



Walking on water

Colour me!



Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus made his disciples get into a boat and start back across the lake. But he stayed until he had sent the crowds away. Then he went up on a mountain where he could be alone and pray. Later that evening, he was still there.

By this time the boat was a long way from the shore. It was going against the wind and was being tossed around by the waves. A little while before morning, Jesus came walking on the water towards his disciples. When they saw him, they thought he was a ghost. They were terrified and started screaming.

At once, Jesus said to them, "Don't worry! I am Jesus. Don't be afraid." Peter replied, "Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water." "Come on!" Jesus said. Peter then got out of the boat and started walking on the water towards him.

But when Peter saw how strong the wind was, he was afraid and started sinking. "Save me, Lord!" he shouted. Straight away, Jesus reached out his hand. He helped Peter up and said, "You don't have much faith. Why do you doubt?" When Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind died down. The men in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You really are the Son of God!"

Commentary

It was the end of a long day. Jesus had heard the news about John's death, spent the afternoon healing people, and then performed the miracle with the bread and the fish. He hadn't had a moment to himself, so no wonder he wanted time alone with God. Having seen the crowds and his disciples safely on their way, he went up a mountain to pray. Unfortunately, the boat trip home for the disciples ran into difficulty, and by early morning they still hadn't made it back.

Once again Jesus comes to people in need – this time, his friends – and takes the direct route to help them by walking across the water. This scares the living daylights out of them, of course, but when they realize who it is, Peter asks if he can walk on the water too. He is keen to be like his master in every way, and Jesus encourages him to come. When, however, he takes his eyes off Jesus and begins to doubt, he starts to sink, but Jesus is there to rescue him.

Christians believe that Jesus wants all of us to do amazing things too, with his help. Jesus encourages us, like Peter, to take a step of faith out of the boat.

Questions

- ▶ Have you ever been in a boat when it was stormy? How did you feel?
- ▶ Jesus needed to pray after all that had happened that day. What makes you want to pray?
- ▶ Where is a good place for you to find peace and quiet?
- ▶ Why do you think Peter started to sink?



Visual aid

Fill a bowl with water and float a small toy boat in it. If you do not have a boat, make one from paper. Create some stormy waves and, by flapping a piece of card, add some wind effects as well.



Activity idea

Act out the story together. Create a boat with pieces of furniture in the room and huddle inside. Row against the current and be tossed around by imaginary waves. Suddenly spot Jesus walking on the water and react with terror. Call out to find out who it is. One of you, as Peter, should dare to step out of the boat. Try walking carefully on the water. Help Peter to get back in the boat when he begins to sink. Give an opportunity for everyone to say how they feel about what has just happened.



Prayer idea

Jesus needed to be alone to pray. Together, walk around your home to find a good place to pray. Talk about what would make the place special and how it would help you to focus on God. When you find a place, kneel down and say a simple, familiar prayer such as the Lord's Prayer.

Key verse

The men in the boat worshipped Jesus and said, "You really are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33).

Old Testament story link

2 Kings 6:1-7: Something heavier than water floats to the surface during Elisha's ministry.



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