



## Introduction

For Christians, following Jesus is sometimes compared to setting out on a journey or embarking on a race through life. There are several Bible passages that pick up on this theme (see [Bible passages with a sports theme](#)). But how does that journey start? The following idea explores the story of the call of the disciples and links this to being part of a team.

## Preparation

No particular props are needed.

For another idea on this theme go to [Dedication - what a load of differences!](#)

## Development

1. Divide the class into five groups and give them jobs to mime as they become fisher-men and women on the shore of Lake Galilee in the time of Jesus. The jobs for each group are:
  - Mending fishing nets
  - Sweeping down the decks of a superior boat (owned by the family of James and John)
  - Counting and cleaning the latest catch of fish
  - Doing the accounts on the latest sales of fish (counting money!)
  - Checking the ropes and sails for the next trip
2. Encourage each group to get into role together. For example, talk to them about:
  - How badly the nets are torn
  - How tiring sweeping the decks is
  - The smell of the fish
  - The amount of money they have made
  - Their plans for the next trip and so on.

Encourage them to form and express opinions about their work, its good and its bad sides, and their hopes and fears.

3. Pause the action and introduce Jesus. Nobody is needed to play this role - just ask the class to imagine he has arrived. Explain that Jesus is a local teacher and holy man, who has impressed everyone with his stories and even some miracles.

Then give each group the invitation that Jesus gives in the Bible stories: *Come and follow me*. In other words, 'join my team and start a new kind of life... a new adventure'.

4. Give each group a few moments to work out together what they will say 'in character'. They may decide to reply in different ways within each group.



- Will they go?
  - Will they stay?
  - Why?
  - What do they feel about it?
  - What are their hopes and fears now?
  - What will happen next?
  - What will their families say?
  - What will their friends think?
5. Explore the responses together. Create two new bigger groups - of those who decide to join Jesus' team and those who decide to stay. Set up a dialogue between the groups. Can either side persuade some from the other group to change his/her mind?
6. The Christian life starts out with a choice. It's like joining a sports team/becoming a competitor. It's a big decision.
7. Link this activity to starting a race as an athlete.
- What other parallels can be drawn?
  - What will Christians need to keep going?
  - What are athletes running for?
  - What gives them their sense of purpose?

In the ancient Greek Games, the athletes would dedicate their performance to the gods, or the city they were representing. They were saying: 'I'm here to run for them, not for me'. It was like putting on a team shirt - taking on a new shared identity.

The first Christians dedicated themselves to God - by being baptised with water. It was a sign that they were saying goodbye to an old life and taking on a new one. 'I'm starting a new life now', they'd say. 'I'm living for Jesus.' For the Ancient Greek Christians, it was like being adopted into a new family. It must have felt like that when Jesus first picked his team of disciples. It was like picking players for a team.