



1-7 May 2022 [Catching on](#)

Related Bible reading(s): John 21.1-19

Bible study on John 21.1-19

This study can be used by a small family/household group, or by an online group, or – sometimes with a little adaptation – by an individual.

See our [Guidelines for a weekly Bible study](#)

Begin with an opening prayer

Come, let us enter the presence
of the One who sits on the heavenly throne.
Let us join with every creature in heaven and earth,
and add our voices to the choir of angels,
worshipping and praising our Creator,
the One Most Holy.

Amen.

Read the passage

Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.

*In an online group, you could share parts between those present, or use/adapt this week's Share the Word suggestion: Use the Jump to this week's menu *on the right* to go to Share the Word and scroll down to find the Gospel reading.*

Explore and respond to the text

Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.

Bible notes

Seeing the empty tomb, Peter and the beloved disciple 'returned to their homes' (20.10). Offered peace and forgiveness by the risen Jesus (20.19-23), they again return home to their fishing. Commissioned to share Jesus' risen life with the world (20.21; 17.18), they are taking time to recognise who he really is. In Jerusalem he showed them his hands and his side. Now he meets them back in Galilee, where they first 'believed in him' (2.1-11). Remembering their past, particularly their wounding and being wounded, must become part of their new way of living. The familiar Jesus they previously followed is now a stranger on the shore. By following his instructions, they find life-giving food. He is the source of living water (4.7-15; 7.37-38), as in Ezekiel's vision of the life-giving river flowing from the Temple: 'and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there' (Ezekiel 47.9).

First the beloved disciple and then the others recognise that the crucified Jesus is the stranger inviting them to breakfast. They are afraid to ask, 'Who are you?', perhaps fearing the answer, 'Jesus whom you abandoned and denied.' But they know who he is, accepting the breakfast he was cooking for them and being allowed to contribute what they had caught. They begin to understand his forgiveness and accept his renewed call, 'Follow me.' This charcoal fire recalls the charcoal fire at which Peter denied three times that he knew Jesus (18.18) and, although uncomfortable for Peter, Jesus must ask three times, 'Do you love me?', before appointing him to his particular ministry. Peter is still seeking to be first, ridiculously and respectably dressing himself to jump into the sea. So, the first of Jesus' three questions is, 'Do you love me more than these [other disciples love me]?' Becoming wiser, Peter simply answers, 'You know that I love you.'

See also:



What a revelation

Arnold Browne introduces the readings in this issue, in conversation with Alison Hulse.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

John Timpson owns the shoe repair chain that bears his name. He and his wife have fostered some 90 children, and his business has recruited 270 former prisoners as employees. In a BBC Radio 4 Lent 2021 talk, Faith in 'Lost Causes', he spoke about the difference between passive optimism – thinking things might get better – and active hope: making them better. Understanding the insecurities that make people behave badly, and having faith in their potential and hope for their future is, he said, transformative. He spoke of trust, support, and love. And Jesus, understanding their fears and failures and offering them hospitality once more, trusts his 'little children', the disciples he loves, with his ministry of supporting his flock.

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week's Bible passage.



Click on the image to view a larger version or use the *Jump menu* to go to *This week's images*. For artist's details, see [this issue's illustrators](#).

Questions

- What patterns can you see in this image?
- What patterns do you see in your life?
- What might 'following a new pattern' look like in your life?

A simple worship activity

Distorted images

Using mirrors as a way to explore our identity.

- Set up some distorting mirrors and invite people to look at themselves. Alternatively, use Photobooth on iPads (or the equivalent on other devices) to show live distorted camera images. For a simpler version, use ordinary mirrors partially covered with (e.g.) polish – something that will distort the image; or large silver spoons. Ask people to share how they feel and/or respond to what they see.
- Invite everyone to ponder whether, or to what extent, the image they portray of themselves might be a distorted version of their true selves. For example, how do you choose what you wear, and how does that affect what others see in you? What other aspects of your life affect how others might see you? Is there anything that might present a distorted picture, but you wish it didn't? What could you do about it?

Use the *Jump* to this week's menu *on the right* to go to *more activities* in Explore and respond.

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

Sometimes Lord, something comes along that happens to shake our world.

Thank you that you are with us through the difficulties.

The walls of our lives may be stripped bare,

yet you paper them afresh and give us a new pattern of living.

At times we can be a little slow to catch on to what you are

wanting to do in our lives,

but we thank you that, just as you never gave up on Saul or Peter,

you never give up on us.

Thank you, Lord, for your patience.

Thank you for your caring restoration and renewal.

Thank you for blessing us with new beginnings.

Amen.

Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to find more prayers, including up-to-date intercessions.

A prayer to end the Bible study

Lord, like the disciples,

we don't always recognise you.

Like the disciples,

we need to be transformed by you.

Help us to live and be more like you, Lord Jesus.

Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.

Reflect on ways to make your life more and more in the pattern of Christ. Look for achievable small transformations (rather than unachievable big ones) and commit to making them.

*Encourage everyone to explore their faith this week with the **ROOTS at home** resource*

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