

Go Fish

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

June 2020 (31 May - 4 July)



Just as light plays on the surface of water, glancing off the glittering scales of the fish underneath we are going to play with words this month as we consider Jesus's instruction to Go Fish!

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the lake—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.' Immediately they left their nets and followed him. (Matthew 4:18-20, NRSVA)

As he walked by the open plan office of Galil-E, he saw two imagination engineers, Simon, who is called Pete, and Andy his brother, coding a new project — for they were developers. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you developers of people.' Immediately they left their laptops and followed him.

As he walked by the food bank at Galilee Crescent, he saw two volunteers, Simone, who is called Petra (nobody remembers why), and Andra her sister, yarn-bombing a display in the community centre — for they were also knitters. And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you knit lives together.' Immediately they left their wool and followed him.

'Pentecost' is when the church celebrates the Holy Spirit empowering and enthusing Jesus's followers after the resurrection. The word enthusiasm comes from the Greek 'enthousiastikos', which itself comes from 'enthous' which meant 'possessed by a god.' To be enthusiastic about something is to be truly spirited and inspired, infused with something divine.

How can we be enthusiastic fisherfolk? How can we use the God-Given, Jesus-Bought and Spirit-Unwrapped gift of language to play around with ideas of casting nets, casting on stitches and perhaps podcasting to explore God's network and catch the catch of the day? It's time to get enthusiastic! Go fish!

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

*The following discussion questions are designed to accompany the [Go Fish Resource Pack](#) to help adapt the material for small group work. They are divided into 5 parts to correspond with the 5 weeks of the Daily Worship theme. **These questions are just a guideline and there is no need to go through all the given questions in a single session, or in the following sequence. Feel free to pick and choose, or adapt to what interests your group.***

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1: Being fisherfolk (Pentecost)

Read 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

Our gifts are meant to play off each other for the common good. What gifts have you been given? And in what way could these gifts work with the gifts of others for the common good?

Read Matthew 4:18-22

James and John are mending their nets with their father when they are called. They are being called anew to start a new mission with a new kind of net.

As Jesus called James and John — he calls you and I.

What are the old and broken nets we need to leave behind to answer God's call? What are the old ways of doing things that need to be left to one side in order to follow Jesus more closely?

Read Numbers 11: 24-30

As we are exploring the God given gift of language this month to play around with metaphors and imagery of fishing, casting and nets we are now going to get stuck into a bit of grammar!

"Would that all the Lord's people were prophets..." This phrase uses the **subjunctive mood** to express something Moses deeply wished to be so. Phrases like: "God bless you" and "Heaven help us" and "So be it" are other examples of the subjunctive. Rather than saying *God blesses you*, or *God has blessed you* or *God will bless you* we say "God bless you". We stand where we are but in a divine context — calling forth to this reality a heavenly reality.

Moses could say "If only all the Lord's people had been prophets" or "I wish all the Lord's people could have been prophets..." but it might not pack the same prophetic punch. "Would that..." implies that Moses doesn't just long for the people to be prophets; he is entertaining the possibility that they really could be — God willing.

As a group have a go at creating some new subjunctive statements that begin "Would that..." Or "May..." as form of **intercessory** prayer (praying for others).

For example:

- "Would that the hungry were fed"
- "Would that there were peace instead of war"
- "May Tom know healing"
- "May Sarah feel a sense of peace"

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Part 2: Out on the open water

Conversation Starter

How do you feel about the sea? Have you ever swam/sailed/surfed? Sometimes people describe how the sheer size of the sea put them in a more contemplative mindset.

Where and when do you find it easiest to talk to God?

Read Psalm 8

Riding the crest of the wave... What does it mean to be "a little lower than God"?

Read Ezekiel 47: 3-12

A vision of a flourishing ecosystem. All of life is connected. Where are the stagnant waters in our society — the places where living is hard — and how can we dig channels so that the life giving water of God can refresh those places?

Read Luke 5: 1-11

They left everything... including the pile of fish... An enormous catch — likely the best of their working lives — abandoned on the beach for the gleaners while they moved on, heeding the call to adventure out on a new kind of open water.

It can be bittersweet when God calls us to somewhere new. There may be great things ahead but we are sometimes leaving good things behind too. Each new beginning contains bittersweet endings. When you leave one role and take up another; when a relationship changes and deepens; changing career, becoming a parent, moving house, the passing of each year — our lives are full of passing seasons which each bring their own unique promises and regrets, hopes and fond memories.

What are some of the 'good things' you have had to leave behind in your walk with God?

And — as a community who care for each other — how can we help one another to let go peacefully and move on to the next chapter with God?

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Part 3: Casting

Sometimes you just gotta call on the Lord and fling out that net...

Read Genesis 18: 1-15

Hoping to make some friends (or at least some lunch companions) Abraham gets more than he ever could have expected when he decides to cast the net a bit wider.

How can we cast the net a bit wider in our lives — to include more people? What might we gain from doing so?

Read Exodus 19: 2-8

Sometimes we have to cast off in to the wilderness to get a mission from God. Occasionally if we want to catch something worthwhile we have to get lost in the wild places on the way.

What is the mission that God is calling you to in the midst and aftermath of the global health crisis? What can you do to help strengthen God's Kingdom in these circumstances?

Read Romans 5: 6-8

While weak, while sinners... God still chose to cast us on, to knit us into a divine project.

Weakness and sinning is not a barrier for God's love. How does it make you feel — that God's love for you is not dependent on your strength or your lack of sin?

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Part 4: Netting

Conversation Starter

Using nets to think about what it is: to be caught in frustration and caught in loving arms; to be contained in God's network and to be unable to contain yourself about it; to go fishing and to be 'gone fishing'; to catch and to let go; to seize the catch of the day.

As a conversation starter, begin by brainstorming as many different types of **net** and **network** as you can. Think about all the different nets you come across and all the networks you are a part of in your life.

Read Genesis 21: 8-21

Even when we cast out others God casts a net wide enough to gather them in. In the Bible we often see the tension between the human instinct to exclude and the divine impulse to include.

Why do we, as God's church, so often wish to subdivide and segregate and push others out?

How does one form a meaningful community without alienating others that fall outside that community?

Read Jeremiah 20: 7-13

"within me there is something like a burning fire
shut up in my bones;
I am weary with holding it in,
and I cannot." (9b NRSVA)

Have you ever felt like this? Like there is a fire burning within you — a truth that you simply have to share?

How can we share a passion for God with others in a way that invites them in to the mystery of faith?

Read Luke 24: 36-43

Sometimes when all is said and done the proof is in the broiled fish!

Look back over your life and consider what have been the most important meals. What are the feasts, celebrations, reconciliations, reunions and other memorable moments that stand out for you?

What is it about sharing food together that helps build a sense of community between people?

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Part 5: A good catch

Conversation Starter

In our final week we will be thinking about hidden catches, catching on to the message and the best catch of all.

To get the chat going let's talk about fish and chips... If Jesus had been on Glasgow's Sauchiehall Street in 2020 would he have talked of being "The fish supper of life"? Would he have not have fed the 5,000 on Edinburgh's Meadows with five potatoes and two battered cod (with salt and sauce of course)? Would he not have popped into a chipper with saints and sinners on Aberdeen's Union Street? Or even had a deep-fried Mars Bar in Stornaway, Inverness or Galashiels?

Well maybe not the Mars Bar...

What is the meal you would most like to share with Jesus? Instead of the bread of life would Jesus be your "Fish Supper" of life? Or maybe the 'Lasagne and chips' of life? Or maybe it doesn't even involve chips! (Can you tell it's someone from West of Scotland writing this...) But what is the familiar comfort food that restores you? That maybe speaks of God's love and provision for you?

Read Hosea 4: 1-3

There are ecological consequences to our hubris and selfishness. It is interesting to read this passage in the context of our polluted oceans — our model of endless consumerism making more and more waste seems to have a catch... As God's servants trusted with caring for the earth how can we work together to clear up the mess?

Read John 21:1-14

A night of fruitless fishing can be turned around by what's waiting for us on the shore...

Picture Jesus standing on the shore waiting for you. It may be that you'd be excited to see a pile of smoking fish on a BBQ but maybe for you it would be something else? What would be the catch of the day for you? Jesus setting up a film-projector to show your favourite films? Setting up a net for some volleyball? Holding a frisbee? Describe the scene...

Read Mark 16: 15

Proclaiming the good news. A fisherman doesn't always fish in the same spot at the same time with the same tools.

How can we use the God-Given, Jesus-Bought and Spirit-Unwrapped gift of language to proclaim the Gospel in ever new ways? As a group come up with three new ways of sharing the Gospel with others that you have never tried before...