

Notes

Please note that this document contains 3 different versions of the “Exploring the Word” worksheet. Each version contains the same Gospel texts, Reflection and questions, but with a different configuration of “alternative views”. The suggested activities are applicable to a variety of age ranges. Some activities may not be suitable in all circumstances.

Activities

- Brainstorm a list of characters from the New and Old Testaments who were ‘called’ by God in one way or another. Are there common characteristics about the experience or the individuals’ response?
- Use a mantra as a technique to slow breathing and quiet the mind (e.g. ‘ma-ra-na-tha’; ‘Come, Lord Jesus’; ‘Be still and know I am God’). Having achieved a reflective state, concentrate on the idea of being ‘called’ and be open to listening to the answers that emerge. Alternatively, use a visualisation technique to project 5 or 10 years into the future to imagine yourself being successful in what you feel called to be doing.
- Interview someone you know who appears to be living their life with a sense of vocation and calling. Ask them about how they identified the pathway they would follow and how they manage to remain true to their calling.

Gospel Journal



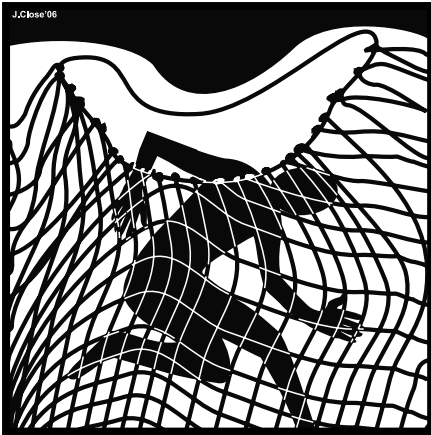
In what ways did Peter trust and place his faith in Jesus?

Have you ever, like Peter, acted against your instinct and experience and been proven wrong?

What does it mean to be 'called'?

How do you try to listen to the voice of God in your life?

Do you feel called to take your life in a particular direction?



Gospel Lk 4:21-30

Jesus began to speak in the Jesus was standing one day by the lake of Gennesaret, with the crowd pressing round him listening to the word of God, when he caught sight of two boats close to the bank. The fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats – it was Simon's – and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat.

When he had finished speaking he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water and pay out your nets for a catch.' 'Master,' Simon replied 'we worked hard all night long and caught nothing, but if you say so, I will pay out the nets.' And when they had done this they netted such a huge number of fish that their nets began to tear, so they signalled to their companions in the other boat to come and help them; when these came, they filled the two boats to sinking point.

When Simon Peter saw this he fell at the knees of Jesus saying, 'Leave me Lord; I am a sinful man.' For he and all his companions were completely overcome by the catch they had made; so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were Simon's partners. But Jesus said to Simon, 'Do not be afraid; from now on it is men you will catch.' Then, bringing their boats back to land, they left everything and followed him.

Reflection

The theme that comes through this week's readings is one of 'being called'. The first reading is the call of the prophet Isaiah (Is 6:1-8). Isaiah experiences a vision of the glory of God and is humbly reminded of his own deficiencies: he believes himself to be 'a man of unclean lips'. As such, he is certainly unfit to speak on behalf of God as his unclean lips would taint whatever message he may speak. But his lips are cleansed by God who then asks, 'Whom shall I send?' Demonstrating a complete conversion of heart and mind, Isaiah immediately replies, 'Here I am, send me!'

This first reading provides a perfect balance to the gospel. Jesus is being closely pressed by the crowd when he asks a nearby fisherman to take him just off shore to preach without being overwhelmed by the crowd. Seemingly at random, he has selected the boat of the fisherman Peter. Having finished preaching for the day, Jesus tells Peter to set out into deeper water and pay out his fishing nets. Peter is certainly not keen on the idea! Out of some interest or good nature he had agreed to allow this preacher to use his boat for a while but now this country bumpkin is trying to tell him how to fish! Just to prove Jesus wrong, Peter agrees to go through the futile exercise and is overwhelmed by the enormous catch of fish. Like Isaiah in the first reading, Peter is suddenly acutely aware of his own deficiencies – 'Leave me Lord; I am a sinful man'. Like Isaiah, he recognises that he has just seen the glory of God revealed and he feels unworthy to be part of the experience. But Jesus reassures him, 'Do not be afraid,' and calls Peter to follow.

Scriptural Context

The Call of the disciples

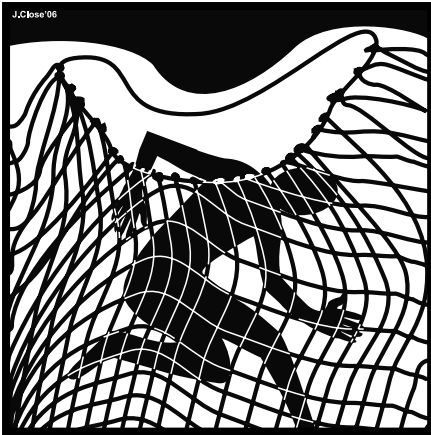
In the other two synoptic gospels – Matthew and Mark – the call of the disciples is one of the first recorded actions of Jesus' adult life. Luke, on the other hand, delays the call until after Jesus' public ministry has commenced. By this stage of the gospel, Jesus has made a public declaration about the nature of his ministry and begun to enact it. In this way, the sort of ministry Jesus will undertake is already established when the disciples are called to join it. It becomes a more conscious decision by the disciples – they know what they're getting in to!

Have you Thought?

Do not be afraid

When Peter is overcome by the catch of fish and falls on his knees before Jesus, the response Jesus makes is to simply say, 'Do not be afraid'. This phrase is the most often repeated phrase in the Bible. It appears more than 60 times throughout the Bible – depending on which translation one uses. This is an extraordinary number of times for the one phrase to appear. And the references stretch from the first book, Genesis, to the last, Revelation. It is God's message to us echoing throughout the Bible: Do not be afraid!

- Q. *In what ways did Peter trust and place his faith in Jesus?*
- Q. *Have you ever, like Peter, acted against your instinct and experience and been proven wrong?*
- Q. *What does it mean to be 'called'?*
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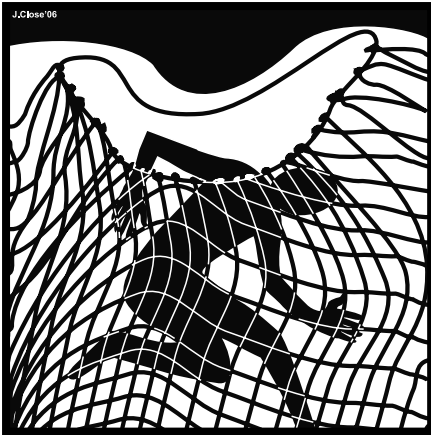
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Living the Gospel

Hearing the Call

Like Isaiah and Peter, each and every one of us is called. It may not happen through Jesus stepping into our boat, but when we quieten our minds and our hearts enough to really listen, we become aware that God truly is calling to each and every one of us. The call comes to us through our friends; our experiences; our hopes and our fears. Sometimes we are so afraid of hearing the call that we fill our lives with noise and distractions. We fear that the call will involve hardship, or at the very least: unpopularity. But that's no excuse!

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