

Back to School

—→ with God ←—



All-age Service Outline

This service is designed to be adaptable for both virtual and actual services. If you wish to include PPT slides the slide numbers given in the service match those in [BSG21 Service PPT Slides](#). Timings given are approximate.

Section 1: Introducing the theme

LEADER

4 mins

PPT Slide 1 Welcome to our **Back to School with God** service. The start of a new school year is always a milestone. Stand up (or give us a wave) if you are starting nursery, school, college or university – either as a student or a staff member!

Great to see you today. I hope you know that as a church family we are thinking about you and cheering you on! You are returning to school with our prayers – but not only that, we want to remind you that are also going **Back to school with God**.

Schools, nursery, and further education have been badly disrupted this past year and the going has been hard. It is good therefore to come together as a church family today to draw strength from God, to express our love and care, and to support those involved with schools.

As we begin our service, let's hear some words from Psalm 33. **PPT Slide 2** They help lift our eyes away from ourselves in worship of the living God. I invite you to join me in saying together the words of verse 22 after I say them. They are in black.

God's word is true. Everything he does is right. He loves what is right and fair. The Lord's love fills the earth.

So our hope is in the Lord. He is our help, our shield to protect us. We rejoice in him. We trust his holy name.

Lord, show your love to us as we put our hope in you.

(All) Lord, show your love to us as we put our hope in you. Psalm 33:4-5, 20-22

Let us pray.

PRAYER

1 min

Opening prayer *(own words or suggested prayer below)*

Lord God, we praise you. Your word is true. Everything you do is right. Your love fills the earth, and all your people praise you. We want to say to you today that our hope and trust are in you. No matter the difficulties, no matter the challenges, you are the God who draws near to help us and save us. May we know your presence with us today and always, in school or wherever we go. Lord, show your love to us as we put our hope in you. Amen.

PRAISE

5 mins

Choose your own hymn or song of praise or use one of the suggestions below: please check your church's copyright license before you live stream songs and videos.

- [Great Things](#), Phil Wickham
- [Great is Thy Faithfulness](#), Maranatha Music
- [Praise my Soul the King of heaven](#) (traditional)

LEADER

5 mins

PPT Slide 3 Our theme for this Back to School with God service is *the Boat & the Breakfast*. I wonder if you can think of a Bible story that mentions a boat? Take 30 seconds to discuss this question with the person next to you! *Allow 30 seconds or 1 minute for a 'pew discussion', social distancing permitting.*

Invite a few people to share their ideas. There are quite a few! Noah and the ark; Jonah; Jesus calling the disciples; Jesus walking on water, to name a few. Today's story however includes a special breakfast. Listen out for who is in the boat! What is happening? Imagine how you would feel if you were in the boat in this story.

John 21:1-14. Options for the Bible reading:

- Invite a young person or a teacher to read the passage.
- Download **BSG21 PPT Bible Story Script** and read while you screen share **PPT Slides 4-14**. *(The PPT images have been downloaded from www.freebibleimages.com. The website offers different styles. Feel free to download alternatives.)*
- Show A video drama retelling of the story: **BSG21 Video Bible Story – The Breakfast and The Beach**.
- There are a couple of video options to live stream from YouTube:
 - Bible Blocks [Breakfast on the Beach](#) – finish at 3:08 (suitable for younger children)
 - [Lumo Bible Project](#) Gospel of John 21:1-14. (suitable for all ages)

GAME

4 mins

Close Ups Quiz **PPT Slides 15-21**

Can you recognise these things which are to do with school? *Invite individuals to shout out answers, put their hand up, or write them down, according to what works best for you. Click mouse to see each answer appear.*

1. Lunch box
2. Schoolbag or backpack
3. Shoe
4. Jotters or notebooks
5. Pencil pot
6. School Tie

Well done for recognising all these items. They are very familiar, because they are part of everyday school life.

Peter and his friends would not have known school quite like we do. Their schooling was most likely being taught by their fathers to be fishermen, so boats and fish were part of their everyday lives.

Section 2: Bible Teaching 1 – The Boat **PPT Slide 22**

TEACHING

5 mins

Our Bible story takes place after Jesus had died and risen from the grave. He was now alive! John has just told us how Jesus had appeared to Mary and the disciples, including Simon Peter. Jesus had told the disciples to go to Galilee and wait for him.

It had been an exciting time – an overwhelming time. Peter had had enough of sitting around waiting, talking, discussing. He wanted to go fishing. He wanted to be doing something he knew – for remember, Simon Peter had been a fisherman before he met Jesus. The boat was like his office, his school: it was familiar to him.

PPT Slide 23 His friends Thomas, Nathanael, James, John and two others wanted to join him, and so they all got into the boat and pushed off from shore. It is good to be together doing things with friends, isn't it? We enjoy their company, and they can cheer us up. For some of us, that is why we love school – because we get to see our friends! For others, we may feel like Peter as we return to school, wanting to be active, doing things, discovering, and learning. For many, school is familiar, and we like to be there!

Simon Peter and his friends were looking forward to their all-night fishing trip. It was not unusual to fish by night, and Peter knew the times and places that fish could be caught. He was an experienced fisherman, he knew what he was doing – but even so, things did not turn out the way he

had hoped. A long, hard night of fishing ended with disappointment. **PPT Slide 24** By morning they had caught absolutely nothing. Not one fish. Their net was empty.

PPT Slide 26 I wonder how they might have felt? *(If you are holding this on Zoom, invite the children to type in what they think on Chat, draw an emoji and hold it up, or make a facial expression. Pause to allow this to happen. Share how you yourself might have felt in that situation.)*

Maybe we can think of a time when we put a lot of effort into something, and it didn't quite work out. All who work in a school or study in a school have faced difficulties and frustrations this past year. As have lots of other people! We have worked hard, very hard, but it has brought challenges and disappointment for many of us. Learning went online; parents became teachers; we missed seeing our friends; exams were cancelled; we lost people we loved; some people lost their jobs, and it has been hard to find employment. I'm sure we can all identify with Peter.

By early morning, the disciples were cold, wet, tired, and hungry. They accepted defeat and returned to shore. It was no use trying any longer.

PPT Slide 26 As they approached the shore, they saw a figure on the beach who asked if they had caught anything. They did not recognise Jesus at this point, but when the figure told them to throw their nets on the other side, they immediately responded and did exactly what he said. They gave it one last shot. **PPT Slide 27**

Doing what we are told is sometimes hard, isn't it? We often think we know better! After all, Simon Peter knew his job. He could have argued and said that throwing the net over the other side was pointless. Instead, he chose to listen to this stranger – who was of course, Jesus, and as a result, things worked out better than he could ever have imagined. Those of us who follow Jesus still find that to be true today. Jesus is worth listening to: obeying and trusting that he knows best.

PPT Slide 28 Suddenly there were so many fish in the net it was full to bursting! The boat that had been empty was now a boat that was full – not just of fish, but excited disciples.

Peter never imagined this could happen – and he could never have made it happen. He needed Jesus' help. He needed Jesus to perform a miracle. Peter had tried and failed: but Jesus had made it possible. It is good to remember the words of Psalm 33: **PPT Slide 29** "So our hope is in the Lord. He is our help." We can rely on him. Not just on a Sunday, but as Peter discovered - in our everyday lives.

PRAISE ITEM *Children's praise item. We suggest:*

3 mins

- [Our God is a Great Big God](#) (Official lyric video) by Vineyard Kids
- [Nothing's too big big big](#) by Doug Horley

Section 3: Bible Teaching 2 – The breakfast PPT Slide 30

ACTIVITY Choose one of the following.

A. Spot the Difference Game

4 mins

What do you like to eat for breakfast? **PPT Slide 31** Take a look at the screen. We are blessed with lots of things to choose from in our country and we should thank God for our food. I wonder which of these **you** would pick? *Have a look at the slide carefully for a moment. Give a minute to do.*

PPT Slide 32 Look again! Can you spot the differences? What has changed?

Here are the changes. Either invite responses or comment on them yourself:

- The coffee changed to tea.
- The toast and spread changed to a muffin.
- The orange juice changed to an orange.
- The muesli bar changed to strawberries.
- The bacon and eggs changed to cold meat.
- Some other things moved around.

We all know the difference a breakfast makes: our tummies are full and we have a good start to the day. In the story, Simon Peter and his friends had full nets. Jesus had made the difference – he had given them what they needed.

Saying grace – giving thanks for our food – and inviting Jesus to be with us, can make a huge difference at the start of our day. Why not meet with Jesus at breakfast each morning before school? You might say a simple prayer such as this one: **PPT Slide 33**

Thank you, Jesus, for our food. Thank you that you are with us today. Amen.

Why not try it and see the difference it makes!

Alternative: *If your local school runs a Breakfast Club you might like to invite people in advance of the service to bring a box of cereal which can be donated following the service, being mindful of all the boys and girls whose parents might not be able to afford breakfast. Following the Activity you might like to lead in prayer for such children.*

B. Memory Verse Fish **PPT Slide 34**

Read the words on the fish together with the children. Click mouse to remove words until only a few are showing. (There are 9 clicks to remove all the words – you may wish to click only two or even three times and stop once you feel that everyone is beginning to learn the verse.)

TEACHING

5 mins

Let's return to our story. **PPT Slide 35** There were SO many fish! Once again, Peter was reminded that Jesus more than provides. I wonder if his mind went back to the feeding of the 5000 where Jesus had shared bread and fish and 12 baskets were full of leftovers? We bring our needs to Jesus and he doesn't give us the bare minimum: he gives generously.

What just happened was so incredible, it had to be a miracle. It made Peter stop and recognise Jesus' love for him. **PPT Slide 36** I wonder: where have we been able to recognise God's love for **us** this past year? Perhaps a worrying situation turned around - and later we heard someone had been praying for us. Maybe someone texted or sent a card, just when we needed a bit of encouragement. We perhaps received a gift, or someone shared a photo that cheered us up? It makes all the difference to our day to know that someone cares for us!

Let's be like Peter. Let's stop and think, recognising God at work in our everyday lives. In the actions of others, we see his loving care. Again, these things remind us of what we read in Psalm 33:4: God's love fills the earth.

PPT Slide 37 Simon Peter's attention wasn't caught up with all the wriggling fish in his boat, however - it was taken up with the figure on the beach. When he heard his friend John shout, "It is the Lord!" Peter put on his cloak and jumped out the boat. We can really sense his eagerness to get to Jesus.

Cold, hungry, and tired, the disciples saw that Jesus had prepared a fire to warm them up, and cooked some delicious fish and bread. How kind! Jesus did not even need the fish they had caught – after all, he is the Lord of the fish! He had provided for them, as he already knew what they were needing. **PPT Slide 38** Even so, he sent Simon Peter to fetch the net of fish, then issued them all with a simple invitation – "Come and have breakfast".

PPT Slide 39 Jesus could have cooked the meal and left them to enjoy it – but no! He didn't drop the food and then leave them, like a takeaway driver might do today. The difference was that Jesus sat down with them. He was there. He enjoyed their company, listening to their chat, speaking to them in return. These were his friends, and he loved them. He gained pleasure from being with them. I wonder if you realise how much he loves

you too, just as you are. Jesus said to the disciples: come and have breakfast. Come and enjoy my company. Come and be fed and nourished and loved.

The final treat for them was to see Jesus break the bread. Perhaps their minds went back to their time with him in the upper room, just before he died. They didn't need to ask, "Who are you?" They just knew it was Jesus.

The breakfast reminds us that Jesus wants our company too. He gives us that same invitation: to come to him. To enjoy his presence. Not to rush away, not to say that other things are more important. As you go back to school, our prayer is that you will know that same loving presence of Jesus going with you. As families, we hope and pray that in the busy-ness of life, you will take time to enjoy the presence of Jesus together.

Section 4: Response

ACTIVITY Peter and his friends felt cold, hungry, wet, and tired. Jesus gave them breakfast. **PPT Slide 40**

2 min

- **What word describes best how you are feeling** as you go back to school?

Invite children and school staff to draw the shape of a fish on a piece of paper, then either choose a word (suggestions are on the PPT slide) and write it inside the shape – or else draw a face or emoji that shows how they are feeling. *(If you are meeting in person, can shapes be left somewhere as a reminder of the children's needs? If on Zoom, can parents share photos of the fish for emailing to those who would volunteer to pray? Or posting on Facebook? Just a few ideas!)*

As the children do the above, invite the rest of the fellowship to sing or listen to one of the following songs.

SONG

4 mins

Choose one of the following quiet, reflective worship songs suitable for all ages:

- [Glory and honour, to you we bring](#) – Duggie Dug Dug. This version has Makaton actions the children can copy and learn.
- [To be in your presence](#), Noel Richards
- [Be still, for the presence of the Lord](#)
- [The Goodness of Jesus](#) – City Alight

Or a children's song:

- [Ask, seek, knock](#) by Hillsong Kids
- [God is Good](#): Nick & Becky Drake (worship for everyone)
- [Our God's generous](#): Nick and Becky Drake

PRAYER

We want to finish our service by praying for local schools, reminding ourselves that God can show us his love as we put our trust in him.

Choose one of the following prayer options:

A. A pre-recorded video of children and teachers lighting a candle or tealight in their own homes, saying “Lord show us your love as we put our trust in you at (name of school).” *If you are back in church, this could be done ‘live’. If there are lots of schools, choose one person to light on behalf of the others.*

B. Pray in your own words for any of the following:

- for schools that young people in your church attend or teach in
- for those in the fellowship who lead an SU Group, serve on a PTA or Board of Governors, provide volunteer support for after school programmes or are involved in chaplaincy
- for your own church’s relationship with local schools
- for Headteachers and the needs of local schools (*contact HTs prior to the service to tell them about your service and find out their prayer needs.*)

C. Prayer of response

5 mins

Before the service, invite the following individuals to take part: The prayer can be downloaded as [BSG21 Responsive Prayer](#).

- A parent who will pray for pupils
- A pupil who will pray for school staff and headteachers
- A church member who will pray for the church and your relationship with local schools.

You will need to tell them in which order they are praying, and explain that after each person prays, the whole church will say together ‘Lord, show us your love as we put our trust in you. Amen.’

LEADER

(*Mention names*) have been asked to lead us in praying for schools and their needs. As each one finishes praying, we will all take part by saying together, “**Lord, show us your love as we put our trust in you.**”

Parent

Father God, we thank you today for every child and young person in our church fellowship. We pray for those who are starting nursery, primary, secondary or home learning (*if you have a child in your fellowship who attends a school for additional support needs, mention them in particular*) for the first time – as well as our students just starting college and university. May they know you care for them and are with them. May

knowing that they are going Back to School with God help them settle in quickly. We pray, Father, that our schools would be places of learning, creativity, encouragement, and discovery for our young people. We ask that your peace and joy would fill classrooms, playgrounds, and lessons. Help them with every difficulty. We also pray that extra-curricular activities might safely resume and that through them, pupils will grow in skills, understanding and friendship.

Lord, show us your love as we put our trust in you.

Pupil

Father God, we pray for our Headteachers, teachers and support staff who work so hard to ensure that we thrive as pupils and reach our potential at school. We thank you for the support and encouragement they give us. We ask that you give them wisdom for the year ahead. Please remind them of the impact they have on the lives of so many pupils. We pray for those in our own church who work in schools. In challenging moments, please give them patience, energy, and a sense of your presence. Guide them by your Spirit. We pray that the staff room would be a place where words of encouragement and hope are spoken.

Lord, show us your love as we put our trust in you.

Member

Father God, we thank you for our service this morning. You are trustworthy and faithful, generous, and kind. You are faithful, even when things don't always turn out as we would want or imagine. Thank you for your incredible love. Forgive us when we doubt your goodness and wander far from you – for times we think we know best, and don't listen to you. We are sorry, Lord. In our disappointments, failings, fears, and worries, draw us close to you.

We pray for those involved in education. We pray for those in positions of leadership and influence, who make decisions at a local and government level. We pray especially for Christians who serve and work among them that you would protect them, that they would lead with integrity, that they would be influencers for good, and work in a way that reflects and honours you. We pray for those who serve on Parent Teacher Associations and Boards of Governors, who have important decisions to make. May your Holy Spirit guide them.

Going forward, we pray that assemblies, SU groups and other Christian support might be allowed to continue, recognising their value as places where children and young people can wrestle with tough questions, explore the Bible, and find out who you are.

We pray for wisdom for our own church family as we support our local schools. *(If appropriate, pray for some of the things that you have been doing or are planning to do in the term ahead).* Lord, please stir us to

compassion, and stir us to action. Please help us bring encouragement to our children and teachers, both practically and through ongoing prayer.

Lord, show us your love as we put our trust in you. Amen.

PRAISE

Your own suggest or we suggest:

5 mins

[What a friend we have I Jesus](#) – Steph McLeod, Celtic Worship

[God of Grace, amazing wonder](#), Jonathan Rea, Keith Getty

[Yet not I but through Christ in Me](#) – City Alight