



## Leader's notes

# why on earth... bother with Jesus?

In this session we take a fresh look at Jesus.

We do this though the eyes of a friend who knew him well and who found Jesus to be unlike anybody else he knew.

We explore who Jesus was, and why he still matters today.

**Needed:** Drinks, name/picture badges (if desired), Session Sheets, some pens, some blank sheets of paper.

**General Intro:** *why on earth... ?* takes a look at some of life's hardest questions. Each session offers simple first steps in exploring a difficult subject. These are not final answers, just starting-points. Group members are invited to talk about their own thoughts and experiences with honesty. Then we explore Christian angles on the subject, and begin to think how these might apply in our own lives.

**Session Intro:** The Jesus we meet in the gospels is attractive, compelling and life-changing. This session asks group members to think about what has shaped their own picture of Jesus. Then it invites them to see Jesus with new eyes. The aim of the session is to help people experience something of the wonder and excitement of the people who originally met Jesus, and explore the relevance of Jesus to our lives today.

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## Starters (approx 30 mins)

- Drinks, welcome, notices, write name badge (if desired).
- A few short passages later in the session need to be read aloud. Identify a person, or couple of people, who are happy to do this (alternatively, the leader can plan to read them).

### ICEBREAKER (*whole group*):

Ask group members to tell the rest of the group which inspiring person (alive or dead, famous or not famous) they would most like to meet, and why.

### BACKGROUND NOISE (in pairs):

Ask group members to get into pairs. Hand out Session Sheets and invite everybody to look at the *Background Noise* picture.

Explain that we all carry thoughts and ideas in our head on a range of issues. These ideas may come from lots of places. In pairs, we are going to explore the 'background noise' already in our heads on the topic. Explain that there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers here: it's all about examining our own starting-points.



Explain that the thought-bubbles represent:

- > (School) School and upbringing
- > (People) Friends and family
- > (TV) TV and film
- > (Smartphone) Social media
- > (Question-Mark) Anything else

In their pairs, invite group members to discuss their own thoughts about Jesus: where did these thoughts come from? Also ask them to discuss what they have heard other people say about Jesus: friends, family, in movies etc. Use the thought-bubbles as a prompt if helpful.

After a few minutes, invite people to rejoin the whole group. Invite them to share anything they discussed if they would like to.

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## Main Course (approx 45 mins)

- VIDEO
- ON SHEET:  
Ask group members to look at Video Recap, a summary of key points in the video.



**Peter fishing**



**Peter swims to Jesus**



**Peter denied Jesus**



**A second chance**



**Stronger than death**



**A fresh start**

- **DISCUSS (whole group):** Allow a few minutes to discuss the following question:
  - What part of the video stood out for you?

- **ON SHEET (two groups):**

Divide the group into two (an easy way to do this is to go round the group in turn and ask people to call out a number: 1, 2, 1, 2...). Explain that they are going to explore the story in the video. One group will look at Peter, the other at Jesus. Ask each group to sit together, and take a few minutes to work through their group's questions:



## Group 1: Peter Questions

- a) When Peter saw Jesus from the boat, he jumped in the lake and swam ashore. Why?
- b) How do you think Peter felt when he saw Jesus standing next to a charcoal fire (again)?
- c) What difference do you think this meeting at the lakeside made for Peter?
- d) Bishop Desmond Tutu said, 'Without forgiveness there's no future.' What do you think he meant? Can you think of an example from your own experience, or from a story in the news?



## Group 2: Jesus Questions

- a) Do you think Jesus knew Peter would be fishing that morning?
  - b) Why do you think Jesus made a charcoal fire at the lakeside?
  - c) Why do you think Jesus gave Peter another chance?
  - d) Bishop Desmond Tutu said, 'Without forgiveness there's no future.' What do you think he meant? Can you think of an example from your own experience, or from a story in the news?
- **DISCUSS (whole group):** Invite each group to feed back their answers to the whole group. Give the other group time to comment and compare answers if they want to.
  - **EXPLAIN (read out):** The video says, 'Now the man is back'. To understand what this means, we need to rewind the story and look at earlier events. Peter and his friends have known Jesus for a few years. During those years, Peter spent most of his time with Jesus. He watched what Jesus did, heard what he said, and saw how different groups of people reacted to him. If we are asking, 'Why bother with Jesus?' it will help to look more closely at the Jesus Peter and his friends have known over the past few years.
  - **ON SHEET:** Ask the group to look at *The Jesus Peter Knew*. Explain that there are three sections, each with six items in. These are: *Quotes* from Jesus, a list of the types of *People* Jesus spent time with, and *Word-Pictures* people used to describe Jesus (these come from other people and from Jesus himself).

# The Jesus Peter Knew

## Quotes

'Wherever your treasure is, there your heart and thoughts will also be.'

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'Love your enemies.  
Do good to those who hate you.  
Pray for the happiness  
of those who curse you.  
Pray for those who hurt you.'

\*

'Let those who have never sinned  
throw the first stones.'

\*

'Don't worry about everyday life –  
whether you have enough food,  
drink, and clothes.  
Doesn't life consist of more than  
food and clothing?'

\*

'If you forgive others,  
you will be forgiven.'

\*

'How do you benefit  
if you gain the whole world,  
but lose your own soul  
in the process?'

## People

Outsiders and foreigners

\*

Women badly treated  
by men

\*

People who are ill

\*

Children

\*

Poor people

\*

People who feel lost

## Word-Pictures

Prince of peace

\*

Healer

\*

Door

\*

Light

\*

Way, truth and life

\*

Friend

- **ON SHEET (*whole group*):** Ask people to look at the *People* section. Invite somebody to read the list slowly. Ask group members to spend a few moments thinking about their own answer to the following question, then invite them to share their answers with the whole group.
    - What value do you think Jesus saw in these types of people that others may not have seen?
  - **ON SHEET:** Ask people to look at the *Quotes* section. Invite somebody to read the list slowly. Ask group members to spend a few moments thinking about their answer to the first of the following questions, and invite them to share their answers with the whole group. Then repeat the process for the second question.
    - Which of these quotes from Jesus do you think our world most needs to hear today?
    - Which of these quotes from Jesus do you think you most need to hear today?
  - **DISCUSS (*whole group*):** Allow a few minutes to discuss the following question:
    - What does it mean when the video says Jesus is stronger than death, and what difference does it make?
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## Dessert (*approx 15 mins*)

- Invite the group to join in either the Creative Prayer or Space to Think (as decided by the leader before the session). Then end by praying the Closing Prayer out loud.

### 1) Creative Prayer:

- Invite group members to close their eyes, and take a few minutes to think about this question: 'What area of your life would you most like Jesus to give you a fresh start in?'
- After a few minutes, invite the group to look back at the Word-Pictures section of The Jesus Peter Knew sheet, and ask somebody to read them aloud. Ask the group to take a few minutes to think about this question: 'Which of these roles of Jesus do you need most in your life at the moment?'

**2) Space to Think:** time to reflect on words from the Bible, ending with the Lord's Prayer.

Tell the group you are going to read out a few words from the story of Jesus and Peter in the Bible (below).

Say you are going to read the words twice, slowly.

Invite them to take a few minutes in silence to think what one word or idea stands out to them and why.

Read the passage (twice, slowly):

' "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.' (John 21:12-14)

*(Modern Version)*

Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
Forgive us our sins  
as we forgive those  
who sin against us.  
Lead us not into temptation  
but deliver us from evil.  
For the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory are yours  
now and for ever. Amen.

*(Traditional Version)*

Our Father who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come,  
thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
the power and the glory,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

- **Closing Prayer** *(read aloud):*

Lord Jesus, we thank you that when Peter failed, you didn't give up on him, but gave him a fresh start. We thank you that you are alive and offer hope and fresh starts to us too. Deepen our faith and trust, we pray, and show us what it means to live for you in today's world. In your name we pray. Amen.

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## Takeaway

- ON SHEET: Ask somebody to read out the *Takeaway* section:

Take some time this week to think if there is anybody in your life you need to forgive, for something they said or did to you. Is there something you can do to bring forgiveness into a difficult situation or relationship?