



Jesus Helps in a Storm

Goal: To identify with the disciples' fear and understand that Jesus offers peace in times of fear.

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, 24

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

story audio (see p. vii)

candle

blue cloth

pillow

toy boat

black construction
paper

chalk

Responding

Praying

“storm scenes” created
during “Welcoming and
Preparing”

Extra

copies of **Grace Notes**
(GN) 1

GATHERING IN GOD’S GRACE

Post **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.

Welcoming and Preparing

TD **LG** **C** **M**

Greet the children by name and with the words “The peace of Christ be with you.” Prompt the children to respond with the same words. Invite children to help prepare the worship space. Provide a Bible, a candle, a blue cloth, a pillow, and a toy boat.

Offer black construction paper and chalk and encourage children to make “storm scenes”—suggest large bolts of lightning, big clouds, heavy rain, and strong wind. Have the children place their pictures on the worship table to help set the scene.

Ask some children to help prepare today’s “Responding in Gratitude” activities, and suggest that one or two prepare to lead today’s singing. Invite a couple of volunteers to practice reading the Scripture passage for today’s reading.

As children create the space, encourage conversation about storms. Ask how they feel about storms, whether or not they are scared, what they do during a storm, and so on. Invite them to make storm sounds: thunder, lightning, heavy rain and wind, and so on.

Singing

Play and sing “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16**; **SCM 24**.

Praying

Turn on the candle. Draw attention to the storm drawings and invite children to imagine the sounds, sights, and feelings associated with stormy water. Ask: “How might you feel during a storm?” Invite the children to make a scared face. Ask: “What other things would make you look afraid?”

Offer a couple of moments of silence and end with this prayer:

God of all that we love and of all that we are afraid of,
help us to put our trust in you, your goodness, and your
grace. Amen.

L *When telling a story, wait to begin until you have the group’s attention. Make eye contact. If the children are looking at you, it usually means they are ready to listen.*



Preparing to Hear the Story

TD

Provide sticky notes and pencils, and invite the children to write or draw one thing per sticky note that people may be afraid of. Don't comment or encourage conversation over fears. Offer that what they write could be something they fear, or it could simply be general. Allow them to do as many as they wish. It is OK if there are duplicates. Stick the notes on the storm drawings.

Read several of the fears that have been added to the drawings.

Ask:

- ✎ What do you do when you are afraid?
- ✎ What helps you feel better?



Today's story 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 B

Invite a child to find Mark 4 in the Bible. Have volunteers read Mark 4:35–41. Conclude the reading by saying, “Word of wisdom, Word of grace,” and prompt the children to say, “Thanks be to God.” Place the open Bible on the worship center.

This story lends itself to engaging children with their voices and bodies. Read the story again using **SCM 9** or listen to the story audio. Pause at these designated points to invite children to participate:

- ✎ It was time to relax. (*Stretch and rest back of head on hands.*)
- ✎ . . . a nice breeze filled the sail . . . (*Gently move arms back and forth.*)
- ✎ Swoosh went the wind! (*Roughly move arms back and forth.*)
- ✎ Lightning flashed . . . and thunder roared. (*Clap loudly and slap thighs; continue this until Jesus says “Be quiet.”*)
- ✎ Immediately the wind stopped blowing. . . Just like that. (*Read this portion in a whisper.*)

At the end of the story, practice looks of astonishment.

Reflecting on God's Grace

C L

Use these questions to reflect on the story:

- ✎ I wonder, “Why were the disciples so afraid?”
- ✎ I wonder, “What do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to do about the storm?”
- ✎ I wonder, “Why were the disciples so surprised when Jesus calmed the storm?”
- ✎ I wonder, “Did they tell others about Jesus calming the storm? What do you think they said?”

Singing

Calmly sing “Tell Me the Stories of Jesus”—**MM 16; SCM 24**. Turn off the candle.



Be alert to situations that may require intervention. Ask the pastor for guidance in handling these.

RESPONDING IN GRATITUDE

Select activities appropriate for your group and for the time available.

Claiming God's Grace

C VI D

Ask the children to think about a worry or fear that they have or a time when they were afraid. Suggest that they decide how they could demonstrate this worry or fear to the group without talking. If a child seems timid about sharing a personal fear, assign that child a worry or fear that children might experience, such as getting lost in a strange place.

When the children have come up with a way to show their worries or fears, form a circle large enough for the children to do their dramatizations in the center of the circle.

Before you begin the dramatizations, lead the entire group in this response: “Jesus brings us peace,” while using these motions:

- ✦ Jesus: touch right middle finger to left palm and then left middle finger to right palm
- ✦ Brings us: move hands outward from chest
- ✦ Peace: hold up two fingers in a “V”

They are to offer this response after each presentation. Afterward, ask the children to be seated. Ask:

- ✦ What are some things you can do to stop being afraid or worried?
- ✦ To whom can you go for help?

Praying God's Grace

TD LD

For a few silent moments, invite children to collect and reflect on the “storm scenes” they created during “Welcoming and Preparing,” remembering the fear that the disciples felt.

Ask them to consider again times, on the sticky notes, that they have felt fearful and remind them that Jesus is right there with them just as he was with the disciples on the boat.

Use markers to write words of praise and gratitude to Jesus over the fears on the sticky notes. If children have trouble, talk together about what words of praise and gratitude may be.

Invite children to work quietly as they offer their words of praise and gratitude to Jesus over their stormy scene. Once completed, offer a prayer together thanking Jesus, who is with us when we are afraid.

The next session suggests an offering activity of participating in a food bank or food ministry. Consider suggesting that the children begin collecting appropriate food items as a way to provide assistance to hungry people in fearful situations.

Offering God's Grace

Consider together a person or family who might be in a situation that is fearful. Consider people from your church community, the family of any of the children in your group, missionaries that your church supports, active military personnel, and so on.

Brainstorm together a concrete way that your class can reach out to them to offer the comfort of Jesus. The group may choose to make cards, to bring items next week for a gift basket, or to make a video message.

Invite one child to write a note to accompany your offering, explaining that the group has studied Mark 4:35–41 and understands that we all feel afraid sometimes but that Jesus is always with us.

If they choose something that can be done during this session, lead them in completing it.

If they choose something that will require a follow-up next week, make sure to communicate with parents and caregivers and solicit their involvement as well.

Extra Activity

Recall some of the fearful situations that children mentioned in “Preparing to Hear the Story.” Remind them Jesus said to have faith.

Provide copies of **GN 1**. Wonder together what the people in the four scenes might be afraid of. Discuss what might make the people feel better.

Challenge the children to pick one of the situations and, on the back of the page, write a short story about the event. Provide the following prompts.

- ▼ What led to the person's fear?
- ▼ What is going through the person's mind at the moment pictured in the scene?
- ▼ What or who could help calm the fear of the person?

Share the stories with the group.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD

Invite the children to gather, and lead them in cleaning up the worship space.

Ask:

- ▼ What is one thing you learned, or one thought you had today, that helped you grow in your understanding of what it means to follow Jesus?

Lead children in this echo prayer:

God, sometimes we are afraid /
and we need you with us. /
Thank you for your presence /
that never ever leaves us. /
We can trust you /
and we are grateful. /
Amen.

Following the prayer, turn to the person to your left and say, “(Name), go in peace and share peace with others,” and ask that person to turn to the person to their left and speak the same words until they have been spoken to each person in the circle.

Remind children as they leave to follow up on the “Offering God’s Grace” activity. Make plans to follow up with parents and caregivers if needed.



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).



