

## 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.

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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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# The BIBLE STORY

## Bible Storytelling Tips

## Jesus Walked on Water

*Matthew 14:22-33*

### • **Vary your voice:**

Dim the lights to portray nighttime. Use tense or quiet voices during climatic or suspenseful parts of the story.

### • **Use volunteer**

**actors:** Ask for two kids or adult volunteers to act out the story as you tell it. One volunteer can portray Jesus and another can be Peter.

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  
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that 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, invite them to share about a time they felt afraid. What caused them to feel afraid? What do they do when they feel afraid?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Out of Place” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Out of Place” on the activity page. Kids should circle the things that seem strange or out of place in the picture.

**SAY** • What kinds of strange things did you find in the picture? [*Allow kids to respond.*] Did anyone circle Jesus or Peter walking on the water? That is definitely strange! Today we are going to hear the Bible story about Jesus walking on water.

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Captain, may I?

Guide kids to form pairs. If you have an odd number of players, choose one kid to be the captain. Otherwise, you be the captain. The captain should stand about 10 to 20



feet away from the other players, or crew members. Guide pairs of crew members to take turns asking the captain for permission to move across the room. For example, “Captain, may I take three steps forward?”

If the captain says, “Yes, you may,” then both players may advance. If the captain says, “No, you may not,” then he should provide an alternative move: “But you may take two hops forward.”

As they play, the captain should carefully observe the crew members. If anyone is caught looking away from the captain, he and his partner must return to the start.

**SAY** • Was it hard to keep your eyes on the captain while you played? In today’s Bible story, we are going to hear about a time one of Jesus’ disciples took his eyes off of Jesus and found himself in deep water!

### **OPTION 2:** Float or sink?

Set a large tub of water on the floor and display various objects. Invite the kids to gather around you. Explain that kids will help you find out if each item sinks or floats.

Ask kids if they think an object will float or sink. Then test their prediction. Use towels to dry off objects and clean up any spills. Allow kids to group the objects based on whether they float or sink in the water.

**SAY** • Do you think a person would float or sink in the water? You know from taking baths or swimming in a pool that people tend to sink in water. Well, today’s Bible story is about a miracle. Would you believe that Jesus walked on water? Even one of His disciples walked on water! Let’s find out more.

- large clear tub about half full of water
- various objects (pencils, plastic forks, rubber balls, sponges, toy blocks, apples, oranges, aluminum foil, bath toys, and so forth)
- towels for cleanup

## **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

• life jacket

*[Large Group Leader enters wearing athletic attire and sweatbands on his or her wrists and head. Leader begins buckling a life jacket around him- or herself.]*

**LEADER** • This is a bit snug. *[Adjust life jacket.]* OK, there we go. Much better. Welcome back! I'm *[your name]*. In case you are wondering what this life jacket is for, I'll remind you that I am training for a very important competition! This is a unique obstacle course. I am not exactly sure what the course will look like, but I've heard there might be some water involved. That's not good news because ... well, I don't exactly know how to swim. I sure hope there is a lifeguard on duty who can pull me out of the water if I start to sink.

*[Hold up a Bible.]* Hey, that actually reminds me of the Bible story we are going to hear today. Let's get after it.

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • The Bible stories we have heard so far have been about Jesus' miracles. Our big picture question is, *Why did Jesus perform miracles?* Let's say the answer together: *Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

• Giant Timeline or  
Big Story Circle

**LEADER** • Can anyone remember what Jesus' first miracle was? I'll give you a hint: It happened at a wedding. [*Call on kids to respond.*] That's right. **Jesus' first miracle was to turn water into wine.** Another miracle Jesus performed happened by the sea. This time, people weren't thirsty; they were hungry! **Jesus fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.**

Today we are going to hear a Bible story called "Jesus Walked on Water." This story comes from the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament. I can't wait to hear it!

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 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** • Incredible! I don't know about you, but I have never seen *anyone* walk on water. I've even tried it myself, and as soon as I put my foot down ... plo! I sink straight to the bottom of the pool.

I love this story about Jesus' miracle because Jesus wasn't trying to do some magic trick to impress His



friends. Do you remember our big picture question and answer? *Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.* So when **Jesus walked on the sea**, His disciples saw that He had power over creation. They realized He was telling the truth about being God's Son, and they worshiped Him.

Now, when the disciples first saw Jesus coming toward them, they were afraid! It was three in the morning, and they were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee. They didn't know who was coming on the water; they thought it was a ghost.

Isn't it interesting what Peter did next? He wanted to make sure it was Jesus, so he asked Jesus to let him walk on the water too. Jesus said, "Come," and Peter walked toward Jesus on the water. But that didn't last long. Peter looked around and saw that the wind was strong, and he was afraid. Peter began to sink!

Peter did just what I would do if I were sinking in the sea. He cried out, "Lord, save me!" And that's exactly what Jesus did. Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter, and they got into the boat.

## Christ connection

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.

**LEADER** • Peter had doubted Jesus when he saw that the wind was strong. But Jesus proved that He can be trusted. Through God's Word, we see that Jesus' miracles, teaching, death, and resurrection showed that He is who He says He is.

We can look to Jesus in faith as our Lord and Savior. He will rescue us from our sins and give us eternal life.

## Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the girls to read aloud John 20:31 together. Then call for the boys to repeat the key passage.

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

**LEADER** • According to our key passage, how do we have eternal life, or life in Jesus’ name? (*by believing*) The Bible does not tell us about everything Jesus did [*see John 21:25*], but it tells us what we need to know to believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. Let’s sing.

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

## Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

**LEADER** • Have you ever been in a situation that caused you to panic? I know I can feel pretty nervous when a situation seems out of control. Watch this.

- “Unit 23, Session 3” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 23, Session 3” discussion starter video.

Then guide kids to discuss the following questions:

- Why was Benjamin panicking? What made him calm down?
- Do you ever feel worried about a situation that isn’t as bad as it seems?
- What do you know to be true about God that can help you have peace in hard situations?

**LEADER** • We can trust that God is in control and has power over everything, even when times are hard. Trusting God gives us peace that can show the world that He is mighty.

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.

• “I Will Stand” song

## **Sing (4 minutes)**

**LEADER** • When **Jesus walked on the sea**, He did a miracle. A *miracle* an unusual event that only God can cause to happen. ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** Let’s sing. Sing together “I Will Stand.”

## **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

**LEADER** • Lord Jesus, we look to You in faith. We call out, “Save us!” and You answer. Thank You for dying on the cross to rescue us from sin and death. We love You. 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.

Tip: 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
- large sheet of paper
- marker
- sticky notes

Before small group, write the key passage on a large sheet of paper. Leave out several of the key words. Write the missing words on separate sticky notes. Challenge kids to attach the sticky notes in the blanks to complete the key passage.

For an added challenge, prepare sticky notes with words not included in John 20:31. Kids must sort out the correct words from the word choices.

**SAY** • In today's Bible story, **Jesus walked across the sea.**

The Bible tells us about these things because they can help us believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. Do you believe that?

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

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- paper
- pencils
- Bible times costumes
- microphone
- beach towel

Guide kids to open their Bibles to Matthew 14:22-33.

Choose a volunteer to stand at the front of the room.

Drape a beach towel around his shoulders and tell him he is "Peter." Choose another volunteer to stand a few feet away. He will play the role of Jesus. Provide Bible times costumes for the volunteers to wear.

Form four groups of kids. Give each group paper and a pencil. Tell them that they are reporters investigating the

events of today's Bible story. Each group should think of at least two questions they can ask to "Peter" or "Jesus."

Call on groups to ask questions one at a time. Volunteers should answer based on the Bible story. If they forget a detail, guide someone to read aloud from the Bible to find the answer. Encourage kids to be creative or dramatic while still being biblically accurate with their responses.

Assist kids with questions as needed. Suggest kids ask questions addressing the who, what, when, where, and why of the Bible story.

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

Sample questions for Peter:

1. Who did you think was walking on the water? (Read Matt. 14:26.)
2. What did Jesus say to you when you saw Him? (Read Matt. 14:27.)
3. When did you start to sink? (Read Matt. 14:30.)
4. Where were you when this happened? (Read Matt. 14:22,24.)
5. Why do you think you doubted Jesus? (Read Matt. 14:31)
6. What did you do when the wind stopped? (Read Matt. 14:32-33.)

**SAY** • Great job, everyone. In our Bible story today, we learned that **Jesus walked on the sea**. That's really cool! But remember, Jesus didn't perform miracles just to impress His disciples.

***Why did Jesus perform miracles?*** [Allow kids to respond.] Yes. That's our big picture question and answer. ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.***

## Activity choice (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Rescue tag

Invite kids to play “Rescue Tag.” Explain that the game is similar to “Freeze Tag.” Choose two players to be *It*.

Designate another player as the *Rescuer*.

Clear an open area for kids to move. Instruct kids to try to avoid being tagged by *It*. If *It* tags a player, the player should sit on the floor and hold out his hands. The tagged player should shout, “Save me!”

When the *Rescuer* tags a seated player, he may rejoin the game. Note that players who are *It* may not tag the *Rescuer*.

**SAY** • In our Bible story, **Jesus walked on the sea** and allowed Peter to walk on the water too. What did Peter say when he was afraid? (“*Lord, save me!*”) How did Jesus respond? (*Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter.*)

### OPTION 2: Paint the scene

Invite kids to paint with watercolor paints. Provide supplies and encourage them to paint a scene from today’s Bible story. Suggest the following scenes:

- Jesus walked toward the disciples.  
(Matthew 14:25-26)
- Peter started walking on the water toward Jesus.  
(Matthew 14:29)
- Peter began to sink, and Jesus reached out to him.  
(Matthew 14:30-31)

As kids work, ask them questions:

1. The disciples were on the boat all night. When **Jesus walked on the sea**, it was dark. Have you ever been afraid of something in the dark?
2. Peter asked Jesus to let him come to Him on the

- paper
- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- cups of water

water. Do you think Peter was afraid? How do you feel when doing something new?

3. Peter was afraid when he saw the waves and felt the strong wind. What can you do when you feel afraid of what's happening around you?

**SAY** • **Jesus walked on the sea**, and Peter looked to Him in faith. We can look to Jesus in faith every day. We can look to Him to rescue us from sin, and we can ask for His help to live in a way that honors Him.

Even when we feel afraid or doubt God, we can cry out, “Lord, save me!” Jesus will answer, and—like the disciples did—we can worship Him.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

## Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Point out that trusting someone you know is easier than trusting a stranger.

Encourage kids to write in their journals things they know to be true about Jesus.

**SAY** • How can knowing these things about Jesus help you trust Him? What can you do to know Jesus more? (*read the Bible, pray*) **Jesus walked on the sea** in today's Bible story. This was a miracle! ***Jesus performed miracles to glorify God and prove He is God the Son.*** Let's pray.

Lead kids in prayer. Pray that kids would keep their eyes on Jesus as their Savior who rescues them from sin and death.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Calling Out” on the activity page. Direct kids to color the letters that have a dot to read what Peter said. (Answer: *Lord, save me!*)

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Calling Out” activity page, 1 per kid

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