



Jesus Walks on Water

Goal: To trust in Jesus when we are afraid.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Matthew 14:22-33

The loving care Jesus gave to his disciples was comprehensive. When they were hungry, Jesus fed them (Matthew 14:13-21). When they were in danger, Jesus came to their aid.

The story of Jesus walking on the water displays Jesus' watchful care while his disciples were in a boat being "battered by the waves" and which was "far from the land" (v. 24). Jesus had retreated to the mountain to pray after feeding the 5,000. Now he came to his disciples, "walking toward them on the sea" (v. 25). To their terror that "it is a ghost!" (v. 26), Jesus spoke words of greatest reassurance: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid" (v. 27). He calmed their fears. When Peter attempted to come to Jesus, but fright overtook him and he was in danger of sinking, Jesus reached out to save him. All along, Jesus protects and saves.

Jesus' actions were pure grace. To those he loved, he offered his protective, loving care. By his grace, Jesus did for the disciples what they could not do for themselves. He saved them in many ways.

This comprehensive care could prompt only the deepest gratitude from the disciples. "Thank you" doesn't say enough. What a friend we have in Jesus!

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

This story of the disciples caught in a storm on the lake has a lot of different actions taking place. Children can identify with the disciples' fear. "When was a time you were frightened?" would be a great question to begin with, followed by, "What helped you to not be afraid anymore?" Jesus both calmed the fears of the disciples and saved Peter from drowning. Telling this story with children and engaging their questions and responses will help them remember that, when they are afraid, they can be assured that there are loving family members and friends who will love them and remind them that they are safe, just like Jesus did for his disciples.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

With so many families living away from extended family, children grow up experiencing the love of neighbors and church members who are invited into a circle of love and support. Be aware of all those involved in the loving care of the children you teach. Inviting children to name those people who love them and care for them will help them connect with this story of Jesus caring for his disciples. When they wondered if they would make it, Jesus was there to help them feel safe and loved. As their teacher, you are one of those in their circle of love and support who cares for them and loves them. Thanks be to God!

*Thank you, God, for calling me to step out
in faith by teaching your children. Amen.*



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2019–2020

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 10, 23, 25

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

piece of blue fabric
or sheet

soft ball

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: books, puzzles

choice 2: bucket or tub,
water, variety of toys
(some that will float,
some that will sink),
towels, plastic dropcloth

choice 3: finger paint,
finger paint paper or
other glossy paper,
newspaper

Exploring

choice 1: copies of **Grace Notes (GN) 1**

choice 2: blindfolds,
items

choice 3: juice box for
each child, duct tape,
large plastic tub, water

choice 4: copies of
GN 2

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2 and choice 3 require more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

TD **B** **T**

Greet the children and parents/caregivers by name and with the words “Jesus is alive.” Prompt the children to respond with “Jesus is alive.” This is the season of Easter, and we continue to celebrate Jesus’ resurrection.

Option: Use the traditional greeting, “Christ is risen,” with the response, “He is risen indeed. Alleluia!”

Explain that the children will hear a story about a time Jesus was with Peter when he was afraid.

Introduce children to your helper or helpers. Invite them to look at the guided-play activities and pick one to start:

- 1. Reading**—Provide books about fears, trust, courage, boats, seas, and oceans. If you have puzzles that fit these categories, add them.
- 2. Sinking or Floating**—Fill a bucket or tub three-quarters full of water and place it on a tiled floor or plastic dropcloth. Invite the children to put objects in the water. You may need to teach the concepts and the words for *floating* and *sinking* as the children observe what happens. After some experimenting, the children might be able to guess ahead of time if an item will sink or float. Wonder with them about what else might sink or float.
- 3. Painting**—Spread newspaper on a table for easy cleanup and put paint smocks on the children. Give the children sheets of glossy paper and invite them to paint a watery picture with finger paint. If children in your group are likely to have seen a lake or ocean, you might encourage them to make a picture of all that water.

T Give the children a signal when it’s time for something new; sing a familiar song or repeat a phrase such as: “One, two, something new.” Expect this to be difficult for some, especially if they are new to your group. It may be helpful to give a child a specific task.



Transitioning to Story Time

When the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “Thank You, God, for Loving Me”—**MM 25**; **SCM 23**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Sea Pantomime

M MS

Challenge the children to pantomime things or actions that may be found in a sea while the group tries to guess the action. If children need prompting, whisper one of these suggestions to a child:

- ▼ Swim like a fish.
- ▼ Catch a fish.
- ▼ Jump a wave.
- ▼ Pick up a seashell.
- ▼ Rock on a boat.
- ▼ Row a boat.

Making Waves

M MS

- ▼ Spread blue fabric or a sheet on the floor. If the sheet is too large for your group, fold to a manageable size.
- ▼ Invite the children to sit around the perimeter of the material and hold the edge of the material with both hands.
- ▼ Practice making waves by asking the children to firmly hold the material while gently moving both their hands up and down.
- ▼ Practice making a storm by asking the children to firmly hold the material while gradually moving their hands faster and faster.
- ▼ Calm the waves and lay the material flat.



Hearing the Story

L C

Open the Bible to Matthew 14. Comment that we read the Bible to hear stories about all of God’s people. Tell the children that they will hear a story about a time when Jesus was with Peter when he was afraid.

Read **SCM 10**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Gather the children around the fabric on the floor. Put a ball in the center of the material. Explain that the ball is like the boat the disciples were in. Invite the children to make waves and watch what happens to the ball. Tell the story again and have the children move the “lake” (fabric) in ways appropriate to the story.

Wonder together how Peter felt when he was on that boat in the middle of the storm. Ask the children to describe times that they have been afraid. See if the children remember what Jesus and Peter did when he was afraid. Help the children focus on the idea that Peter looked to Jesus for comfort and safety when he was afraid, and we can do the same.



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Making Scary Pictures

L C FM

Invite the children to make scary pictures using crayons. Mention that the disciples had been scared in the boat during the storm, and that everyone is scared now and then. Encourage them to make pictures of something that is scary to them.

As the children work, invite them to talk about scary things. You might write some of their thoughts on the drawings. Then bring the conversation around to the disciples. Ask what made the disciples not feel scared anymore. Hand out copies of **GN 1** and invite the children to color the picture of Jesus. Help them cut out the picture and glue it on their scary picture. Tell the children that we can look to Jesus to help us when we are afraid.



Ask the children if they want to wear a blindfold before you put it on them. Do not blindfold children who object.

2. Trust Exercise

SD MS A TD

Before the session, place items such as stuffed animals, balls, blocks, and small cars in grocery-sized paper bags—one item per bag. Place the bags around the outer edges of the room. Clear the area in front of the bags.

Show the children the bags and explain that each bag has something inside. Show them the blindfolds and explain that one person will put on the blindfold. Then a friend will help the blindfolded person carefully walk to one of the bags. The blindfolded person will reach into the bag, feel what is there, and quietly guess what it is. Then the friends will trade places and the other person will wear the blindfold. Pairs will move to a different bag for the second person's turn.

Pair the children and place each pair a few feet in front of a bag. Help the children as necessary.

Collect the blindfolds and gather the children. Go around the room and hold up each bag. Ask what is in it, then pull the item out for everyone to see.

Invite the children to talk about their experiences. Wonder how it felt to be blindfolded. Encourage the children to talk about how they trusted or didn't trust the other person to get them safely to the bag.

Help the children relate their experience to the Bible story. Wonder who Peter trusted. Wonder why Peter trusted Jesus. Comment on how it was scary for some of the children to walk with a blindfold on, but they trusted their friend. Ask what the scary thing was that Peter did. (*He stepped out of the boat.*) Wonder together why Peter did it.

SD *Some children may be uncomfortable being blindfolded. Help these children by altering activities to avoid the situation or providing an option such as closing their eyes or holding the object behind them.*



3. Boats on Water

L TD FA

Before the session, cut out a right-angled triangle, vertical side about 4 inches in length, from white paper for each child.

Encourage the children to make reminders of trusting Jesus when afraid. Remind the children that the disciples were on a boat when they got scared. Tell the children that they are going to make boats to float on water.

Give each child a prepared triangle of white paper and invite them to color the sail of the boat as they wish. Show them how to glue the vertical side of the sail to a craft stick. Give each child a juice box and have them drink the juice, cautioning them not to crush the box. Tell the children to remove the straw and place a piece of duct tape over the hole so water can't get in. Provide each child a small lump of play dough. Have them lay the juice box on the table, wide side down, and stick the play dough on the side facing up. Show them how to place the mast of their sail (the craft stick) into the play dough to finish off their boat.

Provide a large tub filled about halfway with water. (Use two tubs if you have more than six children.) Invite the children to put their boats in the tub. They may make waves in the tub and see what happens.

Suggest that the children take the boat home and tell their family about trusting in Jesus when they are afraid like Peter.

4. Coloring Page

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture and tell you about the story. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, "What did Peter feel when he saw Jesus?"
- ▼ I wonder, "When have you been afraid?"
- ▼ I wonder, "What do you do to feel better when you are afraid?"

T *Transition times can be more frustrating to children if they have to wait. Be prepared to move to the next activity and alert children of upcoming changes. If children will need to wait, provide a simple task such as a threading activity or hand clapping to occupy the time and lessen the frustration.*

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



Say a personal word to each child. It might be no more than “I’m glad you were here” or “I’m sorry you have such a bad cold,” but let each child know you paid attention to him or her today.



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit gracesightings.org. Remind the parents and caregivers about the e-book and story audio (see p. vii).

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

LG

Call the children to snack time, singing “Thank You, Jesus”—**MM 30; SCM 25**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate. Have each child put away one toy or object. Invite everyone to sit around a table or on the floor.

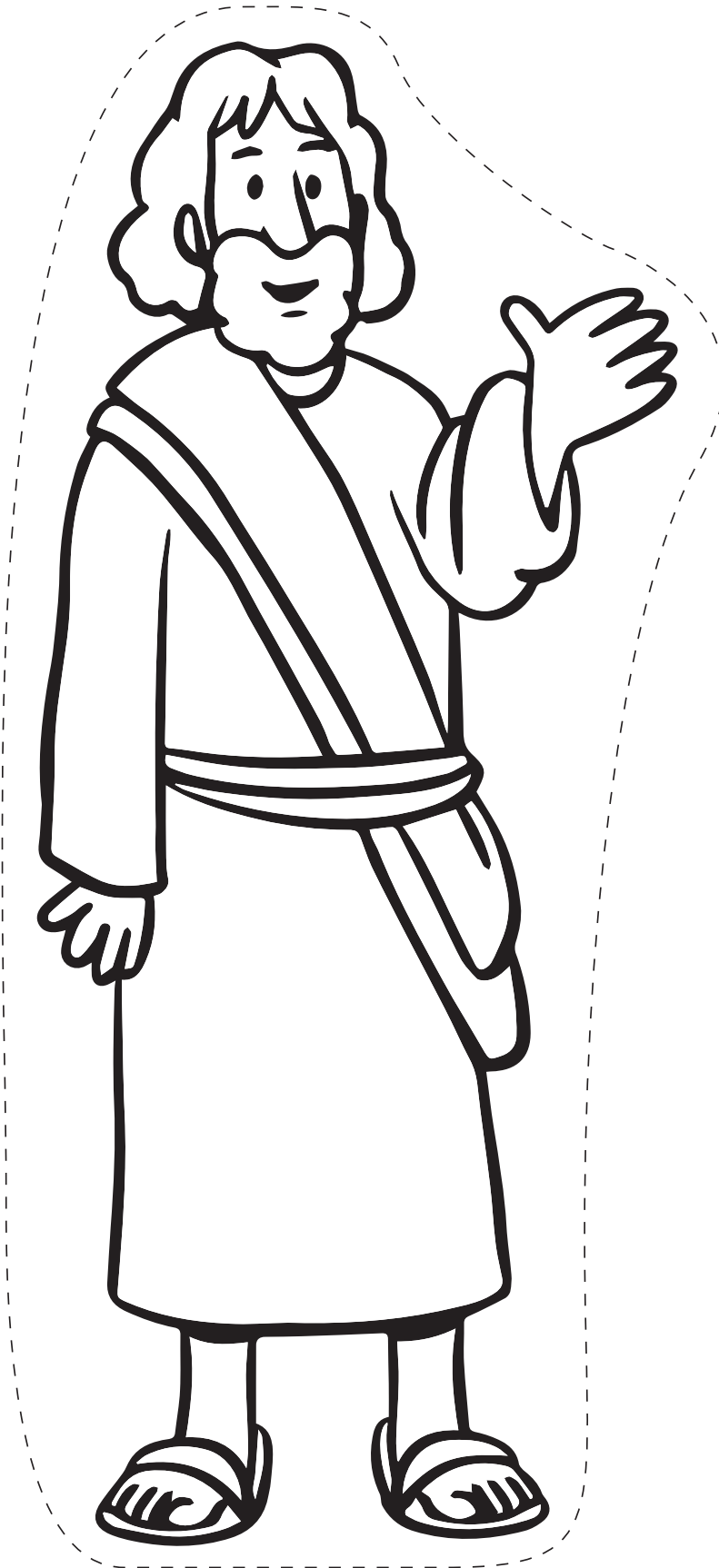
Ask the children what they will tell their families about today’s story. Accept all responses.

Offer a prayer, inviting the children to echo each phrase:

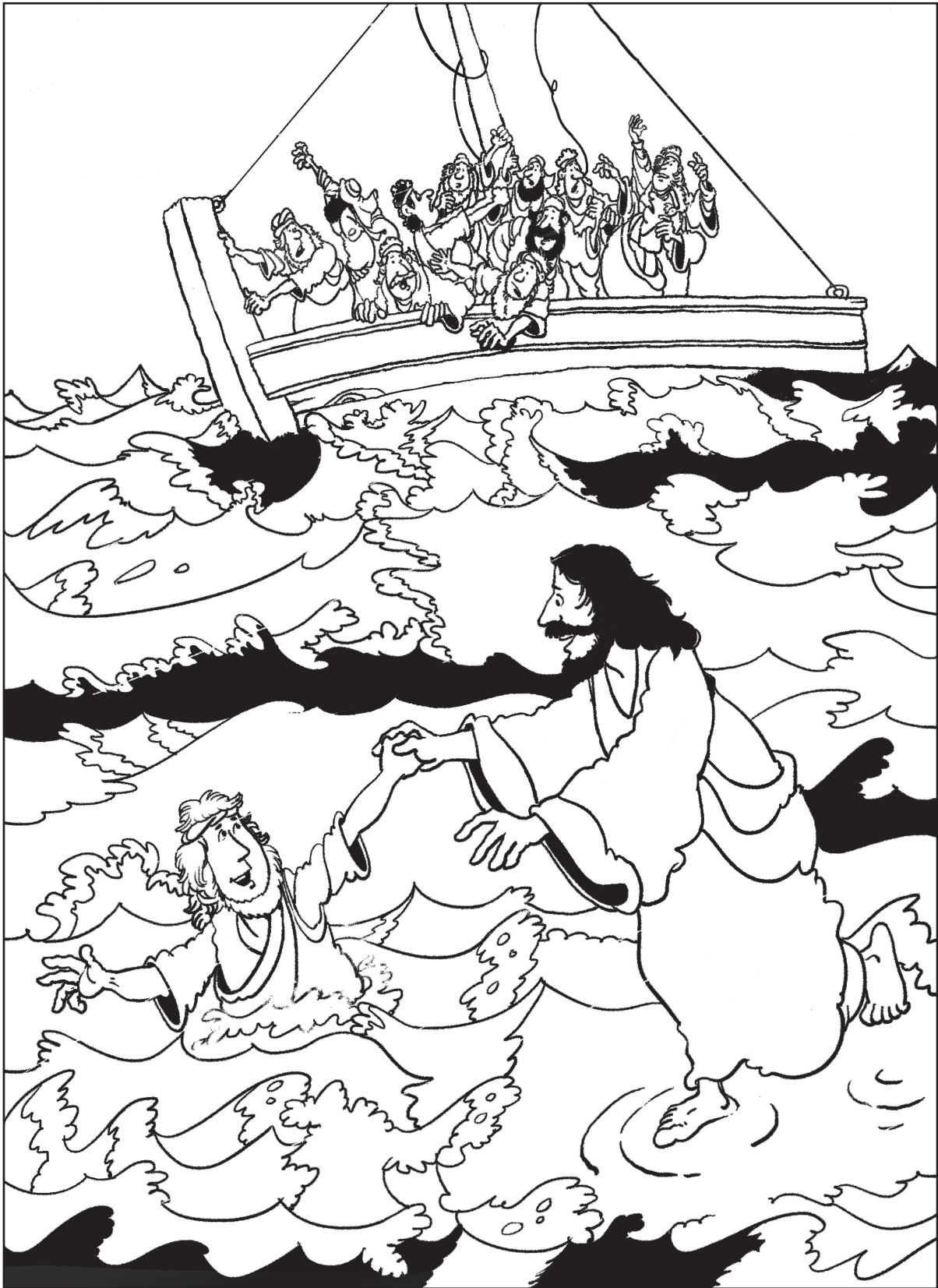
Thank you, God, /
for your love and care. /
Thank you for Jesus /
who is with us always. /
Amen. /

Enjoy a snack.

As the children leave, bless each one: “(Name), Jesus is always with you. Go in God’s grace.”



Jesus Walks on Water



Peter trusted Jesus when he was afraid.

