

## Jesus Walked on Water

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 14:22-33

**MAIN POINT:** Jesus walked on the sea.

**KEY PASSAGE:** John 20:31

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.

**SMALL GROUP OPENING** (10–15 MINUTES) **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (25–30 MINUTES) **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (25–30 MINUTES)  
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### Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus had just fed more than 5,000 people on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. After sending away the people and directing His disciples to go back across the sea, Jesus went to a mountain to pray. It was late, and He sought to be alone with His Father. Jesus was preparing to fulfill His Father's plan. Before long, He would die on the cross and rescue people from their sin.

While Jesus prayed, the disciples struggled to cross the sea. A storm came and tossed their boat up and down. They didn't make any progress against the waves. Then, in the early morning hours, they saw a figure walking toward them on the water. They thought it was a ghost, but it was Jesus!

Peter asked Jesus for permission to come out on the water, and Jesus called to him. Peter walked on the water too—until he remembered the storm. Peter took his eyes off of Jesus and he began to sink. Peter cried out to Jesus, “Save me!”

Jesus took Peter by the hand and got in the boat. The wind and waves calmed. Though Peter had doubted, the disciples worshiped Jesus. Clearly He was no ordinary man; this was the Son of God—the promised Messiah!

Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. As you teach kids, encourage them to look to Jesus in faith every day. We can seek Him for our salvation and for help as we live in this world. Even in the midst of fear and doubt, we can hold out our empty hands and cry, “Lord, save me!” He will answer, and we can respond in worship of our Lord and Savior.

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Additional resources for each session are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

## Jesus Walked on Water

*Matthew 14:22-33*

### • **Make a windstorm:**

When you get to the part of the story where the storm begins, invite the kids to make whistling or blowing sounds for the wind, and make wave motions with their hands. Call for silence when the wind and waves stop.

**Jesus had been teaching crowds of people by the Sea of Galilee. It was getting late, so He told His disciples to get into the boat and go to the other side of the sea.** Jesus sent the crowds away and went up on the mountain to pray by Himself.

That evening, the boat was far from the shore and the wind blew, and the waves tossed the boat around. Jesus was still on the mountain alone.

**Around three in the morning, Jesus came toward His disciples, walking on the sea. When the disciples saw Jesus, they were terrified.**

“It’s a ghost!” they cried.

**Right away, Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It’s Me. Do not be afraid.”**

**Peter answered, “Lord, if it really is You, tell me to come to You on the water.”**

**So Jesus said, “Come!”**

**Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the water toward Jesus. But when Peter saw how strongly the wind was blowing, he was afraid. Peter began to sink.**

**“Lord, save me!” he cried.**

**Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter.** Jesus said, “You have little faith. Why did you doubt?”

**They got into the boat and the wind stopped. Then everyone in the boat worshiped Jesus and said, “Truly You are the Son of God.”**

*Christ Connection: Jesus proved that He can be trusted. His miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is. Only Jesus can save us when we look to Him in faith.*



**WANT TO  
DISCOVER  
GOD'S WORD?  
GET  
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover Jesus' disciples saw His miracles and teachings, but they didn't understand. When Jesus rose from the dead, they remembered and believed. (John 2:22) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out [www.lifeway.com/devotionals](http://www.lifeway.com/devotionals).

# Small Group OPENING

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## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, talk to them about games we might play in a swimming pool. Ask them if they have ever jumped off a diving board. What happened when their feet hit the water?

**SAY** • We all know that water cannot hold us up because it is not dense enough. It's not like solid ground. Today we will learn about two men who stepped onto the surface of the sea and walked! Who do you think those men could be?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "The A-MAZE-ing Walk" activity page. Instruct kids to guide Peter through the maze from the boat to Jesus.

**SAY** • Walking through a maze might be difficult, but walking on water is usually impossible! Today we will learn about a time Peter walked on water to reach Jesus. How do you think that could happen? Who can make impossible things possible?

- "The A-MAZE-ing Walk" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Stepping stones

Before class, use tape to make irregular shapes on the floor. These will be “stepping stones” where kids can step. Then play a game where the kids must hop from “stone” to “stone” to avoid falling in the “seas” (unmarked areas of the floor).

**SAY** • People cannot walk on water usually. We would need stepping stones to avoid falling into the sea. Today we will talk about a time when Jesus walked on water without stepping stones, Peter wanted to join him. What do you think happened to Peter? We'll learn more soon.



• tape

### OPTION 2: Stormy seas

Fill a few tubs or large bowls with water. The larger your group, the more stations with tubs you will need. Provide each kid with one 6-inch square of aluminum foil. Help the kids form a boat shape by bending up the edges. Allow each kid a chance to place her boat in the water to see if it floats. If it does, ask her to scoop some water into the boat. Discuss what happens as the boat fills with water.

**SAY** • Boats are built to float on water, but if too much water gets into the boat, it begins to sink! That's why storms can be so dangerous for boats; big waves can crash into the boat, filling it with water. Today we will learn about a time the disciples were in a boat during a storm. They saw something that, at first, scared them even more than the storm.

• aluminum foil  
• tubs or large bowls  
• water

## Transition to large group

# Large Group LEADER

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing colorful workout clothes and a helmet. His or her face has “war paint” patterns across both cheeks.]*

**LEADER** • *[Speak loudly and with high energy.]* ALL RIGHT!

NICE! Welcome back to the course, warriors. Sadly, this is the last day of the event. Happily, the last day has the best obstacle challenges. These are the stations that will make or break the Mud Warrior champions. It all starts with the slime-pit somersaults, followed by the upside-down rope climb. Then there’s a 2000-meter dash to the last station, the Mud Warrior Slog: a 100-meter pit filled with muddy water. Competitors have to plow through the thick gunk as fast as they can to reach the finish line. I heard a guy last year say it was like running through a milkshake. He didn’t finish and had to be pulled from the mud by a crane! One

competitor a few years back set the record for the fastest Mud Warrior Slog. I wasn't around when it happened, but people tell stories about her. Some say it looked as though she was running on top of the mud. [*Pause, in awe.*] Of course, we know that's not really possible, but she must have gone really fast for people to describe it that way.

Actually, that reminds me of our next Bible story. It's about another of Jesus' miracles.

### Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • We've been talking about Jesus' ministry on earth—the things He did and taught about. For a few weeks you all learned the stories Jesus told about God and His kingdom. For the last two weeks we've focused on the miracles Jesus did. Remember our big picture question and answer? ***Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove that He is God the Son.***

### Giant timeline (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Two weeks ago, we learned about Jesus turning water into wine. Last week we focused on Jesus feeding 5,000 people with one boy's lunch. What miracle is coming next? [*Allow responses, then point to the giant timeline.*] That's right! This week's Bible story is called "Jesus Walked on Water."

• Giant Timeline

### Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open a Bible to Matt. 14:22-33. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Walked on Water."

• Bibles  
• "Jesus Walked on Water" video  
• Big Picture Question Poster  
• Bible Story Picture Poster



**LEADER** • This story takes place right after the story of Jesus' feeding the 5,000. Basically, as soon as the people finished eating, Jesus sent His disciples back across the Sea of Galilee while He said goodbye to the people and then went to pray. The disciples didn't get very far, though, because strong winds and waves made it dangerous and difficult for them to sail. Do you think Jesus knew about their trouble? [*Allow responses.*] Of course He did! Jesus knows everything.

Late at night, Jesus went to them—not in another boat, but by walking across the waves. That's right. **Jesus walked on the sea.** The disciples almost had a meltdown! They thought Jesus was a ghost. Jesus called out to them to calm them, but Peter wanted to be sure. Peter told Jesus to call for him. So Jesus did. Peter went to the edge of the boat and jumped out onto the sea as well. He was walking on water just like Jesus! What happened next? [*Allow responses.*]

That's right. As Peter walked on water, he started to take his eyes and mind off of Jesus. He looked around and saw the big, crashing waves and strong, howling winds. He grew afraid and began to sink. Peter called out to Jesus right way. Jesus reached down and saved Peter from the water.

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • This story reminds me of our lives. We all face hard times when we feel like we can't seem to go the right way. Sometimes it may even feel like Jesus has left us alone to face the difficulties of life. But Jesus never leaves us when we trust in Him. He knows our struggles and will come to us to face them with

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

us. Sometimes Jesus will tell us to do scary things. When we trust in Jesus, He gives us His power to do His work. And the wonderful thing is this: Anytime we look away from Jesus and our hearts fill up with fear, we can call out to Jesus and trust that He will be right there to pull us up. We know this because Jesus promised to be with His people who believe in Him. ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** We can trust Him because of who He is and because of what He has done. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again on the third day. Jesus gives us forgiveness and new life.

### **Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 20:31.

- Key Passage Poster
- “Life in His Name” song

**LEADER** • ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** God inspired people to write the Gospels so that we could know that Jesus is the Messiah and believe Him, too.

Lead boys and girls in singing “Life in His Name.”

### **Discussion starter video (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • Have you ever felt worried about something that wasn’t as bad as it first seemed? Think about that while we play this short video.

- “Unit 23, Session 3” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 23, Session 3” discussion starter video. Discuss why the kid in the video was so afraid. Did the kid need to be so worried? What helped the kid calm down? Who can help us have peace in the middle of hard times?

**LEADER** • We know that Jesus has power over everything. Even when things seem difficult or scary, we can

trust that Jesus is in control. He died on the cross to rescue us, and nothing can take away the eternal life He has promised us.

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

• “I Will Stand” song

**LEADER** • I’m so thankful for the power Jesus has and the miracles He did to prove that He is the Messiah. Let’s sing to Him.

Sing together “I Will Stand.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • God, thank You for Jesus. Help us to trust You with everything we have. Give us strength and courage to live for You and call out to You when we feel like we are sinking. Amen.

### **Dismiss to small groups**

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Allow volunteers to say the verse from memory. Praise the efforts of each volunteer. Then invite the kids to stand in a circle. Invite the first kid to say the verse. If he gets stuck, he can call out “save me!” The next kid in the circle will attempt to pick up where he left off. If she is unable to complete the verse, she must call out for help as well. After a kid successfully completes the verse, start over with the next kid in line. Play until the kids can say the whole verse without calling for help.

**SAY** • Great job with our key passage. Remember that *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son*. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John wrote about Jesus so that other people who never saw Him in person could still know about Him and believe in Him. Jesus is the Messiah and He alone can save us.

## Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid  
• Main Point Poster

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them locate Matthew 14:22-33. Ask them to follow along in their Bibles as you read the passage aloud. Then form two teams of kids and ask each team questions. Teams must work together to

decide on an answer. Then they must send a representative to the front of the room to deliver their answer.

Questions:

1. Why wasn't Jesus in the boat with the disciples? (*Jesus stayed behind to send the crowds home and pray alone on the mountain, Matt. 14:22-23*)
2. What happened to the disciples in the boat? (*They were hit by strong winds, Matt. 14:24*)
3. When the disciples first saw Jesus, what did they think He was? (*a ghost, Matt. 14:26*)
4. What did Jesus say to them? (*He told them not to be afraid, Matt. 14:27*)
5. Who called back to Jesus? (*Peter, Matt. 14:28*)
6. What did Jesus tell Peter to do? (*walk out to Him over the water, Matt. 14:29*)
7. What caused Peter to sink? (*He looked at the waves and became afraid, Matt. 14:30*)
8. What did Jesus do when Peter called out for help? (*Jesus saved him, Matt. 14:31*)

**SAY** • Jesus knew that His disciples were struggling in the boat against the wind and the waves. **Jesus walked on the sea** to be with them. They were amazed and afraid at first. Peter tried to walk to Jesus but sank when he looked around and saw the waves. When Peter called out to be saved, Jesus rescued him.

When we call out to Jesus, He rescues us. **Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove that He is God the Son.** Jesus' greatest miracle was dying on the cross for our sin and rising again on the third day. When we trust Jesus, we gain new life and forgiveness for our sin.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

**LOW PREP**

- paper
- pens
- tape

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Don't be afraid

Before class, make two signs, one that reads *scary* and the other reading *not scary*. Use tape to hang one on each side of the room. Instruct kids to listen to scenarios you read and run to the side of the room corresponding to their thoughts about the situation. For each scenario, discuss ways we can trust Jesus through the scary situation.

#### Scenarios:

- You stop at a store window to look at a toy, but when you turn back around, you don't know where your parents went.
- You are swimming at the beach and see a shark fin poking out of the water, heading straight toward you.
- You are camping out in the woods and drop a marshmallow in the fire before it finishes roasting.
- You walk into your classroom and remember that you have a spelling test today, but you know most of the words.
- You threw a ball and accidentally hit your family's TV. It falls to the ground and breaks.

**SAY** • A lot of situations can make us worry. Fear is a normal feeling, and God gave us the ability to feel fear to protect us from things that can hurt us. However, when we let fear control our hearts, we are not trusting Jesus. We know that Jesus is our Rescuer, and He provides us with salvation. When we believe in Him, our future is forever secure with God. Even the scariest things on earth cannot take us away from God. God wants us to remember His power and trust Him even in difficult or scary situations.

## **OPTION 2:** Leap of faith

Instruct a volunteer to wait until you say “go” before attempting to jump over a chair, trash can, or other large obstacle. Blindfold the volunteer and quietly remove the obstacle from their path. Make sure the rest of the class is silent to avoid giving away the twist. Tell the volunteer to jump over the obstacle. Then remove the blindfold and let him see that the obstacle was moved.

- chair, trash can, or other large obstacle
- blindfold

**SAY** • It can be a little scary trusting Jesus when we aren’t sure how things will work out. However, like Peter, sometimes we need to simply take a “leap of faith” and let Jesus take care of the results. It may not always turn out as we thought it would, but we can trust Jesus to take care of us.

## **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute each child’s journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture showing a difficult situation they can trust Jesus through.

- pencils or crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story coloring page, 1 per kid

**SAY** • We know that Jesus is the Messiah because of the miracles He performed and the things He taught. Jesus died on the cross for our sin and rose again defeating death. We can trust Him through anything. Make sure each child secures this week’s sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, asking God to help your group trust Him more.

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.