

Use Week of:

## Unit 24 • Session 3

# Jesus Walked on Water

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6

### STORY POINT:

Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.

### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalms 40:5

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.

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

## LEADER Bible Study

Jesus had just fed more than five thousand 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 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 to command him 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 they got into 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.

# The BIBLE Story

## Jesus Walked on Water

*Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6*

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. 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.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

- **Use facial expressions:** As you tell the story, use facial expressions to reflect the emotions of the disciples.
- **Display a map:** Display the New Testament Israel Map from the Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970) and point out the location of the Sea of Galilee.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Jesus Walked on Water

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6

**STORY POINT:** Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 40:5

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.

## 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. Prompt kids to talk about a time they felt alone.

**SAY** • Feeling alone is a normal part of being human. Any time we think that no one understands us or how we feel, we can turn to God for comfort. He is always with us. Today, we will learn about a time Jesus' disciples felt afraid, and Jesus was not with them. Do you think they might have felt alone?

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Sink, Sank, Sunk” activity page. Guide kids to circle the items that would sink in water and cross out those that would float.

**SAY** • Whether or not something sinks or floats depends on that object's *buoyancy*—how dense it is compared to water. Today we will talk about a time Peter began to sink in water. However, in Peter's case, he sank because of a lack of faith. What do you think that means? We'll learn more today.

- “Sink, Sank, Sunk” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

## Session starter (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: Walk on what?

Guide the kids to mimic you as you call out different surfaces and pretend to walk on that surface. Allow volunteers to suggest surfaces to mimic walking on.

Suggested surfaces:

- pavement
- quicksand
- slippery ice
- a very steep hill
- water

**SAY** • Humans struggle to walk on some surfaces, such as slippery things or hills that are too steep. One thing that people cannot walk on is water. Our bodies are much too dense, and our feet push right through the surface. Today we will learn about a time Jesus miraculously walked on water anyway.

### OPTION 2: Cross the lake

Form two teams of kids. Provide each team with two sheets of blue construction paper. Instruct the teams to line up on one side of the room. When you say go, the first player in each team will use the construction paper to cross the room by laying one sheet down, stepping onto it, laying the next down, stepping to it, then grabbing the first and repeating the process like stepping stones. The first team to have each team member cross and return wins.

• blue construction paper, 4 sheets

**SAY** • That was a tough way to walk across the room, but it wasn't impossible. Today we will hear about a time Jesus did something usually impossible.

## Transition to teach the story

# TEACH the Story



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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

*[Leader enters wearing business casual attire and a hands-free telephone headset.]*

**LEADER** • Hey there, travelers! Or, stay-putters, as the case has been so far. I'm glad you could make it back to Graceful Getaways.

I just got through helping a customer book a trip overseas. He was a little nervous about the flight, but I convinced him that it would be worth it. It's a nearly 18-hour flight time, but it's a lot faster than taking a boat, and you definitely can't get overseas in a taxi, train, or bus.

The different transportation technologies we have nowadays astound me. Can you imagine what life would be like if we still had to walk everywhere? Traveling would be much harder and dirtier, and it would take much longer. Plus, if you had nothing but your own two feet, you couldn't go anywhere

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

separated by water. Well, not without God doing a miracle for you, that is! That reminds me of a story. I'll tell you all about it.

## Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Our big picture question helps us think about

Jesus' miracles. *Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.*

Whenever Jesus did something by God's power that would normally have been impossible, it communicated wonderful things about Jesus. His miracles met people's physical needs and showed that He is the Messiah, God's Son. Not only is He able to save us, He wants to as well!

## Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • At the start of our unit, we learned that **Jesus calmed a storm to show the disciples He is God.**

Last week, we discussed how **Jesus miraculously fed a crowd with five loaves and two fish.** Immediately after that, Jesus sent His disciples back across the lake and stayed behind to pray. Another dangerous storm arose, but this time, Jesus wasn't with the disciples!

## Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 14; Mark 6; John 6. 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  
• Story Point Poster

**LEADER** • Jesus' disciples found themselves at the mercy of a dangerous storm once again, but this time, they couldn't just wake Jesus and say "Save us!" But what I love about this story is that even though Jesus was still way back on the mountain, He knew about their troubles and came to save them.

**Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.**

Not only was this something miraculous that could only happen by God's power, it was also a picture of God's love for us. Jesus did not walk away from danger, He walked right into it! He strolled into the middle of the storm to be with His disciples.

Peter—who was always confident but often wrong—showed great courage and faith when he stepped out of the boat, but it didn't last long in the face of the storm. Even so, as soon as Peter began to sink, what did he do? [*Allow responses.*] That's right! He called out for Jesus.

Jesus didn't delay in saving him. Jesus didn't say, "Sorry, Pete, looks like you'll have to swim back to the boat." Jesus saved him right away. Jesus wasn't angry that Peter doubted, but He wanted Peter to have more faith. When they got back in the boat, Jesus calmed this storm too, and all the disciples worshiped Jesus.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

## **Christ connection**

**LEADER** • 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.

Whenever we struggle to trust God or feel doubts

growing in our mind, we can turn to Jesus and pray. We can ask Him to give us more faith and protect us from our doubts.

### Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 24, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how they can strengthen their faith. Guide them to discuss in what or whom their faith is.

· “Unit 24, Session 3”  
Questions from Kids  
video



### Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show the “Around the World in 80 Ways” missions video. Then ask kids which ways they would choose to travel if they had their choice.

· “Around the World in  
80 Ways” missions  
video

#### **LEADER • Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.**

That was a miracle! Missionaries can’t walk on water, but they can travel in different ways. God uses the gifts of people just like you and me to provide for the needs of missionaries all over the world, including their need for ways to get around with the message of hope in Jesus.

Close in prayer, thanking God for missionaries who use various means of transportation to reach people with the gospel.

### Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Psalm 40:5. Then sing the key passage song.

· Key Passage Poster  
· “None Can  
Compare with You  
(Psalm 40:5)” song

**LEADER •** All of God’s plans are good. All of His actions are good. We can trust God because everything about Him is good! That was true when this psalm was written, it has been true ever since then, and it will be true forever.

• “Just As I Am” song

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

**LEADER** • When Peter called out to Jesus to save him from drowning, Jesus didn’t wait until Peter had done something to prove his faith. Jesus saved Peter just as he was. Jesus can save us too when we call out to Him, and He can transform us into new creations with hearts that love and obey God.

Sing together “Just As I Am.”

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

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • Lord, thank You that You are trustworthy. Help us love You and obey You out of love. Give us more faith each day. Give us courage to live for You even when the world around us says that is foolish or wrong. Amen.

### **Dismiss to apply the story**

## 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.

# APPLY the Story



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## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- scissors
- pen
- tape

Cut paper into thin strips, approximately 1½ inches in width. Write each word or phrase of the key passage on a separate strip. Mix up the strips and distribute them among the kids. Guide kids to order the strips according to the key passage and connect them as a paper chain, using tape to fasten the ends together into links. Invite volunteers to say the verse from memory. Thank each kid for her efforts. Encourage all kids to continue working to memorize the passage.

**SAY** • God's works and plans are wonderful. Jesus is God the Son, so His work and His plans are perfectly aligned with God the Father's. *Why did Jesus perform miracles? Jesus performed miracles to glorify God, to show He is the Son of God, and to care for people.*

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find Matthew 14. Consider using the New Testament Israel Map to show the kids where the Sea of Galilee is (D6). Remind the kids that the Bible is God's Word, and everything in it is true.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did Jesus stay behind when the disciples crossed the lake? (*to pray, Matt. 14:23*)
2. What did the disciples think they saw when Jesus walked on the water toward them? (*a ghost, Matt. 14:26*)
3. When did Jesus save Peter from drowning? (*immediately after Peter called out to Him, Matt. 14:30-31*)
4. How was Peter able to walk on water? *Guide kids to discuss how Jesus' power allowed Peter to walk on water. Remind the kids that impossible things can happen when God's power is involved. Point out the correlation between Peter's faith in Jesus while he walked on water and his fear of the storm when he sank. Discuss the importance of faith in our lives.*
5. Is there anything we cannot do with God's power? *Discuss the fact that God's power is unlimited, but that doesn't mean we can use Him for personal gain. Help kids see that testing the Lord is foolish and that anything He empowers us to do will be in line with His character and plans for the world.*
6. When was the last time you trusted God to help you through a hard time? *Guide kids to discuss experiences they have had in which God helped them through a difficult situation. Be sensitive to any kids who may disclose abuse or neglect. Report any suspicions according to the laws where you live and your church's policies.*

**SAY • Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.** Peter had faith that he could walk with Jesus on the sea, but when he focused on his fear, he began to sink. We can trust Jesus through our fears. He saves us.

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

## LOW PREP

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

### Activity choice (10 minutes)



#### OPTION 1: Tons of transportation

Invite kids to sit in a circle. Challenge kids to think of a way to travel that starts with the first letter of their name. Encourage creativity. You may allow kids to use adjectives if they need to (such as “Quincey; quick car”). Be prepared to offer suggestions if any kids struggle to come up with a word or phrase.

**SAY** • Those were some pretty interesting ideas of how to travel. Did you know that many missionaries rely on all kinds of transportation, even some kinds that we may think are unusual? Missionaries often do whatever it takes so that people can hear about Jesus. Let’s pray that more and more people will hear the gospel and choose to follow Jesus, and that God will help missionaries all over the world find new ways to bring the gospel to those who need it.

Close in prayer for missionaries around the world, including those your church supports.

#### OPTION 2: Wave mural

Provide a large sheet of paper. Allow the kids to remove a shoe and trace a footprint on the paper. Provide markers, crayons, and other craft supplies to the kids to decorate the paper to look like waves. You may hang the mural in a hallway or on a focal wall for kids to look at and remember this story.

#### **SAY** • Jesus showed He is God by walking on water.

When you remember this story, remember that when God calls you to take a step of faith, you can trust Him no matter what happens next. You probably won’t ever walk on water, but there are

· large sheet of paper  
· markers, crayons, and  
other craft supplies

many other difficult things—maybe even things that feel impossible—that God might ask you to do. Everything God does is for His glory and our good. When we take steps of faith to obey God, we can trust that He will use us in His wonderful plans.

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

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring 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.