



OVERVIEW SECTION

How to Read This Lesson Plan

The **Overview Section** is the foundation of this lesson plan. The questions and activities for the class that you will be teaching on Sunday morning have been based (sometimes loosely) upon what you read in this section. The **Overview Section** is composed of five components (each component is underlined in the lesson plan):

How to Read This Lesson Plan (defines all components of the lesson plan)

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation (a reminder of why we do this)

Scripture(s) for the Session (a reminder that the scripture is to be read in every class)

Key Verses & Theology (background for teachers to ponder)

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture (the ideas that the session's lessons are based on)

The actual lesson is found in the second section, **The Sunday Morning Experience Section**. Think of this section as the step-by-step instruction guide to your Sunday morning teaching experience. There are four components to this section (again, each component is underlined in the actual lesson plan):

Preparation (including supplies needed)

Classroom Statement (a brief explanation of what will be taught/happening in the classroom)

Step-by-step process of the lesson (including the scripture to be read)

Suggested variations for age groups (Self-explanatory but not always applicable)

We encourage you to read the rest of this **Overview Section** before reading the **Sunday Morning Experience Section**.

Purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation

The purpose of Sunday Morning Spiritual Formation is, with God's help and in community, to hear and interact with the stories of our faith tradition, to pray, worship and play together, and to equip and support the building of relationships with God and with each other.

Scripture(s) for the Session: Matthew 14:22-33

Please READ this aloud in every class you teach. The actual words to the scripture can be found in **The Sunday Morning Experience Section: Step-by-Step process of the lesson**. When reading to the class, please read it from the lesson plan (not an actual Bible) as the wording of the scripture has been modified to help clarify some language issues.

Key Verses & Theology: These are provided to help the teachers think about and build a framework for understanding the story to help in answering some of the questions that the students might raise in class.

23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray Jesus had been busy. He had been teaching and healing. And now one might think he might want to sleep or relax. But instead Jesus goes to pray. Jesus' teaching and healing doesn't just happen. It's given to him. And in order to receive what is being offered to him, he has to choose to stay focused on and open to God. Jesus has to pray before he walks on the water.

30 But when Peter noticed the strong wind and the waves, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" What's amazing about this story is that Peter doesn't notice the strong wind and waves *earlier*. This scene reminds me a little bit of Wile E. Coyote when he's chasing the Roadrunner across gaps in the road. Wile E. Coyote is oblivious until it's too late, but he doesn't know that it's too late until he looks down. That's when he falls – when he looks down. So it is with Peter. Once he realizes what's actually happening, then he starts to sink.

Last session we talked about the water as a symbol of chaos. As long as Peter is looking to Jesus, then Peter is ok. But once he starts to notice the chaos around him, then he sinks into it. At first he was paying attention to his teacher, giving his teacher authority by being obedient (following Jesus' command). However, Peter gets caught up in the chaos and then gives the chaos his attention. What we give our attention to is what we allow to have authority over us. Peter gives the chaos authority and it starts to swallow him.

31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught Peter, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Getting swallowed by chaos is not an uncommon event. The Good News is that if we are seeking God, God will send someone to put out their hand. In this case, Jesus, the "above-chaos walker" is there to "immediately" reach out and catch Peter. Jesus lets Peter fail, but that doesn't mean Jesus lets him die. Failure becomes a reminder that we've let chaos overtake our attention and that we need to re-focus on the way that Jesus shows us.

Themes to Focus on from the Scripture: Themes are provided to help teachers understand the teaching of the *session* (not necessarily the class). Sometimes an activity in one class may not match up with any of the themes.

Immediately: This word shows up twice in this story. In verses 27 and 31. Jesus immediately responds to the disciples. When they cry out, he responds. He is close by. He does not delay. There are however, levels of Jesus' immediacy. In verse 27, Jesus doesn't act on or change anything. Instead, he talks and reassures. In verse 31, Jesus acts. He reaches out and catches Peter. But in both instances, Jesus is at the ready. The disciples are not alone and Jesus chooses to act in a way that reminds them of this. In verse 32, it says the disciples were saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." As the son of God, Jesus is displaying a characteristic of God: That God is always at hand. God is with us in an immediate way.

Authority: Someone who we give authority to is someone we give power to. This means we place trust in this person. Peter in this story gives power to Jesus (places trust in Jesus) and so Jesus commands Peter to come out and walk on the water. Once Peter in walking on the water then he gets distracted by the strong wind and waves. This distraction keeps him from choosing one authority over the other, so he sinks into the distraction and chaos. He is no longer walking on top of the chaos and he is not drowning in it either, just sinking in.

Fear/doubt: But then Peter starts paying attention to the strong wind and the big waves (verse 30). Peter gets distracted. And in his distraction, he gives the wind and the waves authority. This then makes him afraid, because the wind and the waves are a threat to Peter. In his fear, Peter begins to sink. But Peter cries out, and Jesus' immediacy makes clear to Peter who the authority is, and once they're in the boat, everyone is naming this authority they've seen and they say that Jesus "is the Son of God."



THE SUNDAY MORNING EXPERIENCE SECTION

Preparation

- Print out this lesson plan and bring it with you on the Sunday Mornings you are teaching
- Arrive at pre-arranged time to join other teachers, shepherds and staff for an opening prayer.
- Supplies Needed: Paper, pencils, ball of yarn or string, and a blindfold.

Classroom Statement

The Movement and Games class consists of three activities: A quiz game where students choose to either trust themselves or their teammate; a trust circle where one person walks blindfolded, trusting their peers to catch them; and if there's time, a simple game of Red light/Green light to help demonstrate the principle of authority and obedience.

Step-by-Step Process of Lesson

Shepherd comes in with students

SHEPHERD ASKS "Question of the Day."

INTRODUCE yourself

Hi, my name is ____ and I want you call me (tell the students how they may address you).

PRAY (Short and simple is perfect)

God, thank you for this day and for each other. We need your help. Help us to learn about you this day. Amen.

TELL

- To trust someone means you place something or someone in that person's care.
- Can you think of someone who you trust?
- In the story we're going to read, Peter places himself in Jesus' care; Peter trusts Jesus.
- But then listen as the story continues for what Peter starts to "trust" instead of Jesus.

READ Matthew 14

22 Immediately after feeding the 5000 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 Peter, 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."

ASK

- When Peter first sees Jesus walking on the water, do you think Peter thinks Jesus is more powerful or that the storm is more powerful?
- Once Peter is walking on the water, what does he see that starts to change his mind?
- How does trusting something other than Jesus affect Peter? What happens to him?

TELL

- In the beginning of the story, Peter acted on his trust of Jesus
- He actually got out of the boat.
- We're going to do an activity now that helps us to see how difficult it might have been for Peter to keep trusting.

EXPLAIN

- There will be teams of two. (Get into teams of two)
- I am now passing out paper and ONE pencil to each team
- In your team of two, one person will be Ice Cream and the other person will be Pudding. (Decide in Three, two, one...)
- OK, now we start with Ice Cream.
- Whoever is Ice Cream, I'm going to ask you a question about the story.
- You will want to answer the question correctly because a correct answer gets your team one point. However, before I ask this question, you must decide if you are going to answer it, or if you want your Partner, "Pudding" to answer the question. Only one of you may answer this question. Ice Cream you must choose who is going to answer in 3, 2, 1....
- Whoever is answering the question gets the paper and the pencil.
- I will now ask the question (Ask the question).
- Write down your answer.
- You have 30 seconds.
- You are done writing in 3,2,1...
- Let's see how we did!
- Team 1, what did you write down for your answer?
- Now it's your turn, Pudding. I'm going to ask you a question. You must decide who is going to answer it in your team. You must choose in 3,2,1...
- (Repeat rest of the process for the rest of the questions.)

(Note: With older children you may want answers to be closer to the exact words of the story. If so, let them know that ahead of time. Give younger children a little more leeway in their answers.)

QUESTIONS FOR QUESTION GAME

1. Why did Jesus not get in the boat with the disciples when they left the shore? (He was dismissing the crowd, then went to pray alone. Accept any part of this answer.)
2. What happened as evening came? (The boat began to be tossed about by big waves, or a storm came. Accept any answer similar to this.)
3. When did Jesus start walking on the water? (early morning probably between 3-6 a.m.)
4. When the disciples first saw Jesus walking on the water, what did they think they were seeing? ("It's a ghost.")
5. What did Jesus say to the disciples when he saw they were afraid? (Accept any answer that is similar to "It is I. Don't be afraid.")
6. What did Peter ask Jesus to do? (Accept any answer similar to "Come to me" or "Command me to come out to you")
7. When did Peter begin to sink? (Accept any answer similar to "when he paid attention to the wind and the waves")
8. What did Peter say when he began to sink? (Accept any answer similar to "Lord, save me.")
9. What does the Bible say Jesus did to save Peter? (He reached out his hand and caught him.)
10. What did Jesus say to Peter? (Accept any answer similar to "why did you doubt?")
11. What happened to the storm when they got into the boat? (It stopped.)
12. What did the disciples do when the wind stopped? (Accept any answer similar to "They worshipped Jesus and said he was truly the Son of God.")
13. Where did this story take place? You must name the sea. (The Sea of Galilee).
14. Where in the Bible is today's scripture found? (Matthew 14:22-33. Accept any part of the answer.)
15. Extra-credit question: What is the water/sea a symbol for? (Chaos)
16. What does it mean to trust someone (to place a something or person in that person's care).

ASK

- When it was your turn to choose who would answer the question, how did you decide to choose yourself?
- How did you decide to choose your partner?
- Were there events that happened during the game that made you change your mind about who you picked? What were those events? (possible events: partner or self getting a question wrong; Ice Cream not picking Pudding, so Pudding felt hurt and then didn't pick Ice Cream).
- When we have to act out our trust, it's not always easy, is it?

TELL

- Now that we've warmed up our trusting skills (what does it mean to trust, again?), we're going to try a trust exercise.
- Our next activity is one where we practice trusting ourselves to the whole group.
- We're going to experience Peter's situation (you'll see how later).
- First, we stand in a circle.
- Then one of us (pick someone) moves to the middle of the circle and is blindfolded.
- Then that person will move from one side of the circle to the other side of the circle.
- The rest of us who are making the circle will NOT SAY ANYTHING, but if the blindfolded person run into us, we will catch him/her very nicely and gently and turn him/her in the direction she/he needs to go (demonstrate to the kids in the circle how we will catch, turn and release – tell them if they do it wrong because they want to be funny, then they will sit out the rest of the game).
- So since you are in the middle, you have to get to one side of the circle, and then walk across to the other side. Any questions? (take three questions at the most and then begin).
- Give each students about 1 to 2 minutes of being blindfolded.

DO activity

Alternative activity (for older kids):

- Do the same activity, only have the blindfolded person hold a ball of string/yarn and then make a shape with that yarn by connecting different people in the circle.
- For instance, have the person make a square. So the person in the middle would hand the end of the yard to someone in the circle and then walk over to the other side of the circle and hand someone over there the yarn to hold on to until the square is made.
- Depending on how good the class is try different shapes: Triangle, pentagon, square, star.
- Also, feel free to make rules regarding talking (who can or cannot talk, etc).

ASK

- Did you notice a change in your speed when you were blindfolded?
- If you did change your speed, why did you?
- Even though the instructions were that the class was to handle you gently, did that mean you acted in trust of that instruction?

TELL

- The same thing happened with Peter. Jesus said come on out. Jesus would not lie to Peter. Yet Peter saw the waves and heard the wind and then he started to doubt the safety of listening to Jesus.

(If there's time) TELL

- We're going to do one more activity
- In the story, Jesus commands Peter to come to him.
- Peter listens and because he listens, he walks on water.
- We're going to play a game that allows you to be like Jesus or like Peter.
- That game is Red light/Green light.
- Remember, you stop when it's red light and go when its green light. If you're moving when it's red light, then you have to go back to the start.

DO Red light/Green light (this is mostly for the younger ages, but sometimes the older kids like to revisit games of yesteryear – use your discretion).

CLEAN UP

DISMISS FOR SINGING