

Jesus Walks on Water

(Matthew 14:22-33)

Pre-Session Warm Up

In what area of your life do you face the most fears and doubts? Do you ever look at things happening around you and become afraid? [Teacher, discuss difficult situations children may face, such as illness, parents fighting, having to move and change schools, etc.]

Sometimes we get so involved in thinking about our problems that we forget that God can help us. Or, sometimes we look for help in the wrong places. Too often we look to ourselves. We think, “*I can get myself out of this problem.*” That’s never a good idea since Jesus says, “*Without Me you can do nothing*” (John 15:5).

God knows how frightening your troubles can be, and He has the power to solve every one of our problems. He wants you to think about Him in times of trouble. Today we are going to learn how important it is for us to look to Jesus when we are in troubled times and remember that He is with you and can help you.

Opening Prayer

Father, it’s one thing to say that we know You are always with us and that You will always take care of us no matter what happens. But when we are in the middle of a fearsome time, it’s hard for us to not be afraid. This morning, Lord, we want to learn to trust You, even when the situation around us looks hopeless. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, A very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear. (Psalm 46:1-2a)

Lesson

The miracle of feeding of the 5,000 happened on the shore of the Sea of Galilee and all the people were caught up in the excitement. So Jesus strongly urged his disciples to go across the Lake to a quiet place where they could rest.

Matthew 14:22-23

Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. (23) After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone.

Seeking time alone with the Father was very important for Jesus. Every day He made a point of getting away to pray and listen to the Father speak to His heart. If Jesus needed to spend time in prayer to the Father, how much more do we need to? Spending time with God in prayer equips us to meet life’s challenges and struggles.

As soon as the boat load of disciples sailed away, Jesus went up on the mountain to pray. But, when the disciples were about four miles out to sea, a fierce storm arose.

Matthew 14:24

Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves.

Sudden storms on the Sea of Galilee were common during certain seasons. The storm was so violent, that in spite of their experience, these skilled fishermen were in danger of going under in their small boat.

Matthew 14:25

About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water.

Although praying on a mountain several miles away, Jesus saw the disciples struggling against the storm and He knew their fear.

How amazing that Jesus could walk on water! Can you imagine Him coming toward the boat on top of the waves as they rolled and tossed in the fierce wind? Jesus is God and has power to do anything. He even has power to forgive your sins. He could even walk on top of a raging, stormy sea!

Matthew 14:26

When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, "It's a ghost!"

The disciples must have been greatly troubled when they saw a figure moving toward them until Jesus spoke.

Matthew 14:27

But Jesus spoke to them at once. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Take courage. I am here!"

Then Peter does an interesting thing...

Matthew 14:28

Then Peter called to him, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water."

Peter reacted to Jesus in total faith; he saw Jesus walking on the water and asked Jesus to let him walk on the water, too.

Matthew 14:29

"Yes, come," Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus.

Looking at the waves tossing around him, Peter began to be afraid.

Matthew 14:30

But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted.

When Peter looked away from the Lord Jesus and focused on the waves crashing all about him, he became frightened. If Peter had kept looking to the Lord Jesus for help, the crashing waves would not have started to pull him under! There's an important lesson here for us. When you find yourself facing trouble, talk to the Lord Jesus about it. Ask God to help you think about Him instead of the problem.

When Peter took his eyes off of the Lord, he began to sink. And he cried out to the Lord for help. He said, "Lord, save me!"

Matthew 14:31

Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. "You have so little faith," Jesus said. "Why did you doubt me?"

Jesus didn't make the storm stop; He simply reached out and caught hold of Peter and calmed his fears. God may not make your problem go away, either. There may be things He wants you to learn from your difficulty. But He promises to be with you and to help you go through the problem. He can help you not to be worried. The Lord heard Peter's cry for help and saved him from drowning.

Matthew 14:32-33

When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. (33) Then the disciples worshiped him. "You really are the Son of God!" they exclaimed.

Once he looked to Jesus, Peter found himself safe again in the boat and then the wind stopped.

The Bible says we can expect to have troubles in our lives (John 16:33). At times those problems may seem to crash all around you, like waves in a storm. If you keep your mind focused on the difficulty, you become discouraged and want to give up. It's not easy to keep going through the hard times in your life. But as you look to God for help, that is, as you get in the boat with Jesus, He will calm the storms of your life. We need to stay in the boat with Jesus, too.

Closing Prayer

Thank You, Father, that You are with us always. Help us to think about You and Your great power instead of worrying about our own problems. Help me to trust You to take care of my problems. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Craft Corner

Game Center

Act out the story

This lesson is a great one for the children to reenact. Bring in some dress up clothes. Build a "boat" with your chairs and tables. Let the children be creative! Some of the kids can be the "storm" blowing in.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What did Jesus do as soon as the boat load of disciples sailed away? (He went up on a hill to pray.)
2. Why is it important for us to spend a quiet time every day praying to God? (It equips us to meet life's challenges and struggles.)
3. When the disciples were about four miles out to sea, what happened? (A fierce storm arose.)
4. What would you have thought if you saw someone coming to you walking on the water in the middle of a raging, stormy sea? How did the disciples react? (They thought it was a ghost!)
5. What unusual thing did Peter do when Jesus came walking on the water? (He asked the Lord to command him to come out walking on the water, too.)
6. What happened to Peter as he was walking on the water? (He looked at the waves tossing around him and began to be afraid.)
7. What did Jesus do as soon as Peter cried out for help? (He reached out His hand and caught hold of Peter, calming his fears.)
8. What important lesson do we learn from Peter's experience? (When we find ourselves facing trouble, ask God to help us think about Him instead of our problem.)
9. When did Jesus stop the storm? (As soon as Peter got in the boat with Jesus.)
10. Why didn't Jesus stop the storm as soon as Peter cried out for help? (Jesus wanted Peter to learn an important lesson from the fearsome experience.)
11. Are troubles in life a sign that we've been bad? (No! The Bible says we can expect troubles in our lives. God uses them to make us into the kinds of people He wants us to be.)
12. What important lesson did you learn this morning? (If we keep our mind focused on our difficulties, we become discouraged and want to give up. But as we look to God for help, He will calm the storms of our lives.)