

Jesus Calms the Storm

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus has power over the wind and the sea because He is God, so we can trust Him even when we are afraid.

Bible passage: Mark 4:35–41. Read it before class, and read Matthew 8:23–27 and Luke 8:22–25, which tell the same story.

Memory verse: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." *Psalms 56:3 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.

Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Safe or Scary? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "safe" and the other side "scary." Read each situation, and kids walk to the side that shows how it would feel: 1) a thunderstorm at night when the power goes out, 2) riding in a small boat on a calm lake, 3) your first day at a new school, 4) a big wave knocking you down at the beach, 5) waiting at the doctor's office for a shot. Ask: *What do you do when you feel scared?* Say: "Today we will read about grown men, some of them fishermen, who were so scared they thought they were going to die."

2. Bible story: Who Is This? (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Mark 4. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A long day. Jesus spent the day teaching a great multitude (crowd) by the sea. So many people came that He got into a ship (a boat) and sat in it on the water, while the people stood on the shore (Mark 4:1). He taught them many things in parables, stories with a lesson (4:2). Some of Jesus' disciples had been fishermen on this same sea before they followed Him (Mark 1:16–20).

Let us pass over. **Look up Mark 4:35.** "When the even was come" means when evening came. Jesus Himself said, "Let us pass over unto the other side." The disciples sent the crowd away and took Jesus "even as he was," which means just as He was, in the boat He had been teaching from. **Other little ships,** smaller boats, went with them (4:36).

The great storm. **Look up Mark 4:37.** A great storm of wind came up, and the waves beat into the ship until it was full of water. Luke says they "were in jeopardy," which means in great danger (Luke 8:23).

Asleep on a pillow. **Look up Mark 4:38.** Jesus was in the **hinder part** (the back) of the ship, asleep on a pillow. The disciples woke Him: "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" That means "Teacher, don't You care that we are dying?"



Peace, be still. Look up Mark 4:39. Jesus arose and **rebuked** the wind, which means He commanded it sharply to stop. He said to the sea, "Peace, be still." The wind **ceased** (stopped), and there was a great calm.

Where is your faith? Look up Mark 4:40. Jesus asked, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" In Luke He asks, "Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25). Jesus had said they were going to the other side (4:35), and He was right there in the boat with them.

What manner of man is this? Look up Mark 4:41. The disciples "feared exceedingly," which means they were very, very afraid, this time with deep wonder at Jesus. They asked each other, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" **What manner of man** means what kind of man. Long before, the Psalms said that God is the one who "maketh the storm a calm" (Psalm 107:29). Only God can do that, and Jesus did it with three words. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Then they came over to the other side of the sea, just as Jesus had said (Mark 5:1).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jesus was the one who said, "Let us pass over unto the other side" (Mark 4:35), and they still ran into a storm. Does following Jesus mean we will never have hard times?
2. The disciples asked, "Carest thou not?" (4:38). Have you ever felt like God didn't care? What does this story show about Jesus?
3. Jesus slept because He was a real man, and He calmed the sea because He is God. What does that tell you about who Jesus is?
4. What is the difference between feeling afraid and trusting God while you are afraid?
5. The disciples asked, "What manner of man is this?" (4:41). How would you answer their question?

Recall questions

1. What time of day did they start across the sea? (*Evening, "when the even was come," Mark 4:35*)
2. Where was Jesus sleeping? (*In the back of the ship, on a pillow, 4:38*)
3. What three words did Jesus say to the sea? (*"Peace, be still," 4:39*)

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **what time** means whenever, and **thee** means You, God. Read the verse on the board together. Erase one word and read it again. Keep erasing one word at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner and tell one time they could use it this week.



5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "The wind and the sea obeyed Jesus because Jesus is God. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: write down one thing that makes you afraid. Each time it comes up, pray and say Psalm 56:3.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Mark 4:1: Where did Jesus sit to teach the crowd? (*In a ship on the sea*)
2. Mark 4:36: What went along with Jesus' ship? (*Other little ships*)
3. Matthew 8:24: What does Matthew call the storm? (*A great tempest. **Tempest** means a terrible storm.*)
4. Matthew 8:25: What did the disciples cry out? (*"Lord, save us: we perish."*)
5. Luke 8:22: What does Luke call the sea? (*The lake*)
6. Luke 8:24: What else did Jesus rebuke besides the wind? (*The raging of the water*)
7. Psalm 107:29: What does God do to the storm? (*He maketh the storm a calm*)
8. Mark 5:1: Where did they come to after the storm? (*The other side of the sea, the country of the Gadarenes*)

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that even the wind and the sea obey You. When we are afraid, help us remember that You are with us and trust You. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why God doesn't stop every storm: be honest and gentle. Sometimes God calms the storm, and sometimes He keeps us safe in it. Jesus was in the boat with His disciples the whole time, and He is with us too.

