Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Walks on Water

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

Main point: When we are afraid, we keep looking to Jesus and trust Him, because He is God and He is always able to save us.
Bible passage: Matthew 14:22–33. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid." *Matthew 14:27 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), masking tape, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Put a long line of masking tape on the floor.

1. Opening game: Look and Balance (5–10 minutes)

Kids stand on one foot on the tape line. Round 1: they look at one spot on the wall and count how long they can balance. Round 2: they look all around the room and up at the ceiling while they balance. Round 3: a few volunteers try it with their eyes closed. Ask: *When was it easiest to balance? Why does it help to keep your eyes on one thing?* Say: "Today Peter finds out what happens when he looks at the wind instead of going to Jesus."

2. Bible story: Jesus Walks on Water (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Matthew 14. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Sent ahead in the ship. Jesus had just fed about five thousand men, besides women and children, with five loaves and two fishes (Matthew 14:19–21). Straightway (right away) Jesus **constrained** His disciples, which means He made them, get into a ship and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the crowds away (14:22). **Look up Matthew 14:23.** Jesus went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when evening came, He was there alone.

A long night on the sea. The ship was now in the midst (the middle) of the sea, tossed with waves, "for the wind was contrary" (14:24). **Contrary** means the wind blew against them. Mark adds that they were "toiling in rowing" (Mark 6:48), working hard at the oars. **Look up Matthew 14:25.** In the fourth watch of the night, Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea. The night was divided into four **watches**, so the fourth watch was the last part of the night, before morning. They had been out there since evening!

"It is a spirit." When the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled. They said, "It is a spirit," and cried out for fear (14:26). They did not know it was Jesus. **Look up Matthew 14:27.** Straightway Jesus spake unto them, "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid."

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Peter walks on the water. Look up Matthew 14:28. Peter said, "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." (**Bid me** means tell me to.) Jesus said, "Come." When Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus (14:29).

"Lord, save me." Look up Matthew 14:30. When Peter saw the wind **boisterous** (wild and strong), he was afraid, and beginning to sink, he cried, "Lord, save me." **Look up Matthew 14:31.** Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him, and said, "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (**Wherefore** means why.)

"Thou art the Son of God." When they came into the ship, the wind **ceased**, which means it stopped (14:32). **Look up Matthew 14:33.** Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God." Long before, Job said that God alone "treadeth upon the waves of the sea" (Job 9:8). **Treadeth** means walks. Jesus walked on the waves because He is God, come as a man (1 Timothy 3:16).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. While the disciples fought the wind, Jesus was praying on the mountain (14:23–24). What does that teach us about Jesus when we are in trouble?
2. Peter walked on the water while he went toward Jesus. What changed when he "saw the wind boisterous" (14:30)?
3. Peter prayed just three words: "Lord, save me." Why is a short prayer still a real prayer?
4. Jesus caught Peter "immediately" (14:31). What does that tell you about how Jesus cares for us?
5. What are some "winds" that make kids your age afraid? How can you look to Jesus when they blow?

Recall questions

1. In which watch of the night did Jesus come walking on the sea? *(The fourth watch, Matthew 14:25)*
2. What did the disciples think they saw? *(A spirit, 14:26)*
3. What happened to the wind when they came into the ship? *(It ceased, it stopped, 14:32)*

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

Explain the old words: **straightway** means right away, **spake** means spoke, **be of good cheer** means cheer up, and **it is I** means "it's Me." Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Peter cried, 'Lord, save me,' and Jesus saved him. 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: when something makes you afraid, stop and pray, "Lord, help me," and say Matthew 14:27 to yourself.

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. Matthew 14:21: How many men had Jesus just fed? *(About five thousand men, beside women and children)*
2. Matthew 14:23: Why did Jesus go up into the mountain? *(To pray)*
3. Matthew 14:24: Why was the ship tossed with waves? *(The wind was contrary)*
4. Mark 6:48: What were the disciples doing when Jesus saw them? *(Toiling in rowing, working hard at the oars)*
5. Matthew 14:28: What did Peter ask Jesus to bid him do? *(Come unto Him on the water)*
6. Matthew 14:31: What did Jesus ask Peter? *("Wherefore didst thou doubt?" Why did you doubt?)*
7. Matthew 14:33: What did the men in the ship say? *("Of a truth thou art the Son of God")*
8. Job 9:8: Who alone treadeth upon the waves of the sea? *(God)*

Or choose the **Jesus walks on water word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/walking-on-water-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/walking-on-water-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/walking-on-water-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/walking-on-water-worksheet).

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7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You see us and come to us when we are in trouble. When we are afraid, help us keep looking to Jesus and trust Him. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks whether they can walk on water too: answer simply. Jesus told Peter, "Come" (Matthew 14:29), and Peter walked on the water because Jesus called him to. The lesson for us is not to try it in a pool or a lake, but to trust Jesus and call on Him when we are afraid.

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