

Jesus Walks on Water

Matthew 14:22-36; Mark 6:45-56; John 6:16-24

PPT Title

Jesus Walks on Water

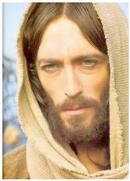
Main Point: Keep your eyes on Jesus.

Key Verse: *Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect.* - Hebrews 12:2a

Props: 2 or 3 spray bottles with water, hand held battery-operated fans or paper fans (or even electric fans), storm soundtrack

Teacher: Prearrange with some adults to come up front to distract the students at the right time. They should move around the room and lightly spray kids with water bottles and use fans to blow wind in their face. (If using electric fans, turn them on and point at the kids.) One adult should flash lights on and off as Storm soundtrack plays.

BACKGROUND/REVIEW



Say: We have learned a lot about Jesus over the past few weeks. First, we saw that the Jewish people waited hundreds of years for their King. Then, at long last, Jesus arrived. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God was very different than this world. Then we saw that Jesus had power over nature when He calmed the raging sea with just a word. We learned that Jesus has complete power over evil spirits, and Jesus alone has the authority to forgive sin. Last week we saw that Jesus had power over sickness & death, when He healed the woman with the bleeding disorder and raised Jairus' daughter from the dead.



As news spread about Jesus, the miracle Worker, more and more people wanted to hear Him and see Him. It seemed that a crowd gathered wherever Jesus was. The gospels tell of one day when a crowd of 5,000 men, plus women and children, gathered to hear Jesus! (Matthew 14:21) That means there may have been 20,000 people who came to hear Jesus teach that day. And after listening to Jesus teach for hours, the crowd was getting hungry. Jesus took the lunch that a young boy gave Him (John 6:9). It was only two fish and five small loaves of bread, but Jesus broke that bread, and just kept breaking it. The disciples handed out enough bread and fish to feed everyone in the crowd until they were full. And there were twelve baskets of food left over! (Luke 9:17) The disciples were a part of this miracle, yet the Bible says they did not fully understand it (Mark 6:52). The Bible says their hearts were hard, or stubborn (Mark 6:52). They knew Jesus was special, but they did not yet realize that He was the Messiah, God in a human body (Matthew 14:33). They were not yet seeing with "kingdom eyes." So, Jesus was about to do another miracle. This time the disciples would finally realize who Jesus really was.



Teacher Note: We can't be too quick to judge the disciples' unyielding hearts. After all, they did not yet have the Holy Spirit to guide them into all truth (John 16:13). How many times do we, though filled with the Spirit, fail to recognize God's work in our lives?

JESUS WALKS ON THE WATER (Matthew 14:22-36)

Say: Right after the miracle of the fish and bread, Jesus had something new to teach

His disciples. He sent the crowd away, and sent the disciples across the Sea of Galilee. Remember, the Sea of Galilee was actually a big lake.



Right away Jesus made the disciples get into the boat. He had them go on ahead of Him to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. Then He sent the crowd away. After He had sent them away, He went up on a mountainside by Himself to pray. [Remember that Jesus often sneaked away from other people to spend time alone with His heavenly Dad.] When evening came, He was there alone. The boat was already a long way from land. It was being pounded by the waves because the wind was blowing against it.



Early in the morning, Jesus went out to the disciples. He walked on the lake. They saw Him walking on the lake and were terrified. "It's a ghost!" they said. And they cried out in fear.

Right away Jesus called out to them, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid." - Matthew 14:22-27

Say: Jesus sent His friends across the lake when the storm winds were coming. **Ask:** Was the windstorm a surprise to Jesus? *No.* **Say:** Of course it wasn't! Jesus sent them into this storm for a reason. He wanted to test their faith, and teach them something about Himself that they didn't know yet.

Let's pause right here for a minute. This story is told in the books of Mark and John as well as in Matthew. John tells us that the boat was over three miles out from the shore by this time (John 6:19). Mark tells us that Jesus could see the disciples from where He sat praying on the mountainside (Mark 6:48). The disciples were having a hard time rowing because a strong wind was blowing against them. Since the disciples had taken the boat, there was just one way for Jesus to cross the lake. Jesus actually walked out to them on the water! Here is another example of Jesus having power over nature. Somehow, the water held Him up. The water treated Jesus differently than it treated the disciples. The disciples were struggling just to row across the lake. But Jesus walked on top of the waves. Do you remember what the disciples said when Jesus calmed the storm in our story a few weeks ago. They said, "What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey Him!" (Matthew 8:27) Don't you wonder what it felt like to walk on water? At least one of the disciples did!

Mark says that it was so early in the morning that it was still dark out (Mark 6:48). No wonder the men were afraid at first. But as soon as they heard Jesus' voice, Peter spoke back.

PETER WALKS ON THE WATER (Matthew 14:28-29)

Peter was a really unique man. He was the boldest of all the disciples. He said things that other people only thought. He was the type of person who did things that other people didn't have the nerve to do. Peter was completely drawn to Jesus. Peter wanted to follow Jesus with his whole heart. But, many times he made mistakes.

"Lord, is it You?" Peter asked. "If it is, tell me to come to you on the water."

"Come," Jesus said.



So Peter got out of the boat. He walked on the water toward Jesus. - Matthew 14:28-29

Ask: Why did Jesus invite Peter to come out to Him, and none of the other disciples? *Because Peter asked!* **Say:** Peter is the only disciple who asked to come to Jesus. Knowing Peter, it's really no surprise that he wanted to walk out to Jesus. The other disciples may have wanted to walk out to Jesus, but none of them would have dared to ask. Peter asked to come to Jesus, waited for Jesus to call him, and then obeyed.

Application: Do you think you are more like Peter - ready to ask God to use you - or are you more like the other disciples who sat in the boat watching to see what would happen with Peter? The Bible says that it's right to ask God for opportunities (Matthew 7:7).

Optional for Older Students: Before he stepped out, Peter said, "If it's You, tell me to come to you on the water." Peter wanted to believe that Jesus was the Son of God. But Peter was looking for proof. He was asking Jesus to suspend him in the waves so that he would know for sure that Jesus was God. Jesus did not get angry at Peter for asking this. Jesus simply invited him to, "Come."

Peter had enough faith to step out of the dry, sturdy boat, in the dark, as the wind was whipping up the waves. At first, Peter's eyes were fixed on Jesus. Peter didn't have to worry about the wind or waves because he had faith that Jesus would not let him sink. **While Peter was focused on Jesus, his faith was strong.** He could see the power that Jesus held over all things. He knew how much Jesus loved him, and that Jesus would never let him down.

Application: Your faith will be strong when you keep your eyes on Jesus. As we have learned, Jesus has power over all things. Is there anything that He can't do? And Jesus loves you. He loves you enough to lay down His life for you. When you know Jesus, you know He is completely deserving of your trust. When you keep your focus on His power and His love for you, your faith will be strong.

PETER SINKS (Matthew 14:30-31)

Say: But, before long, Peter took his eyes off Jesus. Matthew 14:30 says:

But when Peter saw the wind, he was afraid. He began to sink. He cried out, "Lord! Save me!"

Right away Jesus reached out His hand and caught him. "Your faith is so small!" He said. "Why did you doubt Me?" - Matthew 14:30-31

Say: When Peter looked at the wind and waves, he began to doubt if Jesus was more powerful than the storm that surrounded him (Matthew 14:31). Do you know what the Bible says about doubt? "People who doubt are like waves of the sea. The wind blows and tosses them around." (James 1:6b) What an interesting word picture! Peter's doubt literally caused him to be tossed around in the wind and waves. He began to sink.

Ask: Did anything about Jesus **change** that caused Peter to sink? **No!** **Ask:** What changed then? *Peter took his eyes off Jesus.* **Say:** Peter looked at the scary storm. He was overwhelmed by the things that were **more powerful than he was.** But Peter should have remembered that **nothing is more powerful than Jesus!** While he was focused on Jesus, the things around him were not a threat to him.

Say: Let's try a little experiment. Everyone look up here at me. Just focus on me. Don't take your eyes off of me. No matter what goes on around you, keep your eyes on me. You can blink, but don't look away. Okay, "distracters" come on up. **Continue telling the kids to focus on you as your prearranged adult volunteers try to distract them, the lights turn on and off, and the storm soundtrack plays. After a few minutes, thank your volunteers.** **Ask:** Was it difficult to keep your focus where it was supposed to be? *Listen for answers.* **Say:** Just imagine Peter's distractions: the wind was howling and the waves were crashing. Peter turned his focus to the things around him and he doubted Jesus. He was gripped with fear and he began to sink. Of course, when Peter started sinking, **Jesus was right there to catch him!** Gently, Jesus told Peter that his faith was small because he doubted Jesus.



Before we judge Peter, remember, he was the only one willing to step out of the boat that morning. Many people talk about how Peter sank, but few people mention that the other disciples never left the boat.



Application: When the disciples first saw Jesus walking on the water, He told them to be brave, and not be afraid. But Peter had a mixture of faith and fear. I think that describes most of us at times. We may start out with faith. We might begin to do something that we know God wants us to do (like being nice to the kid that nobody likes). Or we might have faith that gives us peace in a difficult time (like when a family member is sick, or our parents are arguing). But then we take our eyes off of Jesus. We look at the scary situation around us. We doubt whether God actually has power over that situation, or if He cares enough to help us. We may stop doing what God wants us to do. Or we may be overwhelmed with fear. You know the kind of fear I'm talking about - the kind that makes you feel like there's a whirlwind in the pit of your stomach.



But here is the truth: Lots of situations are too big or too scary for **you** to handle, but **nothing is too big for Jesus!** Don't focus on the situation you are in. **Focus on the One who has power over every situation!** What a blessing you have! The Creator of the universe, who has power over all things, is crazy about you! (Zephaniah 3:17) He **WANTS** to do what is best for you, and He is **ABLE** to do what is best for you. Focusing on that truth should give you peace. That truth should give you the confidence to step out of your boat and do what it is He wants you to do without any fear.

No one's faith is perfect. If you do stumble, if you ever have a doubt (like Peter did), talk to Jesus about it (Mark 9:24). Jesus never changes. Just like Jesus reached out His hand and grabbed Peter to keep Him safe, He is that close to you, and He will help you too.

THE DISCIPLES PRAISE JESUS (Matthew 14:32-33)

Say: Something awesome happened after Peter and Jesus got into the boat.

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." - Matthew 14:32-33

The disciples finally understood who Jesus was. They had already seen Jesus do miracles. But when Peter and the other disciples saw that Jesus could use PETER to walk on the water, their lives were changed. They all knew Peter. Some had known him all their lives. He was just a plain, clumsy, outspoken fisherman. But when he trusted in Jesus, he did something miraculous - he walked on top of the Sea of Galilee! Jesus transformed Peter. Surely Jesus was the Son of God.

Application: How does this apply to you? Well, your friends and family know you. They know your faults and the mistakes you make. They know who you really are. But when you ask God to use you, when you step out in faith, and when you keep your focus on Jesus, He will do amazing things through you. This is what life in the kingdom of God is all about. You will do things you could never do on your own; you will love people who seem unlovable; you will have peace when it seems impossible. Then, you will be a living testimony for Jesus. The people who know you best will know that Jesus is the Lord of lords!

PPT Verse

Key Verse: *Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect.* - Hebrews 12:2a

PPT Main Point

Main Point: Keep your eyes on Jesus.