

## Luke 5 v1-11 – A Net that Works

A request came from a member of the 1277 Facebook group - 'I wondered if you had any words of encouragement or challenge that come out of the bible passage that I could share with the leaders. Just need a few ideas, nothing long or complicated.' Here are a series of pictures to be used for reflection (PowerPoint slides available)

### Luke 5 v2 Washing their nets



As many toddler groups have re-opened, I am also very conscious of many groups that haven't. This may be for a variety of reasons:

- No leader
- No volunteers
- Buildings issues
- Tiredness

Think of reasons why a group may not have re-opened ....

We pray for people to sit down and wash/mend the nets. As they do – may they be open to hear what the Holy Spirit is saying ... (It may be that they hang up the net and pass it on to someone else)

Find tools to help you rebuild/re-open – the 1277 Facebook group is a rich source of encouragement as is the Playtime project run by Care for the Family and other organisations too.

## Luke 5 v4 Launch out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch



Where might the Lord be asking you to launch your nets?

Is it a new place – the other side, the deep?

Your group may be popular but are there other communities in your area that need to know what you are doing e.g., refugees, new homes in your area, local school, high street etc?

Jesus asked them to let down their nets, but they let down a net. Nets v net. Is your toddler group doing what it has always done or are there other things it could do?

Nets could include:

- A baby bank
- A dads' group
- A group for new-born up to crawling babies
- Get Owt or Muddy Church
- What else?

## Luke 5 v5 We have toiled all night and caught nothing



Have you ever been asked the question – what is the point of doing a toddler group as we never see any of the families come to a church service? Or have you asked this yourself?

We can get discouraged ... what discouragement have you encountered that has put you off doing something in your toddler group?

- What about when you set up a sensory play activity and no one touched it?
- What about when you put out a request for more volunteers and no one responds?
- What about the church leadership/members who never show an interest in what the toddler group does or complain about the mess?

What can you do to overcome these challenges? (one of the many reasons the NMOP was created was to get people taking about and praying for toddler groups)

## Luke 5 v7 So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them



Running a toddler group is hard work and doing it singlehanded or in isolation can be too much. There are so many families in our local communities who need support and by working with other toddler groups in our local communities we can make a bigger difference.

How might this work in practice?

- A new toddler group called Little Chadders has just opened in Barking and Dagenham. The story of a CofE church with a leader and volunteers but no space and a Baptist church with space but no volunteers, so they joined forces.

- Meet termly with other toddler groups in your area – could be over lunch at one group venue. Everyone brings their own lunch and the host provide drinks. It can be held in various venues so you can see other people's building and set ups. Over lunch you can share the joys and challenges of your groups and then pray for one another.

- Have a list of groups that meet in your area and distribute to families ... encourage a culture of sharing what is going on, so everyone becomes involved in gathering people together. Get a map and plot the groups you know – does this 'net' cover all the communities?
- What else might you do? Who else could you work with?

Finally ponder on this picture – found in St Margaret’s Church, Barking



- Who do you see in the picture?
- Who is missing from the picture?
- Where are you in the picture?
- Where is your group in the picture?
- Where is your church in the picture?
- Where are your families?
- Look at the food and reflect on what this might mean for you.
- Spend a few moments reflecting on the picture.
- What one word springs to mind for you that you can take away from this time of reflection?

These are just some thoughts from the scripture Luke 5 v1-11 for the National Month of Prayer for Toddler Groups 2022

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