

Session 5: Participation

Inviting everyone to be part of what's going on



BROUGHT TO YOU BY **CUF**⁺

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Key takeaways:

- Participating in social action can be an entry point for people in the life of the church.
- Participating in social action can be a discipleship opportunity for people.

Feedback from previous session [5 minutes]

If you did the optional next step from the previous session, take a few minutes to share anything you learned.



Opening activity [15 minutes]

Option 1: Download the [Head Heart Hands activity](#). Introduce the activity by explaining that the exercise will help the group identify their gifts. Later in the session you'll reflect more on opportunities for people to be invited to use their gifts.

Option 2: Think about a time that you were involved in some kind of social action (maybe helping out at a gardening project, food bank, youth club, or coffee morning). How did you grow in your faith, through that experience?



Read aloud [2 minutes]

The Sea of Galilee in Israel was a place where a lot of fishermen would make their living. This is where Jesus calls his first disciples - people who would follow him, learn from him, and work alongside him.

As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. 'Come, follow me,' Jesus said, 'and I will send you out to fish for people.' At once they left their nets and followed him. Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.'

(Matthew 4:18–22)

It's tricky to work out when the disciples really 'got it' with following Jesus – when did they know who he really was, what he'd come to do, and what it meant to be his disciples? Was it after his resurrection? After the Spirit came at Pentecost?

What we know for sure is that Jesus involved the disciples in his ministry at a very early stage. The first time he meets them he says he will send them out to fish for people.

Coming to Jesus and being sent out by Jesus happened at the same time. They began their journey with him by having a part in his mission. Sometimes churches are hesitant to ask newer people to help out with things, and instead rely on a small group of people who they think are more 'qualified' to help. But Jesus uses people's gifts right from the start, and through helping out they become more like Jesus.



Discuss **[15minutes]**

- **What surprises you about the way Jesus invites his first disciples to join him?**
- **What do you make of the fact that Jesus' first disciples were fishermen?**
- **What does Jesus mean when he says 'I will send you out to fish for people'?**
- **What gifts might Jesus have identified in the fishermen?**



Watch film **[5 minutes]**



Group activity **[20 minutes]**

Think together about the volunteers in your church:

- Who are the existing volunteers in your church? How did they get involved?
- Do you know what gifts are present in your congregation? If not, how might you find out?
- Who else in your church could you invite to participate in social action?

Now think about the wider volunteering happening in your local area:

- Where is volunteering already happening in your community? What are the issues that people care about locally?
- Are members of your church volunteering locally (outside of things directly run by your church)?
- Who from your community could you invite to join in your church's social action?



Pray
[10 minutes]

Thank God for all the people and gifts he has given in your church and community to grow good. Pray that the social action initiatives in your church might be both an entry point and a discipleship opportunity for those who participate.



Feedback

We would love to hear your feedback on the Growing Good Toolkit and can make it better. After you have used the material, please share your thoughts with us in this short survey.

[Provide feedback](#)



After the session [Optional]

To find out more about what gifts are present in your church, try the 'Head Heart Hands' activity, which you can find on the [Growing Good website](#).

Find out more about what volunteering is happening in your wider community. You might visit your local community centre, or the Community Voluntary Service (CVS) web page for your area.

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