



J E S U S W A L K S O N W A T E R

MATTHEW 14:22-33, MARK 6:45-52, & JOHN 6:16-21

GOAL

▶ To help children realize God's great power and our need to have faith in Him.

CHARACTERS

▶ **Jesus:** Jesus spent time in prayer and then walked on the water to His disciples who were in a boat on the lake.

Peter: He wanted to walk on the water, too. He was able to take a step, but when he shifted his focus from Jesus to the waves, he sank.

Disciples: They watched in awe and fear as Jesus walked toward them on the water.

MEMORY VERSE

▶ **Matthew 14:31:** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

OVERVIEW

▶ **Read over Matthew 14:22-33:** The disciples began to sail across the Sea of Galilee when a storm struck. They became frightened. Jesus, who had stayed on shore to pray for a while, walked out to meet the terrified disciples in their boat. Peter saw Jesus walking toward them and asked Jesus to command him to come out on the water. He took one successful step before shifting his focus from Jesus to the crashing waves surrounding him. With his focus on the water instead of Jesus, Peter sank. Jesus helped Peter into the boat. As soon as Jesus climbed aboard, the storm stopped and the wind and waves became calm.



SUGGESTIONS

This story is about faith as much as it is about Jesus' amazing miracle. Take some time in class to discuss the meaning of faith and the importance of the object of that faith.

1. Great faith: After seeing Jesus walk on water, Peter recognized Jesus' power. Peter believed so much in Jesus' power that he climbed out of the boat to walk on the very waves that only moments before he feared would cause him to drown. With his eyes on Jesus, he lost sight of the things in this world that would cause him to fear.

2. Little faith: Peter was doing something we think of as impossible, but, as Paul says in Philippians 4:13, "I can do all things through him who strengthens me." As soon as Peter took his focus off of Jesus, Peter began to sink into the crashing waves. With his eyes on the waves, Peter lost sight of Jesus' power to help him do amazing things and overcome his fear.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

Sink or Float | Supplies: water, a clear container, such as a small aquarium if available; and a collection of items to place in the aquarium, such as a piece of foam, rocks, a leaf, full and empty soda cans, apples, bananas, cooked beans, dry beans, socks, a fish, etc.

Fill the clear container with water. Hold up the item that you are going to put into the water. Have students call out "Sink!" or "Float!" to predict what will happen when the item is placed in the water.

MEMORY VERSE MEANING

This verse is so full of meaning for Christians. Let's break it down.

1. Just as Jesus lifted Peter out of the water, Jesus saves us when we are in trouble.
2. Jesus rebuked Peter for not believing in the power being displayed right in front of him. It serves as a rebuke for not believing in the power that we know Jesus possesses.
3. It is a message of encouragement. Jesus asks Peter, "Why did you doubt?" Peter was doing something amazing through his faith in Jesus. It's like Jesus was asking Peter why he gave up when he had almost finished and succeeded. Even when what God has called us to do is scary, we should continue on, confident of God's power.



POST-LESSON ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Water Walker | Supplies:** Construction paper, markers, crayons, blue glitter, and fish stickers

Have each child trace their foot (shoes optional) onto a piece of construction paper. Have them cut out their footprint and color it and decorate it with glitter and stickers.

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TAKE HOME

- ▶ When Peter saw Jesus, he forgot he was afraid of the storm. In the next moments of his life, he would experience great faith quickly followed by doubt. How can we do something equivalent to walking on water in our faith in Christ?

1. Great faith: When we hear God's small, still voice directing us to do something that will glorify Him but terrifies us, we should leave our comfort zone, much like Peter did when he climbed out of the boat. Peter walked on water! That is impossible outside of God's power! We can trust that if God calls us to do something, He will provide us with protection and the means to be successful.

2. Little faith: Doing God's work isn't always easy or risk-free. All Christians doubt. It's a part of being human. Remember Peter did something amazing through Jesus' power, but when it became too scary for him, Jesus was right there to pull him out of the water. The same is true for us. Jesus is always with us.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What was the name of the lake Jesus told His disciples to cross?

A1: The Sea of Galilee

Q1b: Have you ever been on a boat?

TN: Many of the disciples were fishermen before they began to follow Jesus, so they knew how to sail.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What did Jesus go to do as the disciples sailed away?

A2: He went to pray.

Q2b: When do you most often find yourself praying?

TN: Some people pray after a hard day. Some people like to pray after good days to thank God for all of His help. Neither is better than the other, but the best answer is all the time and for no particular reason! Jesus had just experienced a mixed day. He received the truly terrible news that His friend John the Baptist had been killed. He also experienced a day in which He saw evidence that word of His power was spreading as thousands of people sought Him out for healing and teaching. People were beginning to believe. He also performed a huge miracle in which He fed 5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish. A lot happened, and Jesus needed some quiet time to pray. No matter what is going on in our lives, we should always take some time to pray and get direction from God.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What happened as Jesus was praying?

A3: A violent storm began.

Q3b: Have you ever tried to push open a door that can only be opened by pulling on it?

TN: Scripture says that the disciples were trying to cross the Sea of Galilee, but they were going against the wind. Everything on the lake that night was trying to push them back to where they started. They rowed, and the wind and waves pushed them back. It was like taking one step forward and then two steps back.

SLIDE 4

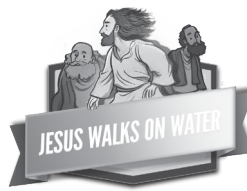


Q4a: How did Jesus get out to where the disciples were in their boat?

A4: Jesus walked on water to reach them.

Q4b: Have you ever participated in an obstacle course?

TN: Obstacle courses usually are a series of physical challenges meant to test agility. Sometimes they are really tough, and people get tripped up trying to complete them. There is no obstacle to Christ's power. He created this world, and nothing in it will stop Him from accomplishing His goals. In this story, not even a deep lake, wind, and wild waves would stop Him from reaching His disciples who were afraid and in trouble.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: At first, what did the disciples think the figure moving toward them was?

A5: They thought it was a ghost.

Q5b: How would you react if you saw someone suddenly appear in front of you?

TN: Often, when we see something that goes against the laws of nature as we understand them, our first reaction is one of fear. Appearing out of nowhere or walking on water is not possible for us humans to do, so the disciples rationalized what they saw with something they thought possible: a ghost. It's funny how they thought that the existence of a ghost was more likely than Jesus being able to walk on water!

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What did Peter do when he realized that it was Jesus walking toward them?

A6: Peter jumped out of the boat to meet Jesus.

Q6b: Have you ever played H.O.R.S.E?

TN: Briefly explain that H.O.R.S.E is a basketball game in which players attempt to make a basket in the same way the previous player did. Peter asked to meet Jesus not because he thought it would be cool to walk on water, but because he saw Jesus and wanted to be with him. He didn't do it to show that walking on water wasn't that big of a deal, instead, he did it out of a deep love for Jesus.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 7



Q7a: What happened when Peter's attention focused on the storm instead of Jesus?

A7: Peter began to sink into the water.

Q7b: If you go ice skating and spend half of the time falling down, can you say you're an ice skater?

TN: Yes and no. It's the same for Peter saying he's a water walker. Peter is the only man, who wasn't also God, to have walked on water. It's easy to see how doing something as strange as walking on water during a huge, violent storm got Peter to shift his focus from Jesus to the situation in which he found himself. This part of the story is meant to show us what we are capable of when we put our faith and trust in Jesus. If we keep our eyes on Jesus, we are capable of so much more than we think or imagine.

SLIDE 8



Q8a: What happened when Jesus stepped into the boat?

A8: The storm stopped and the wind and waves became calm.

Q8b: When you are afraid, what do you do?

TN: The disciples were afraid of the storm, but as soon as Jesus reached their boat, the storm stopped. Jesus is love. As 1 John 4:18 states, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." When we focus on Jesus, we think of His perfect love for us, and we are reminded of His power to overcome whatever it is that has caused us to fear. When we are afraid, we should turn to Jesus for help.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

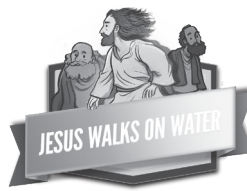
▷ **Matthew 14:31:** Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?"

BIG IDEA

▷ Through Jesus' power, we are capable of great things.

**CLOSING
PRAYER**

▷ Dear God, we don't know how You walked on the water, but we're glad that You did. You showed us that You are so powerful and amazing that You can do anything. And through You, we can do anything, too! Please give us faith. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding 5,000 people with only five loaves of bread and two fish, Jesus told His disciples to get into a boat and cross the lake called the Sea of Galilee. "I'll meet you later," Jesus told them. It was time for Jesus to spend some time in prayer.

SLIDE 2



As His disciples took the boat across the lake, Jesus went to a place where He could pray. Even though it was late at night, Jesus knew that prayer and time with God was important.

SLIDE 3



While Jesus prayed, a violent storm arose. The wind was fierce on the lake, and the disciples, rowing with all their might, were not getting anywhere. Even though they had been on the lake for hours, they were unable to steer the boat and became frightened.

SLIDE 4



At that moment, Jesus decided to come to the disciples. He did not have a boat, so He simply started walking on the water toward them. In the middle of that terrible storm, Jesus walked calmly as the crashing waves roared from all sides.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



As the lightning flashed and the rain pelted them, the disciples looked around in confusion, wondering what to do. Then they saw something on the water. “Could it be someone walking on the water? It’s a ghost!” they screamed in terror. Every one of the disciples in the boat was terrified. “Take heart! It’s me!” Jesus said cheerfully. “Don’t be afraid,” He said. He walked confidently toward the trembling disciples, who were huddling in the windswept, wave-beaten boat.

SLIDE 6



Then Peter answered, “If it’s you, command me to come to you on the water!” Peter knew that Jesus had control over all the elements, even the weather. “Come!” Jesus replied. Peter began to climb out of the boat and stepped onto the water—he was doing it! He was walking on the water! He could hardly believe what was happening.

SLIDE 7



Peter shifted his attention away from Jesus to the storm. He felt the sting of the strong wind, he looked at the motion of the wild waves, and then he plunged into the water. “Lord, save me!” Peter cried. Quickly, Jesus grabbed Peter and pulled him back, helping him into the boat. Jesus looked at His disciples. “Why do you have so little faith? Why do you doubt so easily?” Jesus asked.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 8



Then Jesus stepped into the boat Himself. Right away, the night became calm. The air went still. There was not even a hint of the terrible wind and storm they had experienced. The disciples in the boat were astonished. Their terror was gone, and they started worshipping Jesus. "Truly, you are the Son of God!" they whispered in adoration.