

Jesus Calms the Storm

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Only God rules the wind and the sea, and Jesus did it with a word, so we can trust Him with our fears.

Bible passage: Mark 4:35–41. Students read Mark 4:35–41, then compare Matthew 8:23–27, Luke 8:22–25 and Psalm 107:23–30 out loud themselves.

Memory verse: "What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee." *Psalm 56:3 (KJV)* and "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" *Mark 4:41 (KJV)*

You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.

Before class: read all four passages. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Rank the Fear (5–10 minutes)

Write five things on the board: a test you didn't study for, a big storm at night, speaking in front of the whole school, a family member in the hospital, being left out by friends. In pairs, students rank them from "a little scary" to "very scary." Compare answers. Ask: *Why do different things scare different people? What do you usually do with fear: hide it, talk about it, or pray about it?* Say: "Today we read about experienced fishermen who were sure they were going to die."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Mark 4:35–41. Students take turns, a verse or two each. Old words in this passage:

- **when the even was come** (4:35): when evening came; **pass over:** cross the sea
- **multitude** (4:36): a big crowd; **even as he was:** just as He was, in the boat He had taught from (4:1)
- **beat into the ship, so that it was now full** (4:37): the waves crashed in until the boat was filling with water
- **hinder part** (4:38): the back of the boat; **carest thou not that we perish?:** don't You care that we are dying?
- **rebuked** (4:39): commanded sharply; **ceased:** stopped
- **fearful** (4:40): afraid; **feared exceedingly** (4:41): were very, very afraid, with awe
- **what manner of man** (4:41): what kind of man

Then say: "Some of these men had worked as fishermen on this very sea (Mark 1:16–20). They knew boats and storms, and this storm scared them."



Read out loud: Matthew 8:23–27 and Luke 8:22–25. Ask: *What details do Matthew and Luke add?*

Matthew calls it "a great tempest" (a violent storm) and says the ship "was covered with the waves" (Matthew 8:24). The disciples cried, "Lord, save us: we perish" (8:25). Luke says they "were in jeopardy" (in great danger, Luke 8:23), and Jesus asked, "Where is your faith?" (8:25). All three tell the same question at the end: "What manner of man is this?"

Read out loud: Psalm 107:23–30. This psalm was written long before Jesus came. Old words: **do business in great waters** (107:23): work on the sea; **reel to and fro** (107:27): stagger back and forth; **at their wit's end**: with no idea what to do; **haven** (107:30): a safe harbor. Ask: *Who calms the storm in this psalm?* (The LORD: "He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still," 107:29.) See also Psalm 89:9: "thou stillest them." The disciples knew the Psalms. When Jesus stilled the sea, they were watching what the Scriptures said only God does.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jesus said, "Let us pass over unto the other side" (Mark 4:35), and they still sailed into a storm. What does that teach us about following Jesus?
2. The disciples asked, "Carest thou not?" (4:38). When have you felt like God didn't care? How does this story answer that feeling?
3. Jesus slept because He was a real man. He stilled the sea because He is God. The Bible says, "God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16). How does this story show both at once?
4. Jesus asked, "How is it that ye have no faith?" (4:40). Is being afraid the same as having no faith? What would trusting Jesus in that boat have looked like?
5. Compare Psalm 107:29 with Mark 4:39. How would you answer the disciples' question in Mark 4:41?
6. Jesus said they would reach the other side, and they did (Mark 5:1). What has God said in His Word that you can hold on to when you are afraid?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **what time** means whenever, and **thee** means You, God. **Feared exceedingly** means they were very, very afraid, full of awe. **What manner of man** means what kind of man.

Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Psalm 56:3 this week; keep working on Mark 4:41 next week too.



5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "The disciples asked, 'What manner of man is this?' The Bible answers: 'God was manifest in the flesh' (1 Timothy 3:16). In Jesus 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily' (Colossians 2:9, KJV), which means all of God lives in Him. The One who stilled the sea is the One who came to save us. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."

Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is a "storm" in my life right now, something that makes me afraid or worried?
2. What do I know about Jesus from this story that I can remember in that storm?
3. Write a short prayer telling Jesus about it and asking Him to help you trust Him.

If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: each time you feel afraid or worried, stop and pray, then say Psalm 56:3. Notice how many times you used it by next Sunday.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, the wind and the sea obey You. Thank You that You are with us in every storm. When we are afraid, help us trust You instead of panicking, and help us know You better. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks why God doesn't stop every storm: answer honestly and gently. Sometimes God calms the storm, and sometimes He carries us through it. Jesus did not keep the disciples out of the storm, but He was in the boat with them the whole time, and He brought them to the other side (Mark 5:1).

