



Bible Discovery (20 minutes)

Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21)

Activity Description: Kids experience stormy seas and step out of a pretend boat.

Supplies

- Bible
- rug, blanket, or sheet (large enough for all your kids to sit on)
- small electric fan
- flashlight
- large pieces of sandpaper (about 3)
- large section of bubble wrap
- glass gems (also called decorative fillers, available at craft or hobby stores)
- shallow bin

Easy Prep

- Set out the rug, blanket, or sheet in one area of your room. This will be your “boat” in the Bible story.
- Plug the fan into an outlet and place on a table near your “boat.”
- Place the glass gems in a shallow bin and set off to the side along with the sandpaper and bubble wrap.

Talk About Fear

Ask: • **What’s something you’re afraid of? Something I’m afraid of is...** Share something minor you’re afraid of, such as the dark or spiders. Then have kids share something that frightens them.

Hold up your Bible, and say: **Well, today we’re going to learn about one of Jesus’ friends and how Jesus helped him when he was afraid. Our exciting Bible story will help us remember that Jesus calms our fears and helps us to not be afraid. Let’s find out what happened!**

Experience Stormy Seas

Say: **One day, Jesus was teaching thousands and thousands of people who came to see him and telling them all about God's love. It had been such a long, busy day, and Jesus was tired.** Have kids stretch and yawn like they're tired.

Say: **Jesus told his friends to get into a boat and cross the huge lake they were next to. He was going to rest and pray alone for a while. So Jesus' friends set out and worked together to row their boat across the lake. They were on the lake for hours—I'm sure their arms started to get tired! Let's pretend we're Jesus' friends, rowing our boat across the water.**

Lead kids to the rug, blanket, or sheet you've set out as the "boat." Have kids sit down on the blanket and pretend to all row together.

Say: **Whew! Rowing a boat is hard work! It got to be late in the night and it was really dark out** (turn off or dim your lights), **and Jesus' friends were *still* rowing across the lake. It was a long way to shore! But then something scary happened. A huge storm came!** Turn on your fan so kids feel the "wind." **The wind was so strong, and there were huge waves that rocked the boat back and forth!** Have kids move side to side, pretending the boat is rocking back and forth.

Say: **The storm was so scary, but Jesus' friends kept rowing to try to get to land. Then they saw something coming toward them on the water.** Shine your flashlight in a corner of your room. **They thought it was a ghost!**

Ask: • **What kind of sound do you think Jesus' friends might have made when they thought they saw a ghost?** Let kids scream; then have kids return their attention to you.

Say: **But it wasn't a ghost at all—it was Jesus, walking toward them *on top* of the water!**

Ask: • **What happens when we jump into water?**

Say: **That's right! We sink below the surface and have to swim to stay afloat or stand on the bottom if it's not very deep. But Jesus stayed on top of the water! Jesus walked on the water toward his friends and said, "Don't be afraid. Take courage! I am here!"**

One of Jesus' friends in the boat was named Peter. He called out to Jesus and said, "Lord, if it's really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water." And Jesus said, "Yes, come."

So Peter stepped out of the boat...and began walking toward Jesus on the water! Wow! Let's see how Peter might have felt when he stepped out of the boat!

Step Out of the Boat

Have kids take off their shoes and socks and line up toward one side of your boat area. Set out the sandpaper, bubble wrap, and shallow tub of glass gems in a line, leading away from the boat.

One at a time, have kids “step out” of your pretend boat and take turns walking across the three different surfaces. You or a helper can hold children’s hands as they step into and walk through the tub, so no one slips on the stones. Once everyone has had a turn, have kids sit and gather around you.

Say: You might have felt a little afraid of what it was going to feel like to walk across the sandpaper, the bubble wrap, and the stones.

Ask: • Which one were you most nervous to walk across? Allow time for responses.

Say: Peter must have been scared to walk out on the water like we were worried to step out on the sandpaper, but he trusted Jesus! Peter was able to walk several steps on the water toward Jesus, but when he saw the huge waves around him and felt the strong wind pull at his clothes, he became afraid and began to sink. But Jesus was with Peter, and he reached out his hand and grabbed Peter so that he wouldn’t sink. Then Jesus and Peter climbed back into the boat, and Jesus calmed the wind and waves and stopped the storm. It was amazing!

Facing Our Fears

Say: Peter couldn’t have walked on the water alone—it’s impossible! But Jesus helped him do it and gave Peter the courage to face his fear. Peter and his friends learned that Jesus calms our fears. And we can know that Jesus calms our fears, too.

Sometimes trying new things might be a little scary—like taking swimming lessons or learning how to ride a bike. And sometimes we might be afraid of a loud thunderstorm or going to school or if someone in our family is really sick. But no matter what we are going through, Jesus tells us, “Don’t be afraid. I am here!”

Ask: • When has Jesus calmed one of your fears? For me... Share a kid-appropriate fear Jesus has helped you through, such as moving to a new city or waiting out a thunderstorm. Then allow children to share about a time they were afraid but Jesus helped them through it.

Say: Sometimes Jesus calms our fears by giving us peace, or a feeling of calm, in our hearts, and sometimes he calms our fears by helping us feel brave enough to get through whatever hard thing we’re facing. Let’s pray together to thank Jesus for always being with us and for calming our fears when we feel nervous or scared.

Lead kids in a prayer of thanks, and end by having kids shout, “Thank you, Jesus!”