



STORY 67

A Walk on the Water

MATTHEW 14

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 14.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



A lot has happened since Jesus's birth. He was baptized by John the Baptist. He was tempted in the wilderness and said no, no, no to the snake's temptations. He called twelve apostles to follow him. He taught the good news of God. He healed many sick people. He drove out demons. He raised the dead. He calmed the wind and waves, saving the twelve from a deadly storm. He fed thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. A lot has happened.

Jesus needed a break. He was exhausted. He needed physical rest. He needed spiritual rest too. To find it, he told the fully fed crowds to return home. He also sent his apostles away. "Get on the boat," he instructed them, "and sail to the other side of the sea. I'll meet you there soon" (see Matt. 14:22–23). Then Jesus climbed a nearby mountain. At the top, he was finally alone. Well, not really.

His Father was there. Up on the high mountain he talked with his Father in heaven. We call that prayer—talking to our Heavenly Father. But that’s not the end of the story.

TELL THE STORY

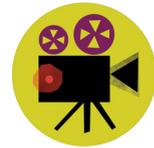
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the Bible passage together



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Because Jesus is the Son of God, he can save us when we cry out to him.

As Jesus was praying, the sun started to set. So he hiked down the mountain. By the time he reached the shore, the twelve were on the boat “a long way from the land” (Matt. 14:24), and it was dark. Why was it taking them so long to reach the other shore? Another terrible storm! The boat was being “beaten by the waves,” and “the wind was against them” (14:24). Because of the wild winds, they couldn’t use the sail. It would be too dangerous. So they rowed and rowed with all their might. But it was useless. They were in big trouble! Just then, Jesus saw them. Wait, how could he see them? “They had rowed about three or four miles” out (John 6:19). That’s a long way to see, even if the moon was fully lit. That’s not the only odd detail of this story. Guess what Jesus did next? He walked on the water! Yes, that’s what the Bible says: “He came to them, walking on the sea” (Matt. 14:25). With wave-parting, wind-ceasing, superhuman speed, Jesus was defying gravity. Incredible!

When the frightened disciples saw him, they screamed, “It’s a ghost!” Who could blame them for being so scared? And who could blame them for thinking it was a ghost since only a spirit could glide across the waters? But Jesus was not a ghost. He yelled to them, “It’s really me! Don’t be afraid.” Peter cried out, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water” (14:28). So Jesus invited him. Peter got out of the boat, and (this is the oddest part) he started to

walk on water. Just like Jesus! But suddenly, he took his eyes off Jesus, saw the fierce wind, got really scared again, and started to sink. He cried out, “Lord, save me” (14:30). Jesus wasted no time. He reached out, grabbed him, and brought him onto the boat. He saved him. While Jesus was saving him, he also taught Peter that he can trust him no matter what. For all of us, trusting Jesus is the smartest and safest thing to do. “Peter, why did you doubt? You should have kept on believing” (see 14:31). What a good lesson for us to learn too: keep on believing—even when you see the big waves.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher. {5 minutes}

The story didn’t end with the call to believe. When Jesus and Peter got back in the boat, suddenly the wind stopped and the waves calmed down. The twelve must have looked at each other in amazement. This time Jesus didn’t say, “Peace, be still,” but they knew he stilled the sea. They also just saw him walk on water! They knew Jesus was no ordinary man. So, one after the other (or maybe all at the same time), they fell at his feet and confessed, “You really are the Son of God” (see Matt. 14:33).

This confession is also what the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus said after Jesus died (27:54). And it’s the confession we will make too when we see Jesus clearly! Jesus showed that he was God’s Son and our Savior in many ways. He multiplied bread and fish to feed over five thousand people. He healed every sickness imaginable. He raised the dead. And he walked on water and calmed storms. But his greatest demonstration of power was actually the one the Roman soldiers saw when he died on the cross. That showed God’s power because it’s the way God saved us from our sins. Jesus’s death was unlike any other. He died in our place. Let’s fall down before him and trust him completely, even when the waves seem big. He’s strong enough to save us. Truly he is the Son of God!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What are some miracles we’ve seen Jesus do? What did Jesus do in our story today that is amazing?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is no ordinary man.

Memory Verse
Truly you are the
Son of God.

MATTHEW 14:33

2. **QUESTION:** When Jesus was walking on the waves, were they still or choppy? How did the disciples feel when they saw him? What did Jesus say to them?

TAKEAWAY: If Jesus is with us, we don't need to fear—even when things are scary.

3. **QUESTION:** Why did Peter begin to sink when he was walking on the water? What did Peter cry out as he sank? And what did Jesus do? Will Jesus ever turn us away when we come to him for help and salvation?

TAKEAWAY: Even when we doubt God's promises and are afraid, if we cry out to Jesus, he will save us.

4. **QUESTION:** How did the disciples know Jesus is the Son of God? Then how did they respond to him? How should we?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Son of God; let's fall down and worship him.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Have children line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, the children move forward. When the leader holds up the red sign, the children freeze. Any child who does not immediately freeze must return to the start. The first child to reach the leader wins. Remind children that when Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he did not sink into the waters.

Option 2: Sink or Swim

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Sink or Swim

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

Option 2: Captain's Orders

Supply List: none

Tell children the room is a ship and they must follow the captain's orders. If the captain shouts "Bow," the children run to the front wall. If "Stern," they run to the back wall. If "Port," they run to the left wall. If "Starboard," they run to the right wall. If the captain shouts "Hit the deck," the children drop to the floor. The last child to the correct wall (or floor) is out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children the disciples were on a boat when Jesus came to them by walking on water.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Eyes on Jesus Binoculars

Supply List: toilet paper rolls (two per child), scissors, yarn, markers, stickers, stapler

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut yarn into 18-inch lengths (one per child). Make sample craft.

Give each child two toilet paper rolls and a piece of yarn. Put remaining supplies on tables. Have children decorate the toilet paper rolls and then staple the rolls together to form binoculars. Staple yarn to the sides so they can hang around the child's neck. Remind children to keep their eyes on Jesus.

Option 2: Waves of Life

Supply List: paper, scissors, blue construction paper, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out Matthew 14:27, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (one per child). Cut ½" x 9" strips of blue construction paper. Make a sample craft.

Give children the verse and a full-sized piece of blue construction paper. Set paper strips and glue sticks on tables. On the full-sized paper, have children make waves by gluing down both ends of a strip to form a long arch. Next have children glue down the arch in one or two places to form waves. Have children add strips until the page is covered with waves. Glue the verse in the middle of the waves. Remind children that Jesus came to the disciples by walking on water in the middle of a storm.

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Option 2: Walk with Jesus

Supply List: bowls, blue paint, marbles, white cardstock, boxes, spoons, construction paper, markers, scissors, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Put paint in bowls and add marbles. Make a sample craft.

Have children take turns putting a piece of white cardstock in a box and then using a spoon to add some marbles. The first child shakes the box to spread paint around the cardstock to resemble waves. He then removes his paper when complete. Return the marbles to the bowls for the next child. Set markers, scissors, glue, and construction paper on tables. Have children trace their footprint onto construction paper, cut it out, and write “I will walk with Jesus” on it. Have children glue the footprint to the marble-painted paper. Remind children that Peter had faith to step out of the boat and walk to Jesus.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.