom from another ruling faction or lack of war, it is ultimate inner peace, and an invitation to be part of the Kingdom of God's Peace.

PRAYER

Thank you, Father, Jesus, and Holy Spirit that you give us peace! We receive this into our busy lives, minds, and feelings now. Help us to be your people of peace, sharing this with the world around us! Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Begin your talk by setting up a game where you invite two players to represent two sides of the congregation that are vying against each other to win. Give each player something distinctive to wear to differentiate the teams, for example one could have a blue hat and the other a red hat. Split the church in half to cheer for each team: this side for the Blues (let's hear you cheer!) and this side for the Reds (can you cheer louder?!) Create an atmosphere of fun competitiveness! The game itself could be a simple scavenger hunt where the players must find things around your space as quickly as possible. Send them off to find one thing at a time and encourage everyone to make noise to support their team! The team that brings each item (suggestions include a left shoe, a watch, two different things matching the colour of your team, a purse, a baby or small child (with parental permission of course!), a cross/bible and so on) to the front first gets a point. Make it fun and have someone keeping score so you can celebrate the winner. Once the game is over, cheer and thank both teams!

In our game just now, each team was vying against each other in a fun way. However, both in Jesus' time and in our world today, there are lots of groups of people and countries who disagree with each other, put each other down, try to outdo each other and are even fighting with each other. In Jesus' time it was the Romans and the Jewish people. Can you think of any examples now?

But God's kingdom is totally different to this! Invite volunteers to hold up 3 signs that say, 'Father God', 'Jesus', 'Holy Spirit'. Show that when these pieces are put together, they make a heart shape. Quickly stick the heart shape together with tape and then turn it round to reveal the word 'PEACE' written on the back! In John 14:27 Jesus says, "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid". Jesus promised his followers a gift of peace of mind and heart, completely different to the world's version. What does this PEACE mean for us today? You may like to end with a prayer for us to receive Jesus' gift of peace and to be peacemakers in the different places we go to.

SONG

[Rend Co. Kids - My Lighthouse \(Hand Motions\)](#)
(Official Music Video) - YouTube

SET THE SCENE

As the children arrive, be very busy and distracted trying to get everything ready for the session - moving things around, forgetting things, tripping up, getting stressed, losing things, trying to be ready... Eventually, make a big deal of stopping and focusing on the children as you go to sit with them. Hmm, I was really worrying and fretting then, wasn't I? I wonder if there was something I could have done differently? What do you think? Invite responses from the children and ask them what they do when they feel rushed or stressed or too busy.

DISCUSSION

Show a wrapped present to the children and be excited about it! Let them guess what they think might be inside it. Explain that today's bible reading is about Jesus giving his disciples a gift. Ask: What do we do with a gift? We have to receive it! Demonstrate the action of receiving by offering the gift to someone. They can choose to receive it and open it and share the contents with everyone: it could be today's snack or a treat for each child, for example a pen/pencil. Read John 14:27 out to the children. What gift was Jesus giving his friends? Yes, a gift of peace! Did you know that Father God, Jesus and Holy Spirit want us to have this peace gift too! All we have to do is say 'yes please' and receive it from him!

I wonder what Jesus' peace is like? Invite responses from the children. You could briefly share the story of the calming of the storm from Luke 8:22-25 with the children. Read it from a good children's story bible or use this short video: [Jesus Calms the Storm - YouTube](#) Afterwards draw their attention to the way Jesus had peace during the storm - he was actually sleeping through the crazy storm! And because he was peaceful, he didn't panic or fret when he awoke - he knew what to do when he saw the wind and waves. He was able to speak peace to the storm because he himself was full of peace! WOW!

This is the same peace that Jesus offers to us. Who would like to say YES PLEASE to Jesus' gift of peace now? Have a simple [Adventure Time](#) with the children, where they use their imaginations to be with Jesus. Encourage them to get comfortable, close their eyes and they may like to sit with their hands out like they are receiving a gift. Invite Holy Spirit to be with you. Speak slowly with lot of pauses.

DISCUSSION CONT.

'Imagine Jesus is sitting with you, and he gives you a gift of peace... What does it look like? Do you say YES PLEASE, receive it and open it? ... What's inside? What is Jesus saying or doing? How do you feel now? ... Is there anything you want to tell Jesus? Spend time with him.' Let the children be with Jesus. Keep it light and fun and encourage them to share what they saw, heard, or sensed. Validate all responses. If you have time, the children could write or draw about their Adventure Time.

TAKE HOME

Wrapping Paper of Peace

Examine some pieces of patterned wrapping paper together and chat with the children about the repeating designs. Which do they like best and why? Provide the children with some large sheets of paper or have rolls of paper so they can create long strips. Help the children to come up with their own design for 'wrapping paper of peace'. It could be a repeating pattern with the word peace (or any words from the Activity) or some symbols or pictures that represent peace. Remind the children that peace is a gift from Jesus that we can receive. Encourage the children to use their wrapping paper this week to wrap something up to bless someone else.

RESPONSE

Stop/Go Activation Instruct the children that when you shout GO, they can jump/hop/tiptoe around the room. When you shout STOP everyone should find a partner. They can tell each other, 'When you're troubled or afraid, Jesus gives you peace'. You can make it simpler for younger ones who can say, 'Peace to you!' Play several times using different ways to move around each time, or with someone different calling out STOP and GO. See if everyone in the group can pair up to exchange this special message. If there is time, interview the children, asking 'Did you receive Jesus' peace?' Can they describe how it felt to receive peace? How did it feel to share Jesus' peace? Make sure the leaders share their own experiences too.

ACTIVITY

Spell It Out! Put your group into teams and provide each with a large piece of paper and some felt tip pens. Ask each team to write the word PEACE on their piece of paper. Using each letter in PEACE the teams must think of as many words/phrases as possible in 5 minutes that describe God, e.g. Powerful, Everlasting, Amazing, Close to us, Everywhere.... They can write their ideas around each letter or as a list on their paper. Allocate leaders to help and encourage the teams. Set a five-minute timer, put on some lively music and have a dramatic count down for the last ten seconds! Once the time is up, ask the teams to share their words with each other. Be ready to lead into a praise or prayer time, depending on what comes up. Are there any key words / themes about God that were repeated?

GAME

True or False Run-around Make up scenarios when you might feel peace and ask the children to respond by running to one end of the room for TRUE or the other end for FALSE. Explain that there are no right or wrong answers. Suggested scenarios include I can feel peace when it's noisy at school. I will know peace when my friend argued with me, I can feel peace when everyone is cross, I can know peace when I'm scared, I can have peace when I'm worried about a maths test, I can know peace when I'm safe with mum/dad, when I pray, think of others first, read my bible... Have fun and be ready to chat or pray about any scenarios when the children need to receive Jesus' peace. If you have very young children you could help them to experience peace by playing sleeping lions for a few minutes!

ALTERNATIVE

Show the children different images that reflect some of the meanings of the word 'Parakletos' (Counsellor, Advocate, Comforter, Helper).

Explain that these are all words that are used to describe the Holy Spirit. Ask the children to say which characteristic(s) of the Holy Spirit they need in their life right now.

ALTERNATIVE

Pick an activity that the children may not have done before, e.g. cross stitch or knot tying, etc. Provide instructions that guide the children through the activity in order to succeed. The Holy Spirit can provide us with guidance as we navigate through the challenges that life presents us with.

ALTERNATIVE

You will need a comforter for each team, e.g. a teddy bear or small blanket. Divide the children into teams and hold a relay where they have to pass the comforter to each other like a baton. During the game only one team member had the comforter at a time, however the Holy Spirit is with EVERYBODY always. We can always count on the Holy Spirit being there to comfort us and bring peace in our times of need.

22ND MAY 2022

THE GIFT OF PEACE

JOHN 14:23-29

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

What does 'peace' mean to each member of your family?

How can we give Jesus' peace to others? How can we be peacemakers?

LET'S PRAY

Even when life is super busy, we can have peace inside our minds, emotions and hearts. It is a gift from Jesus. All we need to do is receive it. Take a feather or a piece of tissue paper and blow it up in the air. Watch it gently float down and think about the peace we receive from Jesus. After a few moments of stillness, say the prayer together:

Thank you, Jesus, for the gift of peace you have for us. Help us to receive it now from you. Even when times are busy or noisy or uncertain, we know your peace is secure and we can live in peace with you. Amen

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Aim: To become stronger in the love of Christ, growing more deeply connected to him and each other.

OVERVIEW

Today's passage is part of Jesus' final instructions and encouragement to his disciples before he was arrested. Someone's final words are very important! John, the author of this gospel, was actually there, seeking to grasp and understand the Lord's message. Jesus sought to help the disciples understand who he really was; God's Son, what he had come to do; to die for everyone, where he was going; back to the Father and who was going to be helping them from now on; the Holy Spirit. Today's verses are part of his prayer for all of his followers, including us today. Jesus' heart is that all of his believers would be one, just as he and Father God are one! He offers us a glimpse into the depth of love, connection, and intimacy between the Godhead, which incredibly is available to us too! We can be in unity, deeply connected to him and to each other.

PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for praying for us. Thank you that your heart is for us to be deeply connected to you, Father God, and Holy Spirit and also to each other. Strengthen the bonds of love between us, so we can be one in you and show the world who you really are. Amen

ALL AGE TALK

Open your talk by demonstrating being stronger when we work together. For example, play a 'tug of war' game with two teams on either side of a long rope. Plan it so that one of the teams is in disarray, pulling in different directions to each other and arguing while the other team is unified, and all pulls together in the same direction and of course wins. Which team did the best? I wonder why they were more successful.

Hold up, or display on a screen, the word UNITY. The winning team worked in unity. They were connected and pulling in the same direction and so they were much, much, stronger! Did you know that nearly 2000 years ago, before he died on the cross, Jesus actually prayed for us? Yes, he prayed for you and me! And his prayer was that we would be one, that we would be in UNITY. Turn your UNITY sign around or have other words pop up on your screen with a few synonyms for unity, such as ONE, HARMONY, SOLIDARITY, DEEPLY CONNECTED... Invite the congregation to add their ideas for other words to it!

We might look at our world and our lives and think that being one seems impossible. But if Jesus prayed that we can be one with each other then it is possible with his help! Remember Luke 1:37 which says, 'For no word from God will ever fail!' I wonder how we can be more unified and more deeply connected today...

PRAY: You could suggest some places that are relevant to the different life stages in your congregation to speak UNITY into together, such as in schools, work places, government, local council, health, law...

You could do this in a call and response way where everyone prays the same prayer together from the screen: 'Thank you for _____. We pray for your people in these places. We speak unity and love. We release your presence. May we be deeply connected to pray together...' **Or** invite those who work in/go to these places to stand whilst you pray for them. Remember we are much stronger when we love, pray and work together!

SONG

[My Best Friend \(Lyric Video\) - Hillsong Kids - YouTube](#)

SET THE SCENE

As the children arrive have two piles of bricks on the table or floor where you're sitting: one pile should be wooden bricks and the other a Lego style brick that sticks together. Hmm, I wonder which of these bricks are better for building with? Which would make a stronger structure? Encourage the children to experiment in groups or pairs and decide which are best. Tell them you will test out their structures! As you do this, highlight to the children how the Lego style bricks stick together much better. They are much stronger and can withstand more.

DISCUSSION

Following on from the activity in 'Set the Scene' show three of the Lego style bricks that stick together. Attach a label to each: Father God, Jesus, Holy Spirit. Jesus said that he and the Father are one and that he would send the Holy Spirit to help us. Chat about the Godhead: Father, Son and Spirit are deeply connected to each other - stick the three bricks together as you chat and show them connected and strong. Then add more bricks on to this Godhead structure. Attach labels to these bricks that have the children's names written on them. Jesus prayed that we would be part of his awesome God team and that we would be deeply connected, or ONE, with him! Show your extended Lego structure. Wow - look how close we can be. Look how much stronger we are when we are together. I wonder what amazing things we can do together...

Ask the children: 'What happens if two of us don't get on, or say unkind things, or let each other down, or think different things?' Show two separated bricks that are clashing side to side and not stuck together. How can we stick back together again? These bricks have to change their direction, their attitude, their heart and then they can be connected again. They need the love of Jesus to forgive, apologise, believe the best about each other, choose kindness... Show one brick turning so it can attach properly to the other one. WOW - it's so much better to be together, isn't it?

Pray for each other to know they are deeply connected to Jesus. Everyone could stand in a circle and put their hand gently on or towards the person on their right and pray: 'Dear Jesus, fill ____ with your love... Help them to be deeply connected to you Jesus!' And then swap to pray for the person on their left in the same way.

DISCUSSION CONT.

Alternatively, pass around a heart shaped cushion and say everyone's name in turn together. Thank them for being a wonderful part of your group and pray that everyone can be deeply connected to each other, by loving, helping, speaking kind words, praying for them, forgiving, listening... Tell the children that Jesus' love is the glue that sticks us together!

TAKE HOME

Lolly Stick Craft Provide the children with craft lolly sticks and ask them to decorate them with the names of people in their family as well as people from church. Include one lolly stick each for Father God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit too. Once the sticks are decorated, the children can line them up next to each other and then stick on the three sticks for Jesus, Father God and Holy Spirit at right angles to the rest to hold them together. Alternatively, use the lolly sticks to create other 2D shapes like a house with a roof, a simple fence, a boat. There are lots of ideas online: [Lolly Stick Crafts](#) Invite the children to take their creations home as a reminder of how good it is to be connected to God and each other.

RESPONSE

Jigsaws In advance of the session cut out some jigsaw piece shapes out of card. These could fit together to make a shape like a heart or they could simply be random pieces. Give each child one of the card jigsaw pieces and ask them to draw themselves on it along with one thing they will do to help stay connected to others. Help them to think of tangible things like, listen to my brother, take turns with a favourite toy, celebrate when someone else wins, pray for my mum, forgive my sister, etc. Invite the children to stick their jigsaw pieces on a large piece of paper which can be displayed so that everyone can see they are connected together and an important part of God's family. Include Jesus, Father God and Holy Spirit and the words from John 17:21 (NCV) in your jigsaw family display!

ACTIVITY

Team Challenges Put the children into teams to work together on different challenges.

Lego Challenge - Discover which team can build the strongest tower that can withstand shaking? Give out a certain number of bricks or allocate a time limit. Mix up the teams with different aged children and give praise for those that allow others to share ideas and work together well.

Marshmallows and Spaghetti - Challenge the teams to create strong structures using only marshmallows and dried spaghetti. Decide on what you will award points for beforehand, such as strength, height, teamwork, stability, kind words, aesthetics and so on.

GAME

Team Games Play team games where the children have to work together.

The Human Knot - Instruct everyone to stand in a circle and put their hands into the middle, taking hold of two other peoples' hands. The group must work together to untangle everyone without letting go of hands, so they all end up standing back in a circle holding the hands of the person stood next to them. You could choose one team member not in the circle who directs people to untangle them!

Over and Under - Organise the group into two lines and pass a ball or balloon down the line alternating between passing it over their heads and under legs.

Across the Room - Put the children in teams and challenge them to cross the room without touching the floor - they can only have 2/3 pieces of paper to stand on...

ADAPTATION

With younger children, provide an age appropriate jigsaw puzzle and encourage the children to complete it together. Observe how the puzzle pieces are all different shapes but they all fit together to make ONE complete puzzle. Reflect on how even though each of us are different, Jesus prayed for us all to be as one so we can share God's love with others.

ALTERNATIVE

Provide a large sheet of paper, pens, newspapers, magazines and glue sticks. Ask the children to use the items to create a group collage which shows where they would like to see unity, e.g. at church, in their family, in the local community, in the world, with God, etc. Pray for God to end divisions and bring unity to these places.

ALTERNATIVE

In teams, use an elastic band with string attached to work together to stack the cups. Instructions can be found here: [Ms. Sepp's Counselor Corner: Teamwork: Cup Stack Take 2 \(mssepp.blogspot.com\)](https://www.mssepp.blogspot.com/2012/05/teamwork-cup-stack-take-2.html). In order to complete the task successfully, the children must be united and communicate properly.

29TH MAY 2022

DEEPLY CONNECTED

JOHN 17: 20-26

LET'S CHAT

Ask your child what they did and tell them what you learned in church today!

It's great to team up with others at home, work and school. Share who you like to team up with.

How can you become more deeply connected to each other? Can you think of two ideas for your family?

LET'S PRAY

Jesus' love is like the glue that sticks us together! You could make models or play with bricks and talk about being stronger when we are together, when we are helping, supporting, loving and sharing God's big love for us. After you have enjoyed a time of activity, pray together:

Thank you, Jesus, that your love keeps us deeply connected to you and to each other. Help us to receive your love and may it be like glue that helps us stick together so that we become stronger. Amen

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