



Session 3



DON'T BE AFRAID

Matthew 14:22-33

In Matthew's Gospel, this story of Jesus miraculously walking on the water immediately follows the feeding of the crowds. Jesus had just fed more than 5,000 people with only a small amount of bread and fish. The disciples were still dumbfounded as to what had just occurred, but Jesus wanted the men to know that He could do anything. Jesus had met a physical need for the crowds, but He further met their spiritual need as He shared about the kingdom of God.

After a long day of teaching, Jesus had told the disciples to get into a boat and head across the lake. Jesus stayed behind for several reasons. The first was so He could dismiss the crowds and send them home. Just as a preacher greets congregants as they leave, Jesus wanted to send the crowds away filled both physically and spiritually. Second, Jesus wanted to spend some time with the Father in prayer. Jesus went alone by Himself to pray. Finally, Jesus wanted to make sure the disciples had gone a significant distance from the shore so He could also show His power over nature.

The Sea of Galilee is well known for very sudden, very violent storms. While the storm in this account may not have been the most atrocious storm, Matthew does tell us that the wind was against the men. It was at this point, somewhere around 3:00 a.m., that Jesus approached the boat by walking on the water. The disciples saw Jesus and mistook Him for a ghost. With all of that input, it is no wonder the Bible describes the disciples' demeanor as "terrified."

Jesus identified Himself, and Peter immediately asked to be allowed to join the Lord on the water. Jesus invited Peter out of the boat. While Peter trusted Jesus and focused his eyes on Him, he walked as Jesus did. When Peter's mind was distracted, however, he sank and needed rescue. Jesus reached out and rescued Peter, and He will do the same for us.

SESSION FOCUS

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus helps people.

BIBLE STORY

Matthew 14:22-33

BIBLE VERSE

Matthew 14:27

CHRIST IN CONTEXT

The Book of Matthew confirms that everything God promised to His people in Old Testament times came true when He sent Jesus.

BIBLE SKILLS: Preschoolers will . . .

- Begin to understand how Bible verses apply to their lives.
- Remember and retell a familiar Bible story and Bible facts.



CONNECT WITH FAMILIES

Provide these weekly resources to help families explore the Bible together.

- Explore the Bible at Home (Printable: Music & Print Extras)
- Preschool Activity Page
- Preschool Family Card

MISSIONS ACTIVITY: READ BOOKS ABOUT JESUS



Tools: Bible, several books about Jesus, Book: All About Jesus (Pack Item 19), child's backpack, large ball

- Put the books in the backpack and put the items on the floor.
- Begin to roll the ball to a child. Invite other children to join you. Say: "Come roll the ball with us. Friends have fun playing together. We learn about Jesus together."
- Direct a child to look in the backpack. When he gets a book, read it to the children.
- Remark: "Missionaries plan mission vacation Bible schools in neighborhoods where children do not go to church. The missionaries often provide books like these and other materials that help the children learn about Jesus. Missionaries want children to know Jesus cares about them and loves them."

LEADER TIP!

Include this special missions-focused activity in addition to preschoolers' Bible Explorations.

JESUS HELPED HIS FRIENDS

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus helps people.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Helped His Friends
Matthew 14:22-33

BIBLE VERSE

Jesus said, "Have courage.
Do not be afraid."
Matthew 14:27

Matthew 14:22-33

It had been a busy day. Jesus had been teaching and helping the sick people. Jesus even provided food for all the people because they and their families had been listening to Jesus all day and they were hungry.

After the crowd of people had plenty to eat, Jesus made His disciples get into a boat and sail to the other side of the lake.

Jesus walked up a mountain by Himself. He wanted to pray. Jesus talked to God until nighttime.

While Jesus prayed, a storm came. The wind began to blow and waves rocked the disciples' boat out on the lake. The disciples were afraid.

Jesus knew about the storm. He started going to the boat. But the disciples could not see in the dark and they did not know it was their friend Jesus coming to them.

Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. It is I."

Peter was on the boat. He loved Jesus and wanted to be near Him.

Jesus told Peter to come to Him.

When Peter heard this, he got out of the boat to go to Jesus. But Peter was afraid in the water. He called loudly, "Jesus, please help me!"

Jesus reached out and took Peter's hand. Then they both got in the boat.

Everyone in the boat knew it was Jesus who helped them.

LEADER TIP

You choose! Are your preschoolers ready to learn memory verses? Decide which wording of the session Bible verse you want to use with your group.

BIBLE VERSE

From the Bible text:

Jesus spoke: "Have courage! Don't be afraid." Matthew 14:27

Paraphrase:

Jesus said, "Have courage. Do not be afraid." Matthew 14:27



CIRCLE TIME (10-15 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON YOUR AGE GROUP)

GATHER

- Encourage preschoolers to join you in the Circle Time area.
- When children are seated, hold up the Happy & Sad Faces. Ask children to name a few occasions when they feel happy or sad. Ask: “When are some times you feel afraid?”
- Listen to responses, then say: “Today we are going to hear about a time when Jesus’ disciples were afraid. Jesus helped them.”

HEAR THE BIBLE STORY

- Tell preschoolers to imagine that they are in a boat on the sea. Turn on the fan (at a low speed) to blow toward the children.
- Open the Bible to Matthew 14 and tell the Bible story in your own words.
- After the story, show the Story Picture. Remark that the men were frightened, but when Peter saw Jesus, he called on Jesus to help him.
- Add today’s Text Truth Flower to the Spring Wall Poster. Say: “Jesus helped the disciples on the boat that night. He told them to have courage. Jesus helped the men during the storm, and He helps us.”

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Show preschoolers the Bible Book Name for Matthew. Say: “For several weeks we are exploring the Book of Matthew. Matthew is in the New Testament part of the Bible and is one of the four Gospels.”
- Help preschoolers say the names of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John).
- Invite children to get their Bibles or classroom Bibles and look for the Book of Matthew. Challenge them to find Jesus’ name in chapter 14.

PRAY

- Thank God for sending Jesus to help people. Ask God to help us be brave and have courage when we are frightened.

TOOLS

- Bible
- portable box fan

PACK ITEMS

- 3 Story Picture: Jesus Helped His Friends
- 16 Spring Wall Poster
- 17 Text Truth Flowers
- 18 Bible Book Names (Matthew)
- 30 Happy & Sad Faces

EXPLORATION STATIONS (45-60 MINUTES)

TEXT TRUTH

Jesus helps people.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus Helped His Friends
Matthew 14:22-33

BIBLE VERSE

Jesus said, "Have courage.
Do not be afraid."
Matthew 14:27

PACK ITEMS

3 Story Picture: Jesus
Helped His Friends
19 Book: *All About Jesus*

PRINTABLES

Allergy Sign

LEADER TIP!

Sink-or-float objects could include: plastic boat, a small piece of wood, rock, crayon, plastic block, leaf, spoon, plastic lid, metal spoon, coin, and so on.

Set up at least three stations to provide choices of multisensory activities and movement for busy preschoolers. Use the Bible in every exploration.

FLOAT OR SINK OBJECTS

Tools: Bible, large bowl with water, towel, objects to test in the water (see Leader Tip), a paper plate labeled It Floats and another plate labeled It Sinks, paper towels

- Spread the towel on a table and put the bowl of water on it.
- Say: "The disciples were afraid their boat was going to sink. Let's test a few objects to see if they sink or float."
- Place an object carefully in the water. If it floats, place it on the *It Floats* plate. If the object sinks, place it on the *It Sinks* plate.
- Give children turns to test the objects.
- Say: "Boats are made to float on water though they are very heavy. Jesus kept the disciples safe when the wind tossed their boat on the water."

PLAY WITH SWIM ITEMS

Tools: Bible, 1 or 2 children's life jackets, 2 inflatable swim rings, swim noodles, Activity Page, mirror

- When children show interest, invite them to put on the life jackets or slip into the swim rings.
- As children play, talk about the items being helpful when swimming or riding in a boat.
- Show children the picture on the Activity Page. Remark that the disciples probably did not have jackets to wear when they were on their boat. When the storm came, the men were frightened.
- Say: "Jesus saw that His friends were afraid, and He helped them."

**TOSS A BOAT ON
“WAVES”**

Tools: Bible, large plastic toy boat, small sheet, Preschool Family Card

- Lay the sheet on the floor. Tell three or four children to stand around the sheet and pick up the sides. Place the toy boat in the center.
- Say: “Jesus’ disciples were in a boat when a storm came. Their boat was tossed around in the sea. The disciples were afraid.”
- Guide the children to move the sheet up and down, creating “waves” for the toy boat. If the boat is tossed off the sheet, return it to the center.
- Show children the picture on the Family Card. Remark: “Jesus calmed the storm. He took care of the disciples in the boat. Jesus told the men to have courage.”
- Turn to Matthew 14 and tell the Bible story.

MAKE WAVE BOTTLES

Tools: Bible, Story Picture: Jesus Helped His Friends, plastic water bottles, cooking oil, water, blue food coloring, duct tape, hot glue gun (teacher’s use), funnel

- Water bottles should be half full.
- Guide a child to add a few drops of blue coloring to his bottle and use the funnel to add oil to fill the bottle. The child may want to add more items to the bottles. (See Leader Tip.)
- After the child fills his bottle, hot glue the cap to secure it. Add duct tape around the cap as well.
- Guide the child to move his bottle to make waves. Relate this to the waves tossing the disciples’ boat on the sea.
- Say: “The disciples were afraid during the storm, but Jesus told them to have courage and not be afraid.”
- Tell the Bible story.

WALK ON A BALANCE BOARD

Tools: Bible, balance board or wood plank (4-to-8 inches wide by 3-to-5 feet long), Book: All About Jesus, Music & Print Extras

- Lay the balance board parallel to a wall. Put the book near the board.
- Direct a child’s attention to the board and invite her to walk on it. Offer your hand to steady the child as she walks.
- After a few minutes, ask the child to sit with you and look at the book. Say: “I helped you walk on the board. Jesus helped His friends when they were frightened during the storm. Jesus helps people.”
- Talk about the things Jesus does to help us know He loves us and cares about us.
- Play songs about Jesus as children walk on the board.

LEADER TIP!

Optional items to put in wave bottles: glitter, small seashells, aquarium gravel, tiny plastic fish.