

Go Fish

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!

Each week of the theme runs Sunday-Saturday and has its own subtheme, which contains daily Bible readings and thought triggers.

Being fisherfolk (Pentecost Sunday, 31 May)

Fishing takes ingenuity, patience and graft. Exploring the metaphor of being fisherfolk living creatively, collaboratively and *subjunctively*...

1. Numbers
11: 24-30

2. Psalm 104:
24-30

3. 1
Corinthians
12:4-11

4. John
20:19-23

5. John
7:37-39

6. Matthew
13:47-52

7. Matthew 4:
18-22

1. **"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 mood. Rather than saying *God blesses you*, or *God has blessed you* or *God will bless you* we say "God bless you". We stand in a divine context — calling forth to this reality a heavenly reality.

2. **Called to be fisherfolk on the high seas of creation**, marvelling at the marvellous manifold works...

3. **Gifts for the mission.** Our gifts are meant to play off each other for the common good.

4. **Empowered to act.** "As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

5. **Rivers of living water...** Keeping the water fresh and not stagnant.

6. **Good fish/bad fish...** Baskets, furnaces, treasure, training and transformation.

7. **Leaving our old broken nets...** Being called anew to start a new mission with a new kind of net.

Out on the open water (Trinity Sunday, 7 June)

Sensitive to the current and watching which way the wind is blowing as fisherfolk out on the choppy seas... Surfing, diving, or capsizing, it is often an enlightening and enlivening place to be.

1. Genesis 1:1-2

1. **The most open of open waters...** The swirling potential of the Spirit-swept primordial soup.

2. Psalm 8

2. **The crest of the wave.** What does it mean to be a little lower than God?

3. 2 Corinthians 13:11-13

3. **We're all in the same ocean.** Making peace with one another through heavenly communication.

4. Matthew 28: 16-20

4. **We don't go alone,** for Jesus is with us.

5. Ezekiel 47: 3-12

5. **A vision of a flourishing ecosystem.** Can we be jet-streams bringing life where we go?

6. John 14: 15-27

6. **"Do not let your hearts be troubled."** Through all tumult we have an advocate who speaks on our behalf.

7. Luke 5: 1-11

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

Casting (14 June)

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

1. Genesis 18: 1-15
 2. Psalm 116: 1-7
 3. Exodus 19: 2-8
 4. Psalm 100
 5. Romans 5: 6-8
 6. Matthew 10: 7-15
 7. Matthew 10: 16-23
1. **Cast the net a bit wider... you never know what you will find...** Hoping to make some friends (or at least some lunch companions) Abraham gets more than he ever could have expected.
 2. **Casting our hope on the Lord.** Calling out to God.
 3. **Casting off to get a mission in the wilderness.** Sometimes if we want to catch something worthwhile we have to get lost in the wild places on the way.
 4. **Casting with confidence.** Because God's love endures forever.
 5. **While weak, while sinners... God still chooses to cast us on,** to knit us into a divine project.
 6. **Casting instructions part 1.** Wipe the dust from your feet and roll on.
 7. **Casting instructions part 2.** Sheep - Serpent - Dove. Vulnerable - Canny - Open-hearted.

Netting (21 June)

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 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.

1. **Genesis 21: 8-21**
 1. **A bigger net.** Even when we cast others out God casts a net wide enough to gather them in. Considering the human instinct to exclude and the divine impulse to include.
2. **Psalm 86:1-7**
 2. **Caught in the netting.** Sometimes we get tangled — ensnared by circumstances, cruel words or our own bitterness. We are left crying out for some encouragement, affirmation, confirmation...
3. **Jeremiah 20:7-13**
 3. **A burning fire shut up in your bones...** A truth that cannot be contained.
4. **Psalm 69:1-15**
 4. **Gone fishing.** Going fishing may be a relaxing hobby for some but it is a strenuous and dangerous livelihood for others. Being cast about in the midst of a storm without a safety net as the waters rise higher is a bleak place to be.
5. **Romans 6:1-11**
 5. **God's network.** Living in God.
6. **Matthew 10:39**
 6. **Finding and losing...** Keeping and releasing. A net both holds and lets go.
7. **Luke 24: 36-43**
 7. **Catch of the day.** Sometimes when all is said and done the proof is in the broiled fish.

A good catch (28 June)

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

1. Genesis 22:1-14
 1. **The binding of Issac... the unbinding of Abraham.** God untangles the net and releases Abraham from the barbaric practice of the age and points to another way.
2. Psalm 13
 2. **When I need God to give light to my eyes!** Using God's lenses to catch the vision.
3. Jeremiah 28:5-9
 3. **Catching on. Prophesying true peace and not a quick fix.** How can we catch words of genuine peace and help realise them in our communities?
4. Hosea 4: 1-3
 4. **Ecological consequences to our hubris and selfishness.** Considering our polluted oceans — our model of endless consumerism seems to have a catch...
5. John 21:1-14
 5. **Smoking fish.** A night of fruitless fishing can be turned around by what's waiting for us on the shore...
 6. **It's surprising what you will find when you heed the call to go fishing.** Sometimes delightful, unexpected solutions suddenly present themselves.
7. Mark 16: 15
 7. **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?