**FIRST STEPS TOGETHER:** FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

## Jesus walks on water

### MEETING AIM

To discover that Jesus is amazing.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 14:22-33

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your particular situation.

This session is the first in a series all about amazing miracles that Jesus does. Here, we see him walking on water. Younger children will probably happily accept that Jesus can do this. They are told that Jesus is amazing and powerful, so why shouldn’t he be able to walk on water? This acceptance of Jesus’ nature and power can teach us as adults much about faith and trust in Jesus. Help those in your group to foster this faith and trust today.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments and ask the children to share about the week they have had. Ask them if they have had a good surprise recently. Share something from your own life too.

### PLAY – 10 mins

**You will need:** trays (such as deep roasting tins or seed trays); water; a variety of objects – some of which will float and some which won’t; cover-up facilities

Lay out your cover-up facilities and put the trays on top. Fill the trays with water and gather the children around them (if you have a small group, just use one tray of water).

Show the objects and ask the children to say whether they think each one will float on top of the water or sink to the bottom. Try out the objects in the water to see if the children were right.

If you have time, let the children play with the objects and the water.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** any furniture in the room (chairs, tables etc) or an inflatable dinghy

Using whatever you have in your room, work together to create a ‘boat’ that you can all sit in. Alternatively, if you have a small group, blow up an inflatable dinghy.

Ask a leader to be Jesus and send them to sit on the other side of the room. Sit everyone else down in your boat and tell this story:

It was the end of a long day and Jesus was sitting by himself talking with God his Father. *Point to ‘Jesus’ on the other side of the room.* All of Jesus’ friends had set out in a boat. They were sailing across a lake called Lake Galilee. *See if the children can say ‘Lake Galilee’.*

There was a big wind and the waves were making the boat rock from side to side. *Encourage the children to move around as if they were being buffeted by the wind and rain.* All through the night, Jesus’ friends tried to sail across the lake, but they struggled because the weather was so bad.

Just before the sun came up, Jesus started to walk towards his friends in the boat. *Ask ‘Jesus’ to start walking slowly towards you.* Yes! He was walking on the lake. And he didn’t sink! His friends were scared – they didn’t know what was happening. *Ask the children if they can make scared faces.*

But Jesus said to them: “Don’t be afraid, it’s me!” *Ask ‘Jesus’ to repeat this.*

Jesus’ friend Peter asked Jesus: “If it is you, tell me to come to you on the water.”

“Come to me,” said Jesus.

Peter got out of the boat and started walking towards Jesus! *Ask a leader to get out of the boat and walk slowly towards Jesus. Ask the children what they think about what is happening.*

But then Peter noticed the wind and the waves. He got scared. He began to sink! *Ask ‘Peter’ to mime sinking into the water.* “Help me!” he cried. *Ask ‘Peter’ to repeat this.*

Jesus reached out his hand to Peter and helped him back in the boat. “Why did you doubt?” asked Jesus.

Then the wind stopped and the lake was calm. Jesus’ friends were amazed and worshipped Jesus. “You’re the Son of God!” they said. *Ask the children to repeat: “You’re the Son of God!”*

If you have time, and the children are interested, repeat the story with children playing the parts of Jesus and Peter.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* What was your favourite part of the story?
* How do you think his friends felt when they saw Jesus walking towards them on the water?
* Why do you think Peter wanted to walk on the water?
* What does this story tell us about Jesus?
* Do you want to ask Jesus anything? What do you want to ask him?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** large pieces of paper; art materials

Beforehand, collect a range of art materials and set them out ready for the children to use. At this point in the session, show the children the art materials and encourage them to create a picture that represents what they think about the story, who Jesus is or anything that they are thinking about today.

As they work, chat about the story and encourage the children in their creativity. This is space for the group to process what God has said to them today. It doesn’t matter if they produce a finished picture or even if the picture seems to have nothing to do with the story. God will be speaking with the children and working in their lives – the picture they create is almost incidental.

If any children want to show their pictures to the rest of the group, let them do so.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** large sheet of paper; marker pen

In the centre of the paper, write “Jesus is amazing”. Ask them to think about if Jesus is amazing, what do they want to talk about with him today? Write each suggestion down on the paper and pray a short prayer asking Jesus to help with that. After the first two or three suggestions, ask the children if they would like to pray a short prayer about each suggestion, rather than you doing it.

When all the children have told you what they want to talk to Jesus about, say a closing prayer, thanking Jesus for being amazing and wanting to help us. Keep the sheet of paper safe for next week.

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