



Jesus Walks on Water: Matthew 14:22-33 Lesson Plans

WRM Season 2 Session 3: Movement & Games, Arts & Crafts, Science

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: Oil, Cork, Coin, Water, Grape, Honey, Tall Clear Cup – plastic that can be thrown away later; aluminum foil; pennies; Pencil; raw egg; ruler; apple; nail; toy boat; paperclip; aluminum cooking pans or other large jars/buckets to fill with water for the aluminum boat experiment

Classroom Statement

Class consists of reading the story out loud to the students, then there are three experiments that help demonstrate the concepts of trusting Jesus, the effects of turning one's attention away from God and the effects of focusing on God.

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

- In this story that I'm going to read to you, Jesus does something pretty amazing.
- But so does Peter.
- Listen for what is so amazing.
- And listen for why you think Peter stops doing the amazing thing.

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."

TELL

- Peter made a decision to jump out of the boat to go to Jesus.
- That was pretty brave of him.
- When he jumped out of the boat, what should've happened to him?
- That's right, he should've made a splash and then sank.
- But, he didn't – at least not at first.
- We're going to do a science experiment where we guess whether something floats or sinks.
- I'm going to pass out some sheets of paper for you to write on
- I'll hold up an item. Write that item down on the sheet of paper you have
- Now put a check mark in the box of whether you think it'll float or sink

DO

- Once sheets are passed out, hold up an item and ask "Write down next to this item on the paper what if you think it will float or sink.
- Place item in water (use a clear cup, feel free to use the same one that you're going to use in the next experiment).
- Were you right?
- Repeat with next item

TELL

- Do you know why some things float and others do not? Because they are less dense than the water.
- Simply speaking, there are air pockets in parts of these things that help keep them afloat.
- For Jesus and Peter though, they stayed above the water not because there was lots of air in them – they weren't even floating – but because God was in them.
- In the story we see how Peter starts to doubt that God is in him.
- Doubt is a word we use to describe how we feel when we can't decide who to believe or listen to. What happens in the story as Peter starts to doubt?
- Right, he starts to sink, but not all the way. He gets stuck, doesn't he?
- Our next experiment shows a similar experience.

DO LAYERED LIQUIDS EXPERIMENT

Supplies: Oil, Cork, Coin, Water, Grape, Honey, Tall Clear Cup (a plastic one that can be thrown away later)

Steps:

1. Fill one third of the cup with honey.
2. Fill the next third with oil.
3. Fill the last third with water.
4. Wait for all three substances to settle.
5. Hold up the coin

ASK

- Do you think this item will sink or float or something else?

DO

- Carefully drop in the coin
- then hold up the grape, ask the same question and put in the cup,
- Repeat with the cork.

TELL

- What's happening is that each of the liquids have different amounts of air in them, and therefore they make three separate layers.
- All three items (grape, coin and cork) also have different amounts of air in them and therefore float in the separate layers according to their density.
- The most dense goes to the bottom and the least dense goes to the top.
- Peter had a similar problem, he couldn't figure out if he belonged on top of the water with Jesus, or in the water where everything else went. And so he sank very slowly. He got stuck.
- Peter started to sink because he started paying attention to the wrong things (the wind and the waves).
- We're going to do an experiment now to see how many "things" it takes to sink an aluminum boat.

DO

- Hand-out 1 square foot sheet of aluminum foil to each student.
- Put out a bowl of pennies

TELL

- Peter paid too much attention to the wind and to the waves and it caused him to sink.
- What we're going to do next is build a boat out of aluminum foil
- Then, you will guess how many pennies is too much for your boat and makes sink (like Peter).
- Then you will place that many pennies in your boat and see how close your guess was.

Things to note:

- The shape of the boat matters
- How the pennies are placed in the boat matter
- Where the pennies are placed in the boat matter

DO activity

**CLEAN UP
DISMISS FOR SINGING**

Item	Float	Sink
Pencil		
Raw Egg		
Ruler		
Apple		
Nail		
Toy Boat		
Paperclip		
Rubber Ball		

Item	Float	Sink
Pencil		
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