

Lesson 60: THE LORD WALKS ON THE WATER
Matthew 14:22-33

INTRODUCTION:

Today's story is about one of the times that the Lord showed His amazing power over nature.

Actually, right before today's story begins, the Lord had performed another amazing miracle. He had been teaching a large crowd of people, and they were getting hungry. All the disciples had five loaves of bread and two fishes. That certainly wasn't enough to feed more than five thousand people! Do you remember what the Lord did? (*For a reminder, teacher can look at Matthew 14:13-21, but see if you can get a brief response from the kids.*) The Lord certainly showed that He has amazing powers, didn't He?

STORY:

Well, after this amazing, miraculous meal, the Lord told His disciples to get into a boat and sail across the Sea of Galilee to the other side. He would join them later. Then the Lord sent the large crowd of people away, and He went up by Himself onto a mountain to pray.

In the meantime, nighttime had fallen. And where were the disciples? They were in the middle of the Sea of Galilee, in the dark. And what made things worse was that a strong wind had come up, causing big waves to toss the ship around dangerously. How do you think they felt, there in the dark with the strong wind howling and the waves making their ship tip back and forth? Afraid! And they didn't have the Lord there with them, so they must have felt like He was far away, and didn't even know that they were in danger.

Do you think the Lord knew what was happening to them? Yes. The Lord knows everything that is happening to everyone, and He is very concerned to help people with their troubles.

But the disciples didn't know this. They thought that they would have to get out of this trouble by themselves. They rowed hard, straining their muscles, trying to get the boat to go toward the other side. But the wind held them back, and they were stuck there in the dark of night, in the middle of the sea.

Do you know what dawn is? Dawn is when the very first light of the rising sun is beginning to show. And when dawn came, the disciples saw something coming across the top of the water toward them. Soon they realized it was not *something*, but it was *someone*, walking on top of the water!

Can anyone you know walk on top of water? If you saw someone, when it was still pretty dark, walking along the top of the water, in the midst of a scary windstorm, what might you think it was? Well, the disciples thought it was a ghost, or a spirit! How do you think they felt? Very afraid! They cried out in fear that it was a ghost.

But who was it? It was not a ghost at all, and it was certainly not someone frightening. It was the Lord Himself, walking across the top of the stormy sea of Galilee to help them. The Lord called out to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid."

The disciples were amazed at this sight. Peter said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So Jesus said to him, "Come."

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Would that have been an easy thing to do, to climb out of a boat and step out onto a wild and stormy sea? Not at all. Peter was very brave to step out of that boat. And amazingly, as he set his feet upon the water, he did not sink! Peter began to walk on top of the water toward the Lord! How could he do that? Because the Lord was giving him the power.

But as Peter walked, he looked around at the big, wild waves and the waters swirling around in the boisterous wind. Would you have felt afraid? Peter sure did. He didn't feel sure that the Lord could keep him up. He was afraid he would sink. And as he felt this fear, he did indeed begin to sink. Why do you think he began to sink? Because when He doubted that the Lord had the power to hold him up, he blocked off that power that was coming from the Lord. And on his own, he certainly couldn't stay up.

Peter felt himself sinking, and was terrified. He cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

And of course, the Lord did, because the Lord wants nothing more than to save each and every person. The Lord reached out and grabbed Peter's hand, and held him up. And the Lord said, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" What he meant was, Peter, why did you stop believing that I could hold you up?

Jesus and Peter climbed back into the boat, and immediately the wind stopped, and the sea grew calm again. The disciples were truly amazed, and said to Jesus, "Truly, You are the Son of God."

This is amazing story! It shows how the Lord has power over the mighty forces of nature, by which he could help the disciples out of some very bad trouble. Does the Lord have power to help us when we have bad troubles?

The stormy sea in our story today is like big troubles when they come into our lives. Say you were having a lot of troubles on a certain day. You didn't understand your homework, a friend was mad at you, your parents said you couldn't play with a different friend outside until you finished that homework you didn't understand, and you had broken one of your favorite toys! And it just seemed you couldn't get out of all those troubles, no matter what you did. The troubles kept storming around you, like the wind and the waves were storming around the disciples. You might feel like you were going to drown in those troubles, like the disciples were afraid they would drown in the sea of Galilee.

But you know, the Lord is always trying to send you help when you're having troubles. And you might not recognize it at first, just like the disciples didn't recognize the Lord at first when He was walking toward them. Maybe someone is offering to help with you're homework, but you're too frustrated to listen. Or maybe you're having this thought in your head of how you could make up with this friend who's mad at you, but you're too upset to pay attention. Or maybe you know of someone who might be able to fix your toy, but you're too afraid to ask. It all seems too overwhelming, like a stormy sea.

But all those things could be the Lord trying to help you. If you pay attention, He can come to you, and if you trust in Him, He can help you get above your troubles, just as He could help Peter walk on top of the stormy sea.

PROJECT: Sand Paper Pictures

Supplies:

squares of sandpaper (fine rather than coarse)
crayons
white paper
an iron
a piece of cloth

Procedure:

Encourage the kids to color a picture on their piece of sandpaper of the stormy sea of Galilee, and the Lord walking on top of it. They should color firmly, to get the most color onto the sandpaper, and should keep the picture simple rather than detailed. (If they also want to add a ship and disciples they may, but again, encourage simplicity and firm coloring.)

When a picture is finished, lay a piece of white paper over top of it. Then lay the cloth over the white paper, and iron over it with a heated iron until the crayon picture is "printed" onto the white paper.

If the child has colored to lightly, the "print" will come out pretty vague. It might help to emphasize what a pleasing color pattern it makes, and say it shows how it was hard for the disciples to see that it was the Lord on the water, while the sandpaper picture shows it more clearly.