Lesson: Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52)

Materials: Bucket of water, items that float, items that sink, picture of Jesus, large spoon, plastic egg, bucket (2 of each if you want to have teams), tape

You can also download a coloring page of Jesus walking on water.

Activity: Float vs Sink.

- Put the bucket of water on the table
- Talk with the children about the items you have to put in the water
- Have them vote, as each item is put into the bucket of water, if it will float or sink
- Have the children take turns putting the items into the water to see if they will float
- Ask them if we can float on the water (on our backs?)
- What about walking on water? Can we do it? Why or why not?
- Talk with them about the story you are going to learn
- Jesus walked on water
- He didn’t float on water (but that’s the closest thing we can emulate)

**Teacher Notes: Jesus walks on water** – Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, John 6:16-21

- Sea of Galilee
- Matthew 14:22 is the only account that talks about Peter walking on the water
- This happens “Immediately” after the feeding of the 5,000.
- Jesus makes the disciples go in a boat to go on ahead of Him
- Jesus stays on land
- to dismiss all of the people
- to go pray on the mountainside
- Evening comes
- Disciples’ boat was far into the water
- Jesus went out to them – walking on the water
- Disciples see Him and were terrified!!!
- “Immediately” Jesus says to them, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”
- Peter tells Jesus, “If it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water.” Jesus says, “Come.”
- Peter got out of the boat, walked on the water towards Jesus
- Then Peter saw the wind and the waves and got scared – he started to sink
- Cried out to Jesus, “Lord, save me!”
- “Immediately, Jesus reached out His hand and caught him.”
- Jesus says to him, “You of little faith. Why did you doubt?”

**Activity – Keep Your Eyes on Jesus Game**
- Tape the picture of Jesus on the wall
- Put the bucket (empty) underneath the picture
- Have the children line up about 10-15 feet away from the bucket (distance doesn’t really matter)
- The first person in line holds the large spoon and puts the plastic egg in it
- They have to walk the egg over to the bucket without dropping it
- The trick is – they have to keep their eyes on Jesus the entire time!!! If they take their eyes off of Jesus, they have to start over.
- Once they drop the egg in the bucket, they get it and go back for the next person to do it
- What makes you doubt? What would make you sink?

**As Peter kept his eyes on Jesus and trusted in Him, he was able to do something no other man on earth did, walk on water. But, as soon as Peter took his eyes off of Jesus, he began to sink.**
Lesson: Jesus Walks on Water

Use this children's Sunday School lesson to teach kids that we never need to be afraid if we have faith in Jesus.

Needed: Bibles, kiddie pool or basin, various sinkable and unsinkable objects, Faith vs. Fear cards, playing cards or UNO cards of Go Fish! cards

Intro Activity: Will It Float?

Fill up a kiddie pool or large basin with water. Gather various objects, including some that will float and some that will not. Have kids guess if an object will float or sink and then, drop it in the water to see what happens. End by asking if a human would float or sink.

Take off your shoes and then step in to demonstrate.

Students may step in with your permission.

Lesson

Well, we couldn’t float on the water, but we’re going to read a story today about Someone who could.

(Read Matthew 14:22-27.)

“Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of Him to the other side, while He dismissed the crowd. After He had dismissed them, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. Later that night, He was there alone, and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

“Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. When the disciples saw Him walking on the lake, they were terrified. ‘It’s a ghost,’ they said, and cried out in fear.

“But Jesus immediately said to them: ‘Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.’”

How could Jesus walk on the water? (It was a miracle that God gave Him the power to do.)

When the disciples were afraid and thought that He was a ghost, what did Jesus say to them? (He told them not to be afraid.)
Do you think God ever wants you to be afraid? (No.)

God never wants us to be afraid. We don’t have to be afraid because we know God is always with us and will help us.

(Read Matthew 14:28-31.)

“Lord, if it’s you,’ Peter replied, ‘tell me to come to You on the water.’

“Come,’ He said.

“Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, ‘Lord, save me!’

“Immediately Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. ‘You of little faith,’ He said, ‘why did you doubt?’

Why did Peter start to sink? (Because he got scared.)

Should be Peter have been scared? (No. Jesus was with him.)

What did Jesus say that Peter had little of? (Faith.)

Jesus said Peter had only a little faith. If Peter had had a lot of faith in Jesus, he wouldn’t have been afraid. Do you have enough faith in Jesus not to be afraid when something happens to you?

(Read Matthew 14:32-36.)

“And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, ‘Truly you are the Son of God.’

“When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret. And when the men of that place recognized Jesus, they sent word to all the surrounding country. People brought all their sick to Him and begged Him to let the sick just touch the edge of His cloak, and all who touched it were healed.”

**Game: Faith vs. Fear**

Print out or write the words Fear or Faith on a set of index cards. You should have an equal number of cards that say Faith as Fear.
Divide students into two teams, and have the teams line up on separate sides of the room in single file lines. Mix up the cards and give each student a card that says Faith or Fear. Set a timer for 3-5 minutes, depending on how many students you have. When you say Go! the first two students run toward each and show each other their cards.

If one says Faith and the other says Fear, the student with Faith scores a point for their team. The person with Fear does not score. If both say Faith, both score a point and if both say Fear, neither does. Both return to the back of their lines and trade their cards for a new card.

As soon as they leave the center, the second two players run up and do the same thing. Play continues until the timer runs out. The team with the most points at the end wins.

**Game: Fast Reflexes**

Lay out a deck of game cards on a table, face up. The cards could be regular playing cards, UNO cards, Go Fish! cards, etc.

Students gather around the table. You’ll call out a type of card (a number, color, shape, etc.). The last student to reach out and touch that type of card is out.

The last student in the game wins and becomes the caller for the next round.

Remind students that when Peter was sinking, he called out for Jesus to help him, and Jesus immediately reached out for him. Jesus does the same for us. When we pray to Him for help, He helps us very quickly and always in the best way. It’s just that sometimes, Jesus doesn’t help us the way we want Him to help us. He helps us in the way that will be best for us.

**Closing Prayer**

Jesus, we pray that You’ll help us to have faith in You and know that we don’t need ever need to be afraid because You’re always with us. Amen.

*You can also find this lesson for Kindle or in print in my book, The Miracles of Jesus.*
Teacher Devotion: Go Ahead and Rock the Boat…
Jesus can Walk on Water

We wish somehow that church could be “perfect” and grant us opportunity for beautiful fellowship, community, and outreach. Unfortunately, though, churches are made of people, and people are not perfect. We make mistakes and sometimes lose track of the truly important things in God’s service. There are times in our experience as church members, and even leaders, when we may need to go against the grain of typical tradition or popular opinion.

Disagreements are bound to pop up, and it’s often up to us to decide when to let go and when to push forward. There is nothing wrong with compromise, provided we are reasonable in our motives. By the same token, there is nothing wrong with speaking up and making waves now and then, when the occasion necessitates. How do we know, though, when to speak up and when to back down? What makes a good litmus test for “deal-breaker” issues? Obviously we do need to be genuinely mindful and wise about such things...

_Do not quench the Spirit. 20 Do not treat prophecies with contempt 21 but test them all; hold on to what is good, 22 reject every kind of evil. _-1 Thessalonians 5:19-22

We are called to be mindful of our mission. At some point in ministry, whether in supporting roles or full-time church work, we will encounter conflict and opposition. It is important to be grounded in a foundational purpose or mission. The test that will navigate challenges must return us to a sense of that central goal. What is the church/Sunday School class/youth group/Bible study aiming to do? If there are members disagreeing over specifics or activities, are they pertinent to the main purpose, or are they frivolous issues?

For example, if argument arises over the color of chairs in the gathering room or the type of curriculum used in Sunday School classes, accessory issues can become over-emphasized. Tempers can flare and get out of control. If we find ourselves in such situations, it’s critical to come back to a sense of humility, examine mission, and most importantly, pray.

We do want to make every effort to get along with our neighbors and fellow congregants. But sometimes we need to stand up and make a statement. Sometimes we have to go against the grain, or shake things up...there are times when this is necessary to point out a need for change or offer fresh perspective. With love, prayer, and authenticity, we should be willing to step out in boldness, and maybe even rock the traditional boat. We cannot merely go along with the way things are “always done.”
We cannot drift drone-like through church. We should think critically and examine every action. And ultimately, our model is Jesus Himself. He often found Himself at odds with tradition, and was not a bit fearful of stating His purpose and standing up to dissent. He asked the same attitude of His disciples when sending them out:

“I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves.” -Matthew 10:16

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. -Matthew 10:34

Then Jesus said to them, “I ask you, which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?” -Luke 6:9

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. -Matthew 23:27

“It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.” -Mark 2:17

The Messiah did not mince His words or hide from His mission. He knew the will of His father and sought to fulfill it. He was not afraid to stand up to (and even decry) church leaders when they were in the wrong. Jesus healed, and sought the lost. Obviously, we are not perfect as Christ was, and we cannot excuse negative actions with His “example” as a rebel. But when the occasion calls for it, we can be encouraged to recall that Jesus did not always seek to go along with the crowd first and foremost. He was willing to stir dissension and spur frustration, and He spoke the brutal truth. Jesus was mission-focused, and promises to honor those who honor Him. By keeping Christ in the center of our ministry, work, church, and lives, we can be willing to do what may not be popular or easy, but what is effective.
“Keep Your Eyes on Jesus” Craft Ideas for Jesus and Peter Walking on the Water

The story of Jesus walking on water is amazing, and can also provide an intriguing challenge for children longing to “test the waters” for themselves, just to see if they can walk atop a swimming pool (not recommended unless the water is frozen solid). It is a fun and remarkable tale, but it is important to remember which elements are key to emphasize. This lesson is not just an impossible physics phenomenon, but a reminder of what we put our trust into. When we look to ourselves, we “sink”, but with Christ, anything is possible! These crafts aim to reiterate those principles, while creating a fun nautical theme as well.

Bible Verses or Craft Captions to Consider…

Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.” - Matthew 14:33

Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. “You of little faith,” he said, “why did you doubt?” -Matthew 14:31

But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” -Matthew 14:27

Faith in Jesus will keep you afloat!

Keep your eyes on Christ...He won’t let you sink!

Jesus Saves out of the waves!

More Teaching Ideas for Sunday School

- See the demonstration video of this craft and our YouTube playlist for this passage
- Print out our free Jesus walks on water coloring page
- See all the free resources on Ministry-To-Children related to Jesus walking on water
- Don’t miss our new children’s sermon and video example for this Bible story
- Compare the full Sunday school lesson and preschool lesson for this passage
Craft one: “Jesus & Peter on the Water”

You will need:

- Construction paper (varied colors)
- Markers, stickers, or other decorating materials
- Scissors
- Glue, tape or staples
- Popsicle sticks

Procedure:

1. Decorate a base paper for a background, adding verses or captions and pictures as desired.

2. Cut paper into waves and boat shapes, gluing onto the main background.

3. Glue the components onto the paper.

4. Cut a slit in the bottom of the paper, for the characters to fit into.

5. Decorate popsicle stick people for Jesus and Peter.

6. Slide the sticks into the paper, and reenact the story!
Craft Two: “DiscipleSHIP Sailboat”

You will need:

- Paper bag
- Construction paper
- Scissors
- Extra decorations (stickers, etc.)
- Caption or verse
- Markers or crayons
- Popsicle sticks
- Glue or tape
- Pipe Cleaner or straws

Procedure:

1. Cut the bag in half, either width-wise or length-wise.
2. Cut construction paper into “waves” and “sail” for the boat.
3. Add a verse or caption outside of the bag.
4. Add a “sail” inside the bag with a paper attached to a straw or stick.
5. Decorate popsicle stick “disciples” and add them inside the boat.
Extra Crafts & Activities for Sunday School

• Use squirt guns with colored water to make special sidewalk art.

• Decorate your own floating water rings.

• Use recycled items (shoeboxes, foil, rubber bands, paper, etc.) to create your own mini sailboats, and see if you can make them float!

• Make traced footprints to remember the walking element, and staying “in Christ’s footprints”.

• Have a water balloon fight!

• Test objects (crafty or otherwise) to see what might sink or float.
These craft ideas were prepared by Kristin Schmidt, who serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through Ministry-To-Children since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and preschool education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

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Learn About Miracles

Miracles are supernatural acts that only God can do. Jesus is God, so he did miracles. He calmed a storm, provided food for many people, healed all kinds of sicknesses, and even made dead people alive again!

Why Did Jesus Do Miracles?

Reason 1:

Reason 2:

Code:

Lots of Problems

Jesus helped people with lots of different problems. Find these words in the puzzle.

BLIND (can’t see)   LAME (can’t walk)   SAD
DEAF (can’t hear)   LEPER (skin disease)   SCARED
HUNGRY   MUTE (can’t speak)   SICK
**Jesus Stopped a Storm**  
Peter, Andrew, James, and John were fishermen. Sometimes Jesus and the other disciples went with them in the boat. One day a storm came, and Jesus’ friends were scared. Jesus made the storm stop!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Read Mark 4:37. Draw a picture of the boat in the storm.</th>
<th>Read Mark 4:39. Draw a picture of the boat after the storm.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Someone to Help**  
Sometimes God doesn’t make our problems go away, but he sends someone to help us. For each problem, draw a line to the person who might be able to help.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If this happens…</th>
<th>God might send…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your dad loses his job</td>
<td>A new friend at school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A bully is mean to you</td>
<td>A tutor to help with school work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your homework is really hard</td>
<td>A church friend with groceries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>