



Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: <https://urc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Faith-Adventures-How-To-FAYR.pdf>

Luke 5: 1-11 – A surprising catch

Theme: God can help us do surprising things

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know before we begin?

Luke

The book of Luke was written around 60 AC by Luke, the doctor who became a disciple of Jesus. Luke wanted to show that Jesus was God's son, who came to the world for everyone, Jew, Gentile, rich, poor, an extraordinary saviour for the ordinary everyday people. This is why his books tell the stories of everyday people and their part in God's big story. This week's passage from Luke takes place at the shores of the Sea of Galilee, where people had gathered to hear Jesus' teachings. A group of fishermen experience a surprising encounter, which has a transformative impact on their lives.

The surprise in this passage doesn't solely emerge from the miraculous catch of fish. It's rooted in the fact that the fishermen chose to follow Jesus' instructions in the first place. Picture the scene: a tired and weary crew, shattered from working all night and ending up empty-handed, are met by a carpenter with no apparent knowledge or experience of fishing who wants to take control of their boat. It's surprising that they even let him into the boat, and even more astonishing that they chose to hand over control to someone who didn't share their expertise.

This willingness to trust in the unexpected challenges us to question our own tendencies to persist in our ways before turning to God. How often do we, like the fishermen, exhaust our efforts before considering whether God could offer a better solution? When we truly trust in the Lord, we can be surprised. God comes up with a solution, but this might not be what we expected.



And what happened to the miraculous catch, the valuable reward for their trust and obedience? The surprise continues, as they choose to leave it all behind and follow Jesus. This narrative challenges us to reevaluate our priorities, recognising that God might require us to leave behind what we perceive as valuable for the pursuit of something far greater.

Together

Let's start our time with God and each other well

If used in a mixed-age group, then young people can support younger ones in using the gathering prayer in Faith Adventures: Children Together. If used in a youth group, you could use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

In-person and online game

See this week's Faith Adventures : Children Together for suitable games for this theme.

Experience

Research Traditional Fishing Techniques

Investigate the type of nets used during biblical times for fishing, including materials and design. Examine some different net types such as casting nets, drag nets and seine nets.

<https://anglinginsight.com/traditional-fishing-techniques-from-around-the-world/>

<https://fishingbooker.com/blog/traditional-fishing-techniques-around-the-world/>

Do you think it is important to understand the context that stories from the Bible are set in?

Fishing usually involved casting the net on one particular side of the boat so that your strongest arm would be the one pulling in the haul of fish. Jesus was asking the experienced fishermen to cast the net out on the side they didn't usually use, to work from a position of weakness instead of strength, to think outside the box and try something new.



Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

You may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Alternatively:

Whoever reads this meditation should use a slow, soft and gentle voice.

Sit somewhere where you feel comfortable and close your eyes. Take a few deep breaths, count to five (In your head) as you breathe in, hold your breath for three and then exhale for five. Repeat this four or five times.

You are stood by the water, you take off your sandals so that you can feel the cool of the water on your toes, the sun is shining on your face, it is a beautifully warm day. You wiggle your toes and look out across the vast water in front of you waves gently lapping, you smile, feeling content.

You are aware of a voice, wonderful, authoritative yet reassuring. The sort of voice you could listen to all day.

It is Jesus, he is here and he is teaching everyone.

You lay out your rug on the sand and settle down to listen.

As Jesus finishes you start to stretch, you get up, roll up your rug and put your sandals on.

You hear the fishermen come back to shore, they don't sound too happy. It sounds as though they haven't been successful in catching any fish. They seem cross and frustrated.

Jesus steps into the boat and speaks to the fishermen. He tells them to try again, to put their nets on the other side of the boat.

Doesn't he realise those men have been fishing all night and are exhausted? One of the men looks as though they can hardly keep their eyes open.

Why are they listening to Jesus? Surely he has no experience as a fisherman, wasn't he a carpenter?

You sit back down on the sand, waiting to find out what will happen in the boat.

The men have not long gone out to sea and put their nets down when the boat starts crashing and thrashing. You jump up, anxious that the fishermen remain safe in the boat but then you hear their voice – not fear, but joy and wonder. If you strain your ears, you can work out what they are saying.

You shield your eyes and look across to the boat. The men are pulling in the net and it's full, full of fish.....so full it takes everyone on the boat to pull it in.

You don't know what to think, you don't know how to feel.

How has this happened? Where did all those fish come from?

Simon, the lead fisherman, looks scared all of a sudden and his voice comes echoing across the water. He says, 'Get away from me Lord, I am a sinful man.'



What does he mean? Why does he think he's sinful? I wonder what Jesus will reply.

You start to feel as though nothing else around you matters, like you are part of something extraordinary.

Calmly, gently, Jesus says, 'Do not be afraid, for you will fish for people from now on.'

Do not be afraid? Do not be afraid? You do not understand what has just happened. But then as you let those words go round your head that fear subsides.

'Follow me,' says Jesus, and just like that they all leave their boats and that amazing catch of fish, and they follow him away from the beach.

You stand mouth open, looking from the boat to the men, then to the boat again - the boat which is full of frantic, flapping fish, fish of every colour, enough fish to feed the town for the whole week. You look back to the men eagerly and voluntarily following Jesus, their voices high with excitement and anticipation.

And then you realise.

You understand.

You know why they have followed him.

Open your eyes – what questions, thoughts, ideas, pictures came into your minds as you explored the story in this way?

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok, etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.

Talking together: Going deeper

- What would you find it difficult to leave behind you if God called you to?
- What do you think Peter meant when he said "Go away – I'm a sinful man" and how do you think the people around him reacted?
- Is there ever a time when you feel you're not good enough for God? What do you think God would say to you?

Conversation starters

- I wonder if you've ever had good advice from someone you didn't expect to give it to you?
- How do you judge who to take advice from and what advice to ignore?

Express

How do we respond to what we've discussed and express our faith personally?

Praying together

Prayer Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Fishy prayer

What you will need:

Glass bowl with water
Small fish cut out of paper
Pencils/ pens

What you do:

Give everyone a fish and pen. Take a moment to think of what to write or draw on their fish to share with God. It could be in response to the reading e.g. something you'd like God's guidance on or declaring a willingness to follow Jesus, or could be the name of someone you want to pray for, for example. Gently fold the tail and head over (do not crease too hard) and then place it into the water. Slowly the folded fish will open up and release your prayer to God. While waiting for the fish to open up on the water, have a moment of quiet to reflect on the words or pictures drawn on the fish.

Finish with these words: God, receive our prayers. **Amen.**

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. See Faith Adventures: Children Together for a craft and a STEM activity which may also be appropriate. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Diorama

What you need:

Matchboxes
Coloured pens
Glue
Felt
Scrap card
Pipe cleaners
Netting



What you do:

Create a scene inside the matchbox from the story. Use the materials available, be creative and see how many small details you can include. Once finished you could look at each other's and guess which part of the story has been depicted.

Swimming paper fish

You will need – paper, scissors, shallow tray, water, washing up liquid.

- Fill your tray with a layer of water.
- Cut a small fish shape out of the paper. The fish should have a v-shaped notch in the tail.
- Gently place the fish on the surface of the water at one end of the tray.
- Place a single drop of washing up liquid in the centre of the tail. Watch what happens to the fish.
- Rinse the tray and fill with fresh water before repeating with a new paper fish.



Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

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- Play some trust games with those you live with or with your friends, talk about what it means to trust someone, how does that differ from trusting God?
 - Use one of the “conversation starter” questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **How do you judge who to trust and who not to trust?**
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Thank you for exploring the **Luke** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing children.youth@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on https://bit.ly/FACT_FB