**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 1 of 4

# Jesus walks on water

### MEETING AIM

To dig down into the details of the story of Jesus walking on the water, finding out more about him, and being amazed.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

Matthew 14:22-34

### 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.

Was there a specific point when Jesus’ disciples committed themselves to be lifelong disciples of Jesus, or was it more of a growing realisation of what it meant to follow him? In these four sessions Jesus unwraps more of his identity, but the disciples struggle to make sense of it. They can only understand after Jesus’ death, resurrection, ascension and Pentecost. Ask the Holy Spirit to open the children’s eyes so that they grasp just how amazing Jesus is.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Welcome the children and share some simple refreshments and ask the children to share about the week they have had. Has anyone ever been in a boat when the waves have got rough, or seen a film when a boat or ship is in danger? Talk about their experiences and your own.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** video of animals that can walk on water, such as [this one](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wJ__rbsytjI), and the means to show it

Show the video of the animals that can walk on water. If you’re using the suggested video, then get the children to vote on which one of the five they like the best or think is the most amazing.

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** Bibles; whatever props you have; volunteers to play the narrator, Jesus, Peter and the other disciples

Set the scene: Jesus has crossed Lake Galilee in a boat wanting some quiet time with his disciples. But the crowds, wanting to hear and see Jesus, walk along the edge of the lake to find him. Eventually Jesus feeds the crowd, which may be as large as 10,000, if you count men, women and children. Everyone must have been excited and amazed.

But Jesus sends his disciples back across the lake and only then, sends the crowds back home. He remains on his own, to spend time with God his Father.

Read the whole story (Matthew 14:22-34) and then act it out. Or if the children know the story (but probably not all the details!) act it out as it is read, but make sure you pay attention to Matthew’s version – for example, Matthew does not say that Jesus was going to walk past them.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Many things in this story make us wonder. Ask children for their comments before you ask wondering questions like these:

* Why does Jesus send the disciples away before the crowd?
* How long are the disciples buffeted in their boat? How would they feel?
* Why did Jesus take so long to go to them?
* Imagine what it is like to see a ghost walking on water.
* Why on earth does Peter ask Jesus to help him walk on water?
* Imagine what it was like for Peter – walking, sinking, being rescued then returning to the boat.
* What did the disciples discover about Jesus?

### CREATIVE RESPONSE – 10 mins

**You will need:** Post-it notes (or small pieces of paper); pens; three A4 sheets stuck together lengthwise with a large outline of a boat at one end; ‘Jesus’ written on a Post-it note

Set out the long piece of paper and stick the Post-it with Jesus at the other end from the boat. Everyone should write their name or draw themselves on a Post-it note. Each child decides what they would do when they first see the ghost: pretend there’s nothing there, cover up their eyes, jump into the water in panic? Stick their Post-it note where they would be.

Move Jesus closer to the boat. Now everyone can see it is Jesus. What will they do: climb into the water and walk to Jesus, go to rescue Peter, stare in amazement?

Jesus gets into the boat, with all the ‘Peters’ who have walked towards him. What will they now do?

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** boat picture and Post-it notes from ‘Creative response’; [‘God is bigger’](http://www.awesomecutlery.com/tracks/god-is-bigger) by Awesome Cutlery and the means to play it (optional)

The disciples were petrified (which comes from the Latin word to be ‘turned to stone’). They were “terrified” (v26). But once Jesus had come to them, they were amazed and worshipped him.

Sit round in a circle. Lay out the boat picture in the middle, with ‘Jesus’ taken out of the boat. Place all the Post-it notes close to Jesus. Invite everyone to thank Jesus that he is so amazing. Children may mention something they are afraid of which you can talk about with God. You might like to play and sing ‘God is bigger’ together.

**RO WILLOUGHBY**

ministers with people of all ages at St Chad’s Woodseats.