



Jesus Helps in a Storm

Goal: To hear about the disciples' fear in a storm and to know that Jesus is with us when we are afraid.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Mark 4:35-41

We all have fears. We all have had times when we were afraid. We know we need help, and we cannot help ourselves.

Jesus' disciples experienced this when they were in a boat with Jesus. When high winds arose and waves crashed against the boat, the disciples were afraid they would drown. Where was Jesus? He was asleep in the back of the boat. They woke him up and asked him, "Teacher, don't you care that we're drowning?" (v. 38, CEB).

Jesus commanded the wind to "Be still!" and everything became calm. The disciples were amazed that Jesus had power over the wind and sea. But Jesus asked the disciples: "Why are you frightened? Don't you have faith yet?" (v. 40).

Faith was the key. We will always have times of fear. We will be afraid when we cannot control situations. But faith is the answer to fear. In faith, we trust Jesus to take care of us. We receive the promise of grace and the goodness Jesus gives us. He will be with us in and through our fears. We have faith; we trust in Jesus. We believe his grace is with us. Through faith, we live gratefully, depending on Jesus.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

Invite the children to tell a story about a time when they were afraid. You may hear stories about being lost, being in the dark, being sick, a scary ride at a park, or a bad storm. Help them to say what it felt like to be afraid. Also, help them to say what helped them feel less afraid. Was someone there who helped them feel safe? Naming their own experiences with fear will help them connect with this story of the disciples and Jesus' reminder to them that, if they trust him, they will not be afraid.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you invite the children to share their stories, help them name not only what made them scared but also how it made them feel. Being scared is not a great feeling, and we always hope that feeling will be over quickly. That was also the experience of the disciples as they faced the bad storm. Help the children know that, when they are scared, adults are there to help them feel safe. When they are scared, they can also ask God for help in being calm. One way to do that is to practice saying a breath prayer—something that can be said to God in one breath. Invite the children to each say a breath prayer they could use when they are scared.

Dear God, when storm clouds threaten, come quickly to save us. In Jesus' name. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023–2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i–iv, 9, 22, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

items to make waves
and storm noises:
lightweight blue fabric,
pie tins, cymbals,
cardboard boxes

Guided Play

choice 1: water-play
table or tub, toy boats

choice 2: graham
crackers, whipped
topping, blue food
coloring, fish-shaped
crackers or fruit chews

Exploring

choice 1: parachute,
large piece of blue
fabric, or blue sheet

choice 2: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

choice 4: copies of **GN 2**

Water play is a very soothing activity for young children. Supervise carefully and remind the children of a few simple rules, such as no splashing. Remind them to share the bowls and cups with one another. If available, consider providing smocks.

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i–ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii–iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 1 and choice 2 require more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play

TD **FA** **F** **A** **B** **M** **MS**

Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers whom you do not know personally. Tell the parents/caregivers that today’s story is about when the disciples were afraid and Jesus calmed the storm.

Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. Playing with Water—Tell the children that today’s story is about Jesus and the disciples in a boat on a lake. Give the children plastic toy boats to play with in the water.

- ▼ Place a plastic tablecloth or dropcloth on a low table or on the floor under the water-play area.
- ▼ If you use a tub of water, set it on a low table.
- ▼ Put toy boats near the water table or tub and invite the children to play with the items in the water.

2. Stormy Treat—Provide paper plates, graham crackers, small cups of whipped topping with a drop or two of blue food coloring in each, spoons, and a bowl of fish-shaped crackers or fruit chews. Encourage the children to stir the food coloring into the whipped cream, then spoon the “water and waves” onto the graham crackers. Let them add fish to the stormy sea. Allow them to eat the treat now or save for later in the session.

3. Watercolor Painting—Give the children watercolor paper and invite the children to paint a stormy or a calm sea with watercolor paints. Tell them that today’s story is about Jesus and his disciples in a boat on the sea.

FA *Many children have food and other allergies, such as peanut, milk, egg, wheat, latex, grass, mold, and others. Be aware of all allergy issues the children may have. Avoidance is the best practice. Provide alternate activities or snacks to keep children safe.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into group time, call them to the story corner, singing “I’ve Got the Joy, Joy, Joy, Joy”—**MM 22; SCM 24**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

I Am . . .

MS

Invite the children to repeat your words and follow your actions.

I am strong. (*stand in a “body builder” stance*)

I am kind. (*pat a neighbor gently on the back*)

I am brave. (*stretch your arms out in front*)

I am faithful. (*raise your arms up in praise to God*)

I can be quiet. (*sit down quietly*)

I can hear. (*cup your hands behind your ears*)

Come and Hear

MS

Say or sing the following song to the tune of “The Bear Went Over the Mountain” and do the motions indicated. Invite the children to join in with you.

O come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)

O come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the left*)

O come and hear God’s story. (*walk four steps to the right*)

Sit down and fold your hands. (*fold your hands in your lap*)



Today’s story from Luke’s Gospel can be found in *Growing in God’s Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Hearing the Story

L

Open the Bible to Mark 4 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that they are going to hear a story about when the disciples were afraid and Jesus calmed the storm.

Read **SCM 9**. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, “Amen.”

Read the story again and invite the children to make the sounds of the wind, waves, thunder, and lightning. Consider providing blue fabric for the children to wave and make the wind or storm sounds with pie tins, cymbals, and cardboard boxes.

Ask the children if anyone is afraid during a storm like the disciples were afraid. Tell them that, when they are afraid, they can try one of the following things:

- ✦ Say a prayer, such as “Dear God, I’m afraid. Please be with me.”
- ✦ Read a Bible story.
- ✦ Talk with a parent, family member, or friend.
- ✦ Remember that Jesus said, “Be at peace. Be still.”



EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE



1. Making Wind and Waves

SD

Remind the children that the wind blew and the waves were rolling in the story and then Jesus made them stop. Have the children hold onto a side of a parachute, a large piece of blue fabric, or a blue sheet.

Invite the children to move their hands up and down slowly like rolling waves. Tell them that the wind is blowing gently. Invite them to make a soft “whooshing” sound for the wind. Tell them that a storm is brewing and the wind gets stronger with louder “whooshing” sounds and higher waves.

Call out, “Jesus said, ‘Be still!’” and instruct the children to stop. Invite children to take turns being Jesus and to sit in the middle of the storm fabric while it waves around. Play again and again to let all of the children take turns being Jesus and calling out, “Be still!”

SD Some children may be uncomfortable sitting in the center of the parachute or fabric. Allow them to observe quietly until they are ready to join the group, or have them participate by making the stormy noises.



2. Boat on the Sea

L FM

Before the session, glue a large craft stick to a paper plate as a handle for each child.

Give the children the paper plate. Spread a light layer of glue over the plate and invite them to cover one side of the plate with torn pieces of blue paper. Have them turn the plate over and spread a light layer of glue on just the bottom half of the plate. Tell the children to cover the bottom half with torn pieces of blue paper. Set the plates aside to dry.

Give the children a copy of **GN 1** and invite them to color the speech bubble, Jesus sleeping in the boat, and Jesus standing in the boat. When they have finished coloring, have the children cut out the speech bubble and two boats. Assist with cutting as needed. Tell them to glue the picture with Jesus sleeping on the side of the paper plate covered in blue and the picture of Jesus standing on the side of the plate with half blue. Instruct the children to glue the “Be quiet!” speech bubble on the side of the plate with Jesus standing.

Tell the story, inviting the children to pretend to be the disciples. When you talk about the storm, have them hold up the picture of Jesus sleeping. Prompt them to call Jesus to wake up and help! When Jesus calms the storm, have the children hold up the picture of Jesus standing. Prompt the children to thank Jesus for saving them.





Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.

3. Be Still Game

MS B L

Tell the children that they are going to play a game where they can run, jump, dance, and move. The children may take turns being Jesus and saying, “Peace! Be still!” When they call out, “Peace! Be still!” all the children must freeze in place. Tap another child on the shoulder to be Jesus next.

4. Coloring Page

C

Hand out copies of **GN 2** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Jesus calming the storm. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following wondering questions:

- ▼ I wonder, “How did the storm seem to the disciples? What did the rain feel like, the wind feel like, the waves feel like, the thunder sound like, and the lightning look like?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did Jesus sleep during the storm?”
- ▼ I wonder, “How did the disciples feel when Jesus calmed the storm?”

T *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as stomping feet, patting knees, and rubbing palms together (these actions make the sounds of a rain storm!), and so forth.*

LOVING AND SERVING GOD

FA

Call the children together, singing “With My Hands Open Wide”—**MM 20; SCM 22**. Repeat words and phrases as appropriate.

Remind the children that Jesus took care of the disciples when they were afraid and reminded them to trust in God.

Ask the children what they might do when they are afraid. Remind them of some of the suggestions mentioned in “Hearing the Story.”

Have a snack or eat the stormy snacks from “Guided Play” choice 2. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer:

Thank you, God, /
for the food before us. /
Thank you, God, /
for the friends beside us. /
Thank you, God, /
for the love between us. /
Amen. /

As the children leave, bless them: “(Name), peace be with you. Be not afraid. The grace of God goes with you.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

BE QUIET!



Jesus Helps in a Storm



Jesus calms a storm at sea.

