

## **Welcome**

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Membership class

Morag

Prayer times

**Praise: 10,000 Reasons**

## **Introduction PPT1**

Galatians 5:25 says, “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Welcome to our back to school with God service, a service at the start of the new school year we want to focus our prayer is for children, young people and the staff of the schools in our area. We want to think what it means for all of us to keep in step with the Spirit - particularly at school, or for those of us who are a bit older, wherever we spend most of time.

I wonder who you walk to school with - or who you used to walk to school with? School as a place with friendships are forged, fears are shared, and stories are told. And our service today we are going to look at the

life of Jesus' friend Peter, someone who walked with Jesus.

We have three things to think about. **(PPT2)**

1. First steps.
2. Out of step
3. back in step

as you came into church today, you should have been given a handout. Hang on to it as you'll be using the sheet throughout the service as we follow the story of Peter.

Our first prayer is going to be led by people who have a school connection.

## **Prayer**

**Praise: Your love never fails**

**Bible reading 1 – Luke 5:1-11**

**Talk 1: PPT 3**

Has anyone been to the beach this summer? Where were you? What did you do at the beach?

When Jesus called his 12 disciples, some of them were on the beach. They were having fun digging

sandcastles or building dams across little rivers, they were working because they were fishermen.

Jesus saw the empty fishing was lying near, and asked Simon Peter - one of the fishermen - if you wouldn't mind taking Jesus a little bit out from the shore. Jesus had become very popular and everyone wanted to listen to what he was saying. By standing on Simon's boat, a little bit from the shore, Jesus could see all the people on the beach and talk to them without being crushed.

After he had finished teaching the people, Jesus turned to Simon and told him to sail further out and let down his net. The Simon had worked all night and not caught anything. Why should he start fishing again? But Simon did what Jesus told him. He put out his net and this time he's got such a large amount of fish that the net almost broke.

Why did Simon do what Jesus told him? I think Simon might have recognised that Jesus was special, that he had authority to tell him what to do. He must have decided that he could trust Jesus, and decided to follow him. It was almost as if Jesus set a test for Simon and Simon took his first steps in following Jesus.

Who do you follow? Some of us follow football team. Others follow our favourite celebrities. Some follow

people on twitter. All of us follow something, or someone. Sometimes it's our friends that we follow, and sometimes that's good, but other times they can get us into trouble. Does that sound familiar?

When we follow someone, they start to influence who we are. We may even start to imitate them - wearing the same clothes, listening to the same music, going to the places they go to.

What does it mean to follow Jesus? It means to trust him, to obey him to turn away from other things, like Simon Peter did. Jesus wants us to walk with him: to recognise like Simon, that he has authority - not just the best ever teacher, but also as our saviour and King.

The call to follow Jesus is as real for us today as it was for Peter. Let's think about that. Have you taken your first steps in following and trusting in Jesus, and have you said yes. That's what Peter did. We read, "..... So they pulled up their boats on shore, left everything and followed Jesus."

Look at your sheet, and on the first food shape, called first steps there is a space. If you want to, you could write your own name there to show that you are following Jesus.

**Praise: I have decided to follow Jesus**

## Bible reading 2 – Luke 22:31-34, 54-56

### Talk 2: PPT4

Things were going well for Peter. He had a new purpose in life, and a new set of friends. His life had changed beyond all recognition: he was no longer Simon, the fisherman, but Peter, the close friend of Jesus. He saw things he could never have imagined as he watched Jesus calm a violent storm, change water into wine, heal the sick and the blind, and even raise a dead man back to life.

Peter was one of the first Jesus called to be his disciple. He was the first and only one to get out of his boat and walk on water! He was the first to recognise that Jesus was the son of God. He was the first to swear he would follow Jesus, all the way to death - for three whole years Peter listened to and obeyed Jesus every step of the way. But there came a day when Peter fell **out of step** with Jesus.

Jesus was arrested. Not everyone likes Jesus, and some decided to get rid of him. Peter followed Jesus into the courtyard of Caiaphas, the high priest. A servant girl recognised him and told others that he was a friend of Jesus. "I am not!", Peter explained. Peter who had taken those first steps of following Jesus at had loved

Jesus, now disowned him. He let Jesus down and it broke his heart.

That courtyard was a very hard place to say that Jesus was his friend. School can be a hard place to say that Jesus is our friend. When we are at school, in spite of trying hard, sometimes we let Jesus down.

1. We are ashamed to stand up for him, even when others make fun of Christians.
2. We let him down by the way we speak and by the way we behave

it's easy at church to say that we are following Jesus. It is much harder that school for all sorts of reasons. That's why it's good to be part of a Scripture union group at school, or to make sure you get to church on a Sunday. That's why it's good to belong to Monkton and Prestwick North. We want to support and encourage you, because we know it isn't easy.

In some countries like North Korea, Iraq, Pakistan, Syria, and lots of others, it is impossible to follow Jesus without getting into trouble. We want to remember how hard it is for these children, and pay for them. We also want to remember that no one is going to arrest us and throw us in prison because we say we follow Jesus and we should be thankful for that.

Under pressure, Peter failed. He disowned Jesus and he wept. If we let Jesus down will he forgive us? Will he allow us to be his friend again? Of course she will.

Some of us might have fallen out with a friend. It upsets us. If no one says sorry, then, that friendship is ruined forever. Jesus never lets us down, but he needs to hear our “sorry” when we mess up our special friendship with him.

We are going to pray about this just now, but before we do look at your handout again and take a moment to think about the places you go.

Where is hard to follow Jesus? Where are you most **out of step** with him? Is it with friends? With family? At school? At work? Take a moment to write down, or draw, on the out of step footprint the place where you find it most difficult to follow Jesus.

### **Prayer PPT5**

We’re going to pray together. I will say a line and we all say the line in bold:

When we care more about what others think, and say we don’t know you

**Forgive us, Lord, when we are out of step**

When we keep quiet about our faith and are not willing to tell others

**Forgive us, Lord, when we are out of step**

When we are caught up with ourselves and forget about the needs of others

**Forgive us, Lord, when we are out of step**

When we find it easier to follow others than to follow you

**Forgive us, Lord, when we are out of step**

**Please bring us back in step with you**

**Amen**

**Praise: Oh to see the dawn** Offering to be taken –  
announce a short prayer

**Bible reading – John 21:1-19**

**Talk 3 PPT6**

How many things do you recognise the story about Jesus and Peter? They're at the beach again. Peter's fishing boat is there, and yet again, he has spent all night fishing and caught nothing.

There is also a lovely meal of fish and bread. Did you notice something? Jesus is cooking breakfast for Peter - he's not angry with him.

Remember the early story in the courtyard, with three times Peter said he didn't know Jesus? Peter speaks



strongly, once again three times, but this time to say that he loves Jesus.

Then Jesus says to be to the same words that he said three years before: follow me. He gives him a new job to do. He forgives him. He restores him. And he does the same thing for us today.

Jesus hears us asking for forgiveness. He picks us up and calls us to get in step with him again and to keep going.

We have heard how Peter took his first steps – of following Jesus.

We have heard how Peter wandered out of step and needed to say sorry to Jesus and ask for his forgiveness.

Now we see Peter back instep, ready for a new future: the past is the past and a great adventure with Jesus lies ahead of him.

As we read on into the first chapter of Acts, we find a very different Peter, Peter filled with God's Holy Spirit. Peter and his friends are transformed, totally changed by God, becoming bold instead of frightened. Peter is now prepared to stick up for Jesus were before. He said he didn't know him. Peter is now confident

and speaking in public prayer before he wanted to blend in with the crowd. Peter is back in step.

On your handout, you'll see the third footprint says, "Dear Jesus, I will follow you by....." Think about a way in which you could follow Jesus e.g. Telling the truth, Praying for someone, being more regular at church, increasing your offerings, reading the bible more – maybe it's to invite someone to church.

Take a moment to write or draw your answer in that footprint.

### **Prayer 3**

**Praise: This is amazing grace**