

Lesson 5: Jesus Walks on Water

Bible Reading:

Matthew 14:22-33

Key Verse:

Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I;
do not be afraid.”

– Matthew 14:27

The Point:

God gives faith.



Activities & Supplies

Opening

What's the Point?
Learn actions for The Point of today's story.

15 min.

- Bibles
- Optional: Internet-connected device

Stations

Storytelling
Jesus Walks on Water
Move with the story.

20 min.

- Bible
- White board or mural paper
- Markers

Craft
Lake Slime
Make a lake to tell the Bible story.

20 min.

- Clear or white glue
- Liquid starch
- Measuring cups
- Blue food coloring
- Glitter
- Mixing bowls
- Mixing spoons
- Paper
- Scissors
- Zippered sandwich bags
- Optional: small shells and ocean animal toys



Stations

<p>Science Sink or Float? Guess and identify what sinks and what floats.</p>	<p>20 min.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Large pots, bowls, or buckets• Water• Variety of fruit and vegetables• Variety of objects around the room• Paper towels
<p>Games Water, Water, Everywhere Water games for inside and outside.</p> <p><i>Inside games</i> Water Tube Fun</p> <p>Jump the Rocks</p> <p><i>Outside games</i> Water Balloon Parachutes</p> <p>Walking in Each Other's Footsteps</p>	<p>20 min.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inflatable swim rings or inner tubes• Boundary markers• Paper• Boundary markers• Water balloons• Plastic bags with handles• Tub or bin• Access to water faucet or hose• Tub or bin• Access to water faucet or hose• Masking tape or chalk• Optional: empty box



Stations

<p>Snack Sandal Feet Make and eat feet in sandals.</p>	<p>20 min.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bread• Jam• Grapes• Stick pretzels• Plates• Knives• Napkins
<p>Closing Prayer</p>	<p>5 min.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For the Home



Background for Leaders

Jesus Walks on Water

The Point

God gives faith.

Did You Know?

- Bible translations generally say that the disciples' boat was far from the land, though the Greek text says it was "many stadia." A stadion is a unit of measure that is approximately one eighth of a mile. While the Gospel writer is not intending to make a claim to distance, the boat may have been a half mile or more from shore.
- The NRSV Bible translation states that the boat was battered by the waves (verse 24). The Greek word used here is often used to indicate testing a person by use of torture. So "tormented" is also a possible translation. While the text does not describe this weather as a storm, the words used indicate violent weather. By contrast, the language used to describe Jesus' actions show no special concern on his part.
- Jewish (and therefore early Christian) teaching about death and the final resurrection denied the possibility of ghosts, but it was a popular belief among the people.
- Jesus' response to the disciples' fear includes the phrase "I am" (*ego eimi*), which could remind the disciples and early readers of God's self-identification at the burning bush "I AM."
- While the disciples' response to Jesus' stilling of the storm was awe, here they responded by bowing down, a posture of worship the Gospels use only toward Jesus and God (along with Satan's temptation in Matthew 4:9).

Why It Matters

- Jesus is present even in our times of fear.
- Even when we falter, Jesus reaches out his hand to steady us.
- Jesus' miracles stories show that he is the powerful Son of God.

Prayer of Preparation

Faithful God, help us to remember that you are always with us. Guide us to pass on your faithfulness to your people as we lead this lesson. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.



Lesson Plan

Opening

What's the Point?

15 min.

Learn actions for The Point of today's story.

Supplies:

- Bibles
- Optional: Internet-connected device

Preparation:

1. Practice the actions described below for “God,” “give,” and “faith” until you are comfortable teaching them.
2. If you wish, search the Internet for a video of American Sign Language (ASL) signs for each word.

Instructions:

1. **Welcome to our last session learning about God's gift of water! We have learned a lot about God's gifts to us through water stories, let's review them. Who remembers the story from our first day of this water unit? Allow responses, guiding participants to talk about the story of Creation. Great! Can anyone tell me the point we learned that day? I will give you a hint, it starts with, “God gives...”** [*God gives life.*] Continue through the story and point for each lesson:
 - a. The Red Sea – God gives freedom.
 - b. Jesus Is Baptized – God gives love.
 - c. Jesus Calms a Storm – God gives peace.



2. **Great remembering! Our final story is another amazing water story, about a time when Jesus walked on water! And the important point of this story is that God gives faith. Before we hear the story, let's learn to say, "God gives faith" with actions.**
3. **Our action for God is...** swipe your dominant hand in front of your head, your thumb touching your forehead, then pulling downward to your chest area. **Let's practice that together.** Practice a few times until participants have learned it.
4. **The "give" action is done like this:** demonstrate cupping your hand slightly, palm facing your body, holding your thumb to all your fingers together on your dominant hand, and moving your hand away from your body. **Let's try that one together.** Practice this sign together until participants are familiar with it.
5. **Finally, our action for faith is...** Make the common sign for "okay" with both hands, thumbs touching forefingers. Start with your dominant hand touching your forehead and bring it down to double-tap your other hand placed in front of you. **Let's do this one together too.** Practice with the group until you are comfortable they have it down.
6. **Now let's put it all together!** Slowly demonstrate the actions for the whole phrase, "God gives faith," repeating as needed for participants to feel confident.
7. **Great job! Now let's hear the story of Jesus walking on water, and Peter's faith. Open your Bibles to Matthew 14:22-33.** Pause while participants locate the passage in their Bibles. **Remember, Matthew is the first book in the New Testament, one of the four Gospels.**
8. Read the story out loud or ask a volunteer to read it. **Well, that was an exciting story, right? How would you have felt it you were one of the disciples seeing Jesus walking on water?** Allow responses. **How would you have felt if you were Peter? Do you think you would have asked Jesus to make you walk on water?** Allow responses.
9. **I am so glad that God gives us faith! Let's say that together with actions before we leave for our next activity.**



Stations

Storytelling

20 min.

Jesus Walks on Water

Move with the story.

Supplies:

- Bible
- White board or mural paper
- Markers

Instructions:

1. **In our last lesson, Jesus and his disciples were in a boat on a huge lake called the Sea of Galilee. What happened in that story?** [*Jesus and his disciples were in a boat when a scary storm threatened to sink their boat. Jesus was asleep, but his disciples woke him up. Jesus told the storm to be silent and it did. The disciples were amazed.*]
2. **Today we are learning a different story, which also takes place when the disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee during violent weather. Let's hear the story and figure out what is different.** Read or ask a volunteer to read Matthew 14:22-33.
3. **So, what was different about this story?** [*Jesus was not with the disciples because he had gone up a mountain to pray. Jesus came walking on water. The disciples thought he was a ghost. Peter also walked on water.*]
4. **We are going to break the story into pieces and then put it back together again. First, who are the characters in the story?** [*Jesus, Peter, the disciples.*] Write the answers on the white board or mural paper. **What are the different things that move around?** [*The water, sea, or waves; the wind; the boat.*] Write the answers on the white board or mural paper.



5. **Now, we are going to act out each of these! I would like you to stand as you are able. You can participate while sitting, too.**
6. **Let's start with the water. What is it like at the beginning of the story?** *[It is not directly stated, but the water would likely have been calm when the disciples first started out.]* **How can we use our bodies to show the water being calm? What happens in the middle?** *[The water got rough, waves battered the boat.]* **How can we show that with our bodies? What happens at the end of the story?** *[It turned calm again.]* **And how can we show that with our bodies?**
7. Use this same process to go through the wind and boat, and then act out what Jesus, Peter, and the disciples were doing, saying, and feeling.
8. **Great! Now, we have looked at each part of the story on its own, so let's put them all together.** Ask for volunteers to fill each role, with as many disciples, wind, waves, even boat actors as needed. Read through the story again, encouraging the actors to repeat the actions they had previously done as the story progresses.
9. **What do you think were the scariest parts of the story for the disciples?** *[The wind and waves, the boat out of control, thinking that Jesus was a ghost.]*
10. **And what amazing thing did Jesus do?** *[Walk on water.]* **What crazy thing did Peter ask Jesus to do?** *[Command him to come to Jesus on the water.]* **What happened next?** *[Jesus did command him, Peter walked on water, but he became scared and started to sink. Jesus rescued Peter.]*
11. **When was a time that you felt scared?** Encourage participants to share in pairs, trios, or the larger group. **Do you remember a time that you trusted someone? If you do, briefly share that story.** Allow participants to share their stories.
12. **Peter might have had the crazy idea to walk on water himself, but he was only able to do it when he trusted Jesus. When Peter stopped thinking about Jesus and started looking at the wind and the waves, he got scared, and he started to sink. But Jesus saved Peter and made the wind and waves stopped. The disciples knew then that Jesus was the Son of God that they should trust and have faith in. We can also trust Jesus to be present in scary times.**



Craft

20 min.

Lake Slime

Make a lake to tell the Bible story.

Supplies:

- Clear or white glue
- Liquid starch
- Measuring cups
- Blue food coloring
- Glitter
- Mixing bowls
- Mixing spoons
- Paper
- Scissors
- Zippered sandwich bags
- Optional: small shells and ocean animal toys

Preparation:

1. Cut small half circles from paper to represent boats.
2. Place all supplies above on each small group table. You will need:
 - For each participant:
 - 1 cup clear or white glue
 - 1/2 cup liquid starch
 - 5 drops blue food coloring
 - Paper boat shape
 - Sandwich-size zippered bags



- For each small group, access to:
 - Mixing bowls
 - Mixing spoons
 - Optional: small shells and ocean animal toys

Instructions:

1. **What do we need to tell our Bible story today?** [*Water, feet, Jesus, boat, etc.*]
2. **We are going to make lake slime to tell the story of Jesus walking on water here in class and at home.**
3. Instruct small groups in making slime:
 - a. **Pour glue into the mixing bowls.**
 - b. **Add blue food coloring and mix well.**
 - c. **Add liquid starch and mix well.**
4. After all groups have made their slime: **Give a handful of this slime to each person.**
5. **Knead, pull, and push your slime with your hands until you get the desired consistency.**
6. Helpful note: If your slime is still sticky, you need more liquid starch. Add about a teaspoon at a time. Clear glue needs a bit more starch than white glue.
7. **When your slime is just right, add a sprinkling of glitter and a couple of shells and ocean animals. Then pull, push, and knead it all into your lake slime.**
8. **Let's tell today's story together! As I read, follow what I do with my slime and hands with your own slime and hands.**
9. **The disciples were out on the lake in a boat.** Place boat on slime.
10. **Jesus started walking on the water to go to the boat.** Use fingers to walk on slime towards boat.
11. **The disciples are afraid, and Jesus says, "Do not be afraid!" Peter trusts Jesus and walks on water a few steps, too. But he becomes afraid and starts to sink.** Using fingers from other hand, walk from boat on top of slime and then sink fingers in.
12. **Jesus helps Peter and they all get in the boat.** Move fingers into the boat.
13. **All the disciples shout "Hooray! You are really God's Son!"** Dance the fingers on top of the boat.
14. **Place your lake slime and boat inside the plastic bag. Bring this home and tell someone the story of Jesus walking on water.**



Science

20 min.

Sink or Float?

Guess and identify what sinks and what floats.

Supplies:

- Large pots, bowls, or buckets
- Water
- Variety of fruit and vegetables
- Variety of objects around the room
- Paper towels

Preparation:

1. Fill the large containers with water and place one on each small group table along with the other supplies.

Instructions:

1. **Jesus walked across the water and did not sink!**
2. **Peter walked across the water until he stopped trusting Jesus, and then he began to sink.**
3. **Look at all the things in front of you. Make two piles. One pile of all the things you think will float and another pile of things you think will sink.**
4. **Put each item, one at a time, into the water and watch to see if it will sink or float.**
5. **Were you correct? Did it sink or float? Make new piles according to your observations.**



Games

20 min.

Water, Water, Everywhere

Water games for inside.

Inside games

Water Tube Fun

Supplies:

- Inflatable swim rings or inner tubes
- Boundary markers

Preparation:

1. Inflate rings and tubes.
2. Mark relay boundaries.

Instructions:

1. **Jesus walked on water. We can play thinking of water!**
2. **What things do you use when you play in water?**
3. **Sometimes we use these swim rings (inner tubes) to play in the water.**
4. Form relay teams, show boundaries and place one tube with each team.
5. **When I say, “Do not be afraid,” put on the ring.** Demonstrate putting the ring on your legs. If the rings are small, put one leg through it and demonstrate walking quickly while keeping the ring on your leg. **Move as quickly as you can to touch the other boundary and run back.**
6. **Give the ring to the next person to do the same thing and say, “Do not be afraid!”**
7. Play until all teams are finished.
8. **Let's play it again and this time walk backwards wearing our rings!**
9. Start the second round by saying, **“Do not be afraid!”**



Jump the Rocks

Supplies:

- Paper
- Boundary markers

Preparation:

1. Mark relay boundaries.

Instructions:

1. **When Jesus walked on the water, he did not need rocks to walk on.**
2. **We can walk on paper “rocks” to cross this lake to the boat on the other side.**
3. Form relay teams, show boundaries and give each person two pieces of paper.
4. **When I say, “Do not be afraid,” the first member of each team places a rock (a paper) onto the “lake” playing area and steps onto it.**
5. **Then they put the second paper down in front of them and step on that one, be careful not to step in the lake water.**
6. **Players then reach back and pick up the first paper from behind them and place it in front.**
7. **Each person continues that way all the way to the “boat” on the other side and yells “I am in the boat!” Then the next person on the team starts across the lake.**
8. **Continue until everyone is safe in the boat.**



Games

20 min.

Water, Water, Everywhere

Water games for outside.

Outside games

Water Parachutes

Supplies:

- Water balloons
- Plastic bags with handles
- Tub or bin
- Access to water faucet or hose

Preparation:

1. Fill water balloons 1/2 full of water (three balloons for each person).

Instructions:

1. **Jesus walked on water. We can play with water!**
2. **How can we help this water balloon fly? Show how to tie the handles on the bag to the water balloon.** Demonstrate how to throw it up in the air and catch the balloon.
3. Hand out bags and filled water balloons to each person.
4. **Throw your parachutes up in the air and try to catch them!**
5. **Find a partner and throw your parachute water balloons to each other.**



Walking in Each Other's Footsteps

Supplies:

- Tub or bin
- Access to water faucet or hose
- Masking tape or chalk
- Optional: empty box

Preparation:

1. Fill tub with water for each team place at end of sidewalk or parking lot. Tape or draw a boat shape across from the tub. Optional: Use a box to represent a boat.

Instructions:

1. **Our Bible story today is about Jesus walking on water. We are going to walk on water footprints.**
2. Form teams behind each water tub. Show boundary (boat).
3. **Take off your shoes and socks.**
4. **The first person will put their feet in the tub and walk across to the boat.**
5. **The second person will try to walk in the first person's foot steps to get to the "boat" on the other side.**
6. **Each person will walk in the footsteps made before them.**
7. **Continue until everyone is safe in the boat.**



Snack

10 min.

Sandal Feet

Make and eat feet in sandals

Before serving any food check with participants or caregivers for potential allergies provide an alternative if necessary.

Supplies:

- Bread
- Jam
- Grapes
- Stick pretzels
- Plates
- Knives
- Napkins

Preparation:

1. Cut grapes in half to avoid choking hazard.
2. Place all supplies on small group tables.
3. Make one treat to show as an example.

Instructions:

1. **When Jesus walked on the water, was he wearing sneakers? Boots?** *[No!]*
2. **Jesus lived where it was hot most of the time, so Jesus probably wore sandals. What kind of sandals do you have?** Allow responses.
3. Show your prepared treat.
4. **We are going to make a foot in a sandal and eat it.**
5. **Take a piece of bread and cut it in half.**



6. Spread jam all over one piece of bread. Place five grapes at the end of the bread like toes.
7. Place the other half of the bread on top and use the pretzels to make your sandwich look like sandals.
8. Let's think about Jesus walking on the water as we eat our treat.
9. Before we eat, let's pray. Repeat after me.

Dear God, (echo)

Thank you for Jesus. (echo)

Thank you for the great gift of water. (echo)

Help us trust you. (echo)

And remind us that we are loved. (echo)

Amen. (echo)



Closing Prayer

Let's close our time today by using our actions for, "God gives faith" together in a repeat-after-me prayer. I will say the words and do the actions, then you will repeat the words and actions after me.

Dear God, make action for "God." (echo)

Thank you for giving make action for "give." (echo)

us faith make action for "faith." (echo)

Amen. (echo)

Remember to send "For the Home" take-home sheet with participants before dismissing them.



Jesus Walks on Water

The Point

God gives faith.

Key Verse

Jesus spoke to them and said, “Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.”

– Matthew 14:27

Did You Know?

- Bible translations generally say that the disciples' boat was far from the land, though the Greek text says it was “many stadia.” A stadion is a unit of measure that is approximately one eighth of a mile. While the Gospel writer is not intending to make a claim to distance, the boat may have been a half mile or more from shore.
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Why It Matters

- Jesus is present even in our times of fear.
- Even when we falter, Jesus reaches out his hand to steady us.
- Jesus' miracles stories show that he is the powerful Son of God.

Prayer of the Week

Faithful God, help us to remember you are always with us no matter what. Amen.

Discussion Starters

What would you have thought if you had seen Peter walk on water and then start to sink? Show others what you would have felt with your face.

How has your faith in God helped you through a scary time? Thank God by saying a prayer.

Find a small rock and with a permanent marker write “God” on it. Keep it with you in your pocket, bag, or backpack to remind you that God is faithful.

Make a “Faith Box” to help you through hard times. Write words that help you feel strong and put them in a box. When you are afraid read the words until you find just the right one.

Search the Internet for American Sign Language signs for each word in “God is always with you.” Practice them and then share them with others.



Blessing for the Week

Share this blessing while tracing a cross on each person’s forehead or hand with their permission: **God is always with you.**