

# Family Bible Devotional

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# FRIEND



# WHO FORGIVES

15 DAYS EXPLORING THE STORY OF PETER



The Friend Who Forgives Family Bible Devotional  
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# Before You Start



Peter messed up again and again, and yet Jesus forgave him. It's easy to summarise the story—and its message is one we all need to know! But it's worth looking deeper into it, too. We can go slowly, notice details along the way and allow this story of friendship and forgiveness to soak into our own lives in a way that changes us. That's true whether we're five or fifty.

Dan DeWitt's storybook *The Friend Who Forgives* is a beautiful, simple retelling of the story of Peter's denial and Jesus's forgiveness. You might have enjoyed it together already, or you might not have seen it at all! Either way, this devotional is a chance to lead your family deeper into the story.

It's designed to be easy to lead and fun to do—and to help your family to grow not just in knowledge of Jesus, but in love for him too.

Each session includes:

- A short opening prayer
- A starter question
- A short Bible passage, printed in full
- Two questions about the passage
- A short explanation that can be read aloud
- Two reflection questions (Usually one is simpler and the other requires more thought. Feel free to just pick one!)
- A final brief thought on the Bible passage, sometimes with an extra question
- A prayer idea



Finally, there's always an optional extra section aimed at older children, if you have them. Sometimes these are based on an extra part of the passage; sometimes they're aiming at deeper reflection. You might like to include these as part of your session, or your child might want to take the book away and look at those sections on their own. Use them however you like!

Some sessions include simple creative reflection ideas. If you have one child, he or she can use the space provided at the end of the chapters for these. But if you have more than one, it's worth having paper and pencils handy.

You'll also find bonus puzzles and colouring activities here and there throughout the book.

I hope these devotions will help your family to explore, reflect and grow together as you enjoy the story of Peter and Jesus. I hope you'll have fun—and I hope you'll see more clearly what Jesus's death on the cross really means for us every day.



# 1. By the Lake



## Pray

Dear Jesus, please teach us about yourself today and make a difference to our lives.

## For starters

How well do you know Jesus? Circle the words you might use to talk about him.

teacher

powerful

friend

saviour

master

scary

kind

## Luke 5 v 1-5

<sup>1</sup> One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Genesareth, the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God. <sup>2</sup> He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. <sup>3</sup> He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

<sup>4</sup> When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

<sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."



## Explore the story

Read verses 1-3

**Q:** *When people listen to Jesus, what are they listening to (v 1)?*



Read verses 4-5

**Q:** *What does Simon call Jesus (v 5)?*

Simon didn't know Jesus very well yet. But he had heard enough to know that Jesus wasn't just clever or wise. Jesus's words are God's words! Jesus knows what's right. Jesus knows everything! So, it's sensible to let Jesus be in charge. That's what Simon did. He called Jesus "master" and he did what Jesus said.

Later on in the story Simon will be called Peter. You might spot that sometimes he is given both names at once!

**Q:** *Why do you think it's important to listen to Jesus and do what he says?*

**Q:** *If we think of Jesus as our master today, what difference do you think that might make to our day?*

Read the story again.

**Q:** *What do you think is going to happen next?*



### **Extra**

Simon was an expert fisherman, and Jesus wasn't. But Simon didn't say, "In this area of life, I'm the master." No, he did what Jesus said.

**Q:** *Are there any areas of your life that feel like they don't have anything to do with Jesus?*



**Q:** *What would it look like for Jesus to be your master in those specific areas?*



## Pray

Choose one or two of the words and phrases below and say a prayer that includes those words. Everyone take a turn!

thank you

Jesus

help

know

please

teach

God

in charge

sorry



## 2. A Huge Catch



### Pray

Dear Jesus, please teach us about yourself today and make a difference to our lives.

### For starters

Put the following things in order from least scary to scariest.

kitten      lion      homework      killer whale  
your teacher      singing in front of people

### Luke 5 v 5-10a

<sup>5</sup> Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

<sup>6</sup> When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. <sup>7</sup> So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

<sup>8</sup> When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" <sup>9</sup> For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.



## Explore the story

Read verses 5-10a

**Q:** *How do the fishermen feel about the catch of fish (v 9)?*



**Q:** *Why do you think Simon tells Jesus to go away from him (v 8)?*

Jesus had done something amazing. You might think Simon should have jumped up with glee! But instead he fell down in fear. He knew that Jesus was very special—and that he, Simon, wasn't special. In fact, he was sinful. He wasn't good enough to be Jesus's friend. Simon thought that special Jesus should stay away from sinful Simon!

**Q:** *What are some differences between you and Jesus?*

**Q:** *What reasons might Jesus have to stay away from us?*



## Extra

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It's right to pause and remember that we are like Simon: sinful. It's not just about how well-behaved we are or aren't. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3 v 23). In other words, none of us are good enough for Jesus! Jesus has no reason to be friends with us. That makes it all the more amazing when we realise that he loves us anyway and is willing to forgive us.

**Q:** *Think quietly: what is one thing in your life that you know is sinful and not right? Maybe you've hurt someone else, or you've been disobedient. Maybe there's some other way in which you haven't been treating Jesus as the master of your life.*

Ask Jesus for forgiveness now. Write down your prayer if you like.



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Read the story again.

**Q:** *Can you think of one word that you would use to describe Jesus in this story?*

In the next study we will see that Jesus didn't go away from Simon. In fact, he did the opposite...

## **Pray**

Use your answers to the final question to make this prayer your own.

Dear Jesus, you are [*add your own words here*]. You are special and we are sinful. We could never be as special and wonderful as you! Thank you that you want to come close to us and love us anyway.

# 3. From Now On



## Pray

Dear Jesus, please teach us about yourself today and make a difference to our lives.

## For starters

What are some things you do every day?

Pick two of those things. On a scale of one to ten, how much would you like to leave each thing behind and stop doing it?

(1 = I wouldn't like to stop this thing at all! 10 = Yes please, can I stop today?)

## Luke 5 v 9-11

<sup>9</sup> [Simon] and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, <sup>10</sup> and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." <sup>11</sup> So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

## Explore the story

Read verses 9-11

**Q:** *Does Jesus want Simon to be scared of him?*



**Q:** *What do Simon and his friends leave everything for?*

Simon thought Jesus should leave. But instead, Simon ended up leaving—with Jesus! Simon was sinful, but Jesus had a job for him to do. Simon was going to fish for people, not fish! That meant he was going to help Jesus search for other sinful people—people who needed forgiveness. Simon left everything to be part of Jesus’s mission. He left behind things he liked as well as things he didn’t like. He put Jesus first.

**Q:** *Fishing for fish was less important to Simon than following Jesus. Can you think of some things you like doing that are less important than following Jesus?*

**Q:** *Putting Jesus first sometimes means giving things up. If someone today wants to put Jesus first, what changes might they make in their lives?*

Read the story again.

**Q:** *How do you think Simon and his friends felt as they left the beach with Jesus?*

From now on, Simon stops being called Simon and starts being called Peter. Peter means “rock”!



### **Extra**

Simon was going to learn about fishing for people. We can fish for people today too. That just means telling them about Jesus and about Jesus’s forgiveness.

Think of three friends you’ll see this week who don’t know Jesus yet.

**Q:** *What is one thing you could tell each of them about Jesus this week—or even today?*



Pray that God will give you a chance to be a fisher of people.

### **Pray**

Draw a big footprint. You’re going to fill it with some things that are important in your life.

First of all, write the name JESUS inside your foot shape.



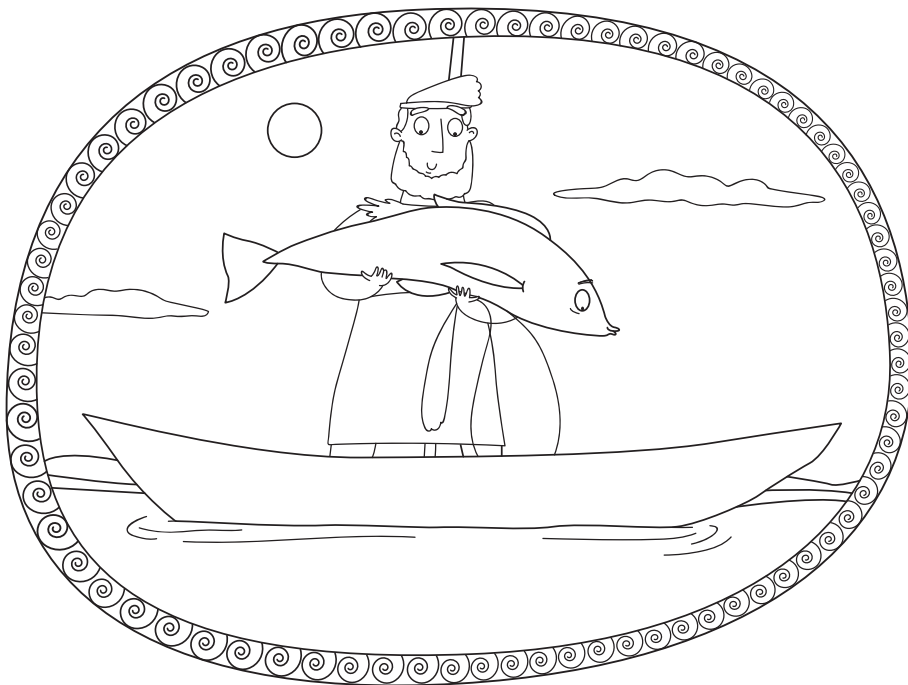
Think about how big or small you want to make his name: how big a part of your life is he, or how big a part of your life would you like him to be?

Then surround the name with words or drawings that show some other things that are important in your life.

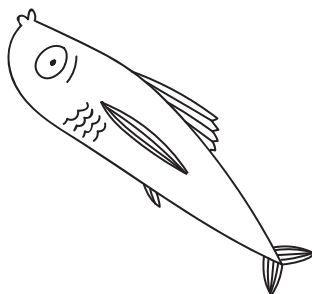
A large, empty rectangular box with a teal border, intended for writing or drawing.

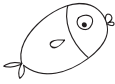
You might also like to say this prayer.

Dear Jesus, thank you for things I love, like *[add your own words here]*. But following you is more important than anything else. I want to put you first. Please help me to be thankful for the things you've given me, but also to be ready to give them up if you want me to.

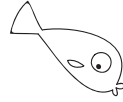


Every so often in this book  
you'll find colouring and  
activity pages like these ones.  
Have fun getting creative and  
solving the puzzles!





# Wordsearch



h	k	i	g	b	g	s	c	f	i	s	a	j	d	u
g	t	a	t	n	i	f	s	a	i	l	q	b	i	y
e	k	h	o	i	f	r	t	h	t	o	r	g	b	d
l	w	r	i	a	s	w	e	s	l	c	n	e	f	v
e	t	e	d	n	o	r	s	b	g	i	h	o	r	t
s	e	o	i	e	k	k	r	p	t	g	l	d	i	b
r	d	e	m	e	k	e	y	m	e	r	s	u	e	k
i	o	b	o	a	t	n	o	d	l	a	i	d	n	a
l	k	h	u	e	n	o	e	l	e	k	k	e	d	w
a	l	x	p	f	b	c	k	s	h	a	s	c	p	n
i	v	g	g	e	s	u	j	e	s	u	s	m	y	d
a	i	i	p	h	o	b	w	p	i	e	a	s	k	w
e	b	r	s	e	n	p	s	g	f	s	i	o	i	n
z	o	n	e	t	h	e	l	o	y	e	j	g	i	l
s	u	e	j	e	s	u	x	b	r	a	v	e	f	a

☐ Peter☐ net☐ speak☐ fish☐ friend☐ think☐ boat☐ strong☐ sail☐ catch☐ brave☐ Jesus