



S1.Lesson 6: Peter Sinks

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); one blindfold

OPENING PRAYER

OPENING ACTIVITY - Marco Polo without the water (if you dare)

TELL

- We're going to play Marco Polo.
- One person will be "Marco."
- Marco will be blindfolded.
- Whenever that person says "Marco," the rest of us *have* to say, "Polo."
- Marco is allowed to walk.
- The rest of us must crawl.
- If you start to walk and Marco says "Fish can't walk!" while you're standing, then you've been caught and you have to be Marco.
- If Marco taps/tags you, then you become Marco.
- Let's not yell Marco or Polo too loudly because worship is just down the hall.
- Any questions?

DO activity of Marco Polo

ASK

- When you were Marco, how did you know where to go?
- Do you think it would've been easier or harder without the blindfold?
- As Marco would you have to focus more or less if you could see?
- Is the ability to see always a good thing?

TELL

We're going to read a story about Jesus and Peter. Listen for examples of how seeing was helpful and how seeing was not helpful.

READ Matthew 14:22-33

14:22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. 25 And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is

a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. 30 But when he noticed the strong wind and the waves, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

TELL (optional)

- From the words of this story, we might not get a true sense of the scene. So I'm going to highlight some of what's happening for the disciples:
- It's night time. It's completely dark. The clouds from the storm are covering the stars and moon. There is no electrical light on the boat or shining from the shore.
- The disciples are in a small boat, about the size of two couches pushed together end-to-end (give or take a few feet). The boat is probably about as wide as three couches side-to-side.
- The Sea of Galilee is really a lake. But it's still a decent size. It's about 6 miles long and 3 to 4 miles wide. The waves are probably somewhere between two to three feet high and since it's a shallow lake, the waves are choppy, not swells. So there are most likely white-tops hitting the boat, causing there to be lots of spray. And though the boat probably isn't in danger of breaking or flipping over, it's still a miserable experience.
- In the midst of ALL THAT the disciples then see something strange out on the water.
- They think it's a ghost.
- Finally, the first listeners to this story would've understood "water" as a symbol of "Chaos." Jesus wasn't just walking on water, he was also walking on top of the chaos.

ASK

- So was there anything helpful about "seeing" for Peter or the other disciples in this story?
- Was there anything unhelpful for Peter/the disciples about "seeing" in this story?
- In verse 23, what does Jesus do? (makes time and space for himself to pray)
- Does it surprise you that Jesus prays? Why/why not?
- Just for fun: Do you think Jesus walked up and down the waves, or just kind of hovered over all of it? Do you think his feet splashed? Did he get wet or not?
- Would jumping out of the boat like Peter have been *your* first response? Why?
- Looking at verse 30, for what reasons do you think Peter was sinking? (he was looking at the wind and the waves instead of at Jesus. The chaos became Peter's focal point and so he started to sink into it).

TELL

- Peter saw the chaos and paid attention to it so he sank into it.
- Some of the thoughts he probably had as he looked at the wind and the waves were, "Wow, look at all those waves! What was I thinking!?! I can't believe I'm out here walking on water! There's no WAY I can make it all the way to Jesus and back to the boat!"

- Peter stopped trusting Jesus because he was seeing things (a storm and waves) that made him afraid (the opposite of trust).

We're going to watch a clip, now, about a football team from a movie called, "Facing the Giants." In the clip, the team is at practice getting ready for a game. As you watch the clip, think of how the main football player and Peter are similar and different.

WATCH – Facing the Giants clip

ASK

- What similarities do Peter and Brock share? (Both are leaders on the team. Both are "picked on" by the teacher. Both want to look at the thing that will not help them. Both do an extraordinary thing. You wouldn't know it from the bible story, but both are pretty close in age - Peter's probably a little bit older than Brock, but not much. Probably around 18 or 19.)
- What are the differences between Peter and Brock in the story? (Peter is allowed to fail. Brock succeeds. The coach is very immediate in his presence with Brock the whole time and blindfolds Brock so that Brock has less distractions. Jesus does not blindfold Peter and so Peter becomes distracted by the other things around him).
- Do you think Brock could have gone as far without the blindfold?
- Why?
- With the blindfold on, what could Brock NOT pay attention to? (how far he had gone/how far he had to go)
- With the blindfold on, what was left for Brock to pay attention to? (his coach's voice and the pain in his muscles)
- Do you think a blindfold would have helped Peter not sink?
- If no, what *do* you think would have helped Peter not sink? (If Peter had kept looking at, being focused on Jesus, he probably would not have sunk into the water/chaos).

Journal (if there's time)

- What are some things that distract you if you look at them? (e.g. tv commercials?)
- Name some things that you would like to be able to see, but you seem unable to see?
- Ask God to help you see the things that you want to see and then ask God to help you see what God wants you to see.

CLOSING PRAYER