

# Jesus Walks on Water



Matthew 14:22-33



**Worship Theme:**



God cares even when we doubt.

**Weaving Faith Into Life:**



Kids will praise God for caring for them through doubts.

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>1</b> Let's Praise God! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Sing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• "I Will Give You Rest" (Matthew 11:28) (track 20)</li> <li>• "How Wide?" (Ephesians 3:18) (track 8)</li> <li>• "Christ the Solid Rock" (track 16)</li> <li>• "Everybody Come Along!" (track 14)</li> <li>• "Let Your Light Shine" (Matthew 5:16) (track 18)</li> <li>• "I Am the Way" (John 14:6) (track 12)</li> </ul>	<p><b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> <i>Songs From FaithWeaver</i></p> <p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> CD player, index cards, pencils, picture of Jesus, dictionary, talcum powder, rock, poster board, scissors, marker, tape</p> 

**Preschool**

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<p><b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i></p>	<p><b>Float or Sink?</b> Experiment with objects that float or sink.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Large bowl of warm water, towels, small items that float</p>
	<p><b>* A Watery Walk</b> Tell the Bible story with a boat that floats.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Large bowl of water, small plastic bowl, towel, round cereal, poster board, hand wipes</p>
	<p><b>God Cares Even When We Doubt</b> Say a poem, and pretend to be Peter.</p>	<p><b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Masking tape</p>

Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>2</b> Let's Learn the Point! <i>(up to 25 minutes)</i>	<b>It's Impossible, Isn't It?</b> Make a penny disappear and surprise doubters.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Permanent marker; pennies; clear, plastic tumblers; towels
	<b>* Don't Be Afraid, It's Me!</b> Tell the story and learn the point together.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> White board or newsprint, marker
	<b>* "The Doubter"</b> Watch a video about doubt, and bring doubts to Jesus.	<b>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</b> KidsOwn Worship DVD: "The Doubter" (6) <b>Classroom Supplies:</b> TV, DVD player, pan of water, index cards from Let's Praise God!



Session Sequence	What Children Will Do	Supplies
<b>3</b> Let's Pray! <i>(up to 10 minutes)</i>	<b>The Offering</b> Take a step of faith, and give their offerings.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Offering bowls, masking tape
	<b>Catch the Wonder</b> Say a poem-prayer.	<b>Classroom Supplies:</b> Newspaper
	<b>Repeated Prayer</b> Form pairs and pray.	

\* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let's Learn the Point! Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

# *Jesus Walks on Water*

*Matthew 14:22-33*

In the period that followed the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus healed many people, called the rest of his disciples, sent the disciples to minister and heal, preached extensively, taught in parables, learned of the execution of John the Baptist, and used five small loaves of bread and two fish to feed more than five thousand people. These events form the backdrop of the story described in Matthew 14:22-33.

After hearing of the death of John the Baptist, Jesus sought solitude but was followed by throngs of people. He took pity on them, healing the sick and feeding the crowd. Evening was approaching when Jesus sent his disciples toward the other side of the Sea of Galilee by boat, dismissed the crowd, and finally retired, alone, to pray. He apparently spent many hours in prayer, because he didn't approach the disciples' boat until "the fourth watch" (Matthew 14:25), which would have been between 3 and 6 a.m.

The disciples' terror at seeing a figure walking on the water is certainly understandable. They knew no ordinary human could do such a thing, so they assumed the figure must be a ghost. Their cries of fear prompted Jesus' compassionate response, for he always responded compassionately to people in need.

Hearing Jesus' voice, impetuous Peter had a crazy idea: What if Jesus would make it possible for him to walk on the water as Jesus was doing? So he voiced his suggestion to Jesus, and Jesus took him up on it. Peter's success and then his failure hinged on his focus. As he concentrated on Jesus, he walked on water. But when he focused on the wind and waves, he almost drowned.

After pulling Peter from the waves, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" (Matthew 14:31). Some consider this a rebuke. However, it was more likely a gentle encouragement to Peter to have even more faith. After all, Peter was the only one of the disciples who had enough faith to step out on the water in the first place!

What happened next stunned everyone but Jesus. The wind that had been hindering the disciples all night suddenly stopped. Jesus was capable not only of walking on water but also of calming the wind and the waves! John's Gospel states that the disciples immediately reached their destination (John 6:21). Jesus could also control time and space! The disciples' response was only logical: They bowed in worship before this one who truly was the Son of God. Before this event, they had thought perhaps they knew who Jesus really was, but now they were certain. In this miracle, Jesus rescued Peter when he doubted and then eliminated all the doubts of the others.

## ***Devotion for Leaders***

When you trust in Jesus, you can "walk on water." Jesus gives you the ability to accomplish impossible things that give him the attention he deserves.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Reread Matthew 14:22-33. What overwhelming situations do you tend to look at fearfully? How can trusting Jesus cause you to "walk" over that storm in your life? Jesus will respond to you with the same love and support he gave Peter. He wants to grow trust in all his children.

## Why We Worship for Leaders

As the disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee, Jesus went to them, walking on the water. The Bible says the disciples were “terrified.” They thought they were seeing a ghost. Despite their fear, Jesus showed he cared for them. Instead of condemning them for their fear, Jesus encouraged Peter to come to him. Peter joined Jesus for a watery walk on the wild side. Then, when Peter realized he was walking on water, his fear resurfaced, and he began to sink. Jesus reached out his hand and caught him, saying, “Why did you doubt?”

At some time, each of us will doubt God. But we can take comfort in knowing that God doesn’t reject us when our fears and doubts threaten to drown us. Instead, God offers us gentle correction, unfailing love, understanding, acceptance, and encouragement.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

### Let’s Praise God!

- Cut five large light-bulb shapes from poster board or construction paper. On each shape, write one letter of *shine*.
- Tape a picture of Jesus on the wall at the front of the room.

**Don’t Be Afraid, It’s Me!**—Write the poem from page 150 on a white board or newsprint.

**“The Doubter”**—Set up a TV and DVD player, and cue the *KidsOwn Worship* DVD to “The Doubter”(6). Watch the segment at least once before the worship session so you’ll be familiar with it.

**The Offering**—Use masking tape to make a large boat outline on the floor.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

**Web Help**—Get bonus leader tips and ideas at [kidsownworship.com](http://kidsownworship.com).



## 1 Let’s Praise God!

Play *Songs From FaithWeaver, Winter 2010-2011* as children arrive. Greet children by name, and give them index cards and pencils.

**Say** Hello. I’m so glad you’re here. Write on this index card one thing you doubt about God. To doubt means to be unsure of something. What is it about God that you’re unsure of? Write it on your card.

Have adult volunteers or older children help the younger children. Ask children to hold onto their cards for the rest of Let’s Praise God! When everyone has filled out a card,

**Say** Today we’re going to talk about the times we doubt God. We’re going to worship God because, even when we doubt, he loves us and cares for us.

**Ask** • What does it mean to doubt? (To be not sure; to not believe someone.)

Open your dictionary and read the definition of *doubt*, or use this one from *Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fourth Edition*: "Doubt: To be uncertain in opinion or belief; be undecided."

**Ask** • When have you been uncertain about God?

**Say** God cares about us even when we doubt. While we sing the first song, bring your cards with your doubts written on them, and lay them in front of this picture of Jesus. He understands, and he cares about you.

Sing "I Will Give You Rest" (Matthew 11:28).



Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** We can believe in Jesus and doubt things about him at the same time. Even adults doubt sometimes. You don't need to feel guilty when you wonder about God or about what he can do. You just need to honestly tell him about your doubts and fears. He understands. And guess what? You can trust him, even when you don't feel like it. God doesn't turn away anyone who comes to him honestly. Let's sing about God's love.

Sing "How Wide?" (Ephesians 3:18).



Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Pass around a container of talcum powder. Instruct the kids to shake a little in their hands, hold on to the powder, and pass the container to the next child.

**Say** The powder in your hands is from a soft mineral called talc, which is found in certain rocks and crushed into powder. Let's pretend that this talcum powder is like our doubts—the times we don't trust God. Let's blow our fears way. Encourage kids to blow the powder into the air. Hold up a rock.

**Ask** • How is God like a rock? (God doesn't change; I can lean on God.)  
• How are our doubts like powder? (They don't stay with me; I can get rid of them.)  
• How do you feel knowing that Jesus is like a solid rock?

**Say** Our doubts will come and go, but they don't change who God is. God is like a rock, strong and sure. You can't change him, and you can't blow him away. He cares and stands firm even when we doubt.

Sing "Christ the Solid Rock"



Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** Jesus is the rock we can trust. You'll find out in the Bible story that Jesus reached out his hand for Peter when Peter doubted. Right now, reach out your hand to someone while we sing "Everybody Come Along!" Whenever you hear the word *everybody*, hold up your friend's hand.

Sing "Everybody Come Along!"



### Worship Leader Tip

You may prefer to sprinkle the powder into the children's hands yourself so children don't get too much. Ask them to be careful when they blow the powder so they don't blow it into anyone's eyes or inhale it.

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say** **We worship Jesus because he cares about us even when we doubt. I need that kind of love, don't you? Everyone does! And we can let Jesus' love shine through us for everyone to see. I need five volunteers.** Choose five volunteers, and have them stand in a row and hold the light-bulb shapes that spell *shine*. Ask kids to hold up the light bulbs for the line, "Let your light shine."

Sing "Let Your Light Shine" (Matthew 5:16).



**Track 18**

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Thank your volunteers, and have them return to their seats.

**Say** **Jesus is a rock even when we doubt. He cares about us. Jesus is truth and life. Let's stand up for this next song.**

Sing "I Am the Way" (John 14:6).



**Track 12**

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Pray** **Dear God, even when doubt, you are as dependable as a solid rock. We'll stand up for you wherever we go. Thank you, God, for caring about us, even when we doubt. In Jesus' name, amen.**

## 2 Let's Learn the Point!

### *Preschool Activities, pages 151-152*

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let's Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (\*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.

### *Elementary Activities*

#### *It's Impossible, Isn't It?*

**Say** **If you believe I can make a penny disappear, stand up. If you doubt, stay seated.** (Pause.) **Now everyone sit down.**

Show the kids how to make a penny disappear. To do this trick, you'll need to sit on a chair. Sneak a penny under a clear, plastic tumbler in the palm of your hand. When the kids take a quick peek, they'll think the penny is actually inside the cup. Throw a towel over the cup, let the kids say a few funny words, and tap on the towel. Discretely slip the penny onto your lap before you pull away the towel.

**Ask**

- You of little faith, why did you doubt?
- You who didn't doubt, why did you think I could make a penny disappear?

**Say**

God wants you to believe in him and have faith in him. It's his deepest desire. But sometimes, like Peter, we look around us and think, God can't help me in this situation. God can help you, and he wants you to believe. But when you doubt, he understands.

The Bible tells us about many other people who doubted. Gideon, Sarah, Moses, and Jesus' disciple Thomas all doubted. God cares even when we doubt. God still uses us when we doubt. He used Gideon, Sarah, Moses, Thomas, and Peter. He will use you, too.

Now let's take a minute to learn this trick.

Have the kids form pairs. Give each child a clear plastic tumbler and a penny. Give each pair a kitchen towel or a paper towel. Show children how to do the trick. Have them practice the trick with each other as they ask, "Do you believe I can do this, or do you doubt it?"

When each child has had a turn doing the illusion, pass around a permanent marker. Ask children to write the point, "God cares even when we doubt," on the plastic tumbler. Or have children write Matthew 14:31b: "Why did you doubt?" Have children each take home a tumbler and a penny so they can share the trick and biblical concept with their families.

*\* Don't Be Afraid, It's Me!*

Display the poem you copied on a white board or newsprint.

**Say**

When I point to the poem, stand up and say it with me. Let's practice once.

Point to the poem, and have the kids stand and say it.

Jesus cares when we doubt.  
In fact, that's what he's all about.  
Come to him with your fear.  
Take courage. He's here!  
Jesus cares when we doubt.

**Say**

The disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee where storms can swoop quickly down from the surrounding mountains. It was the middle of the night when, sure enough, the wind arose. Through the stormy darkness, they saw a shape on the water. Was it...human? The disciples screamed, "It's a ghost!" The Bible says they were terrified!

Point to the poem. Have the children stand, say the poem, and sit down.

(continued on page 153)

**Worship  
Leader Tip**

You may have some children who mention that they have another way to do the same kind of illusion. If this is the case, praise them for their willingness to contribute. Tell them a time you will set aside for them to share their talents with the rest of the children. This time can be after the session or during a transition.

**Worship  
Leader Tip**

If you have preschoolers participating in this activity, have them repeat each line after elementary kids read it.

# Jesus Walks on Water

Session 11

Matthew 14:22-33

## Worship Theme:



God cares even when we doubt.

## Easy Prep for Leaders

**Float or Sink?**—Fill a large bowl with warm water, and put the bowl on a towel. Gather a variety of objects that will float such as corks, plastic cups and lids, sandwich bags, sponge, pretzels, napkins, pencils, straws, rulers, index cards, and twist ties.

**God Cares Even When We Doubt**—Use masking tape to outline a boat shape on the floor. Make the outline big enough that all the children can sit in it.

## Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Have Theo say with the children, “Yes, I believe it will float,” or “No, I doubt it,” in the “Float or Sink?” activity.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.



## Float or Sink?

Gather the children in a circle around the bowl, and ask them to take turns selecting one object each. As each child chooses,

**Ask** • Do you believe this will float?

Ask the child to see if the object floats. When all the children have had a turn choosing, answering the question, and experimenting with the object,

**Say** If you said you doubted, that’s OK. God cares even when we doubt. Doubt means that we’re not sure about something.

**Ask** • What would happen if you tried to walk on top of the water in the bathtub?

• What would happen if you tried to walk on top of the water in the swimming pool?

• What would happen if a person tried to walk on top of the water in the ocean?

**Say** It’s impossible to walk on the water, and you should never try to walk on top of the water in a swimming pool or the sea. If you want to play in the water, you need to make sure that your mom or your dad is with you and can help you because people can’t walk on top of the water.

But the Bible tells us that one time the impossible happened, and it was amazing! Let me tell you a true story from the Bible about a man who tried to walk on the water. We’ll find out whether he floated or sank. Let’s see what happened.

Set all the objects on a towel to dry.

## \* A Watery Walk

Use the bowl of warm water from the previous activity and a small plastic bowl for a boat. Use round cereal to represent the disciples. Give each child a piece of cereal, tell the children the cereal represents a man, and ask them not to eat the cereal.

**Say** We’ll tell our Bible story with this bowl of water and the men in your hands. The men are called Jesus’ disciples. They were Jesus’ special helpers. Jesus told his disciples to get into the boat and cross the lake. Have each child put his or her piece of cereal in the boat. Jesus stayed on the land and prayed to God.

**It got dark.** For effect, you can dim the lights. Invite any preschooler who is uncomfortable with this to sit on your lap. **The wind started to blow, and the boat rocked back and forth.** Tilt the bowl of water back and forth. **The waves got higher, and the storm got scarier.**

Jesus wanted to get into the boat with his disciples, but the boat was far away from shore. How do you suppose Jesus got to the boat that was in the middle of the lake? He walked! He walked right on top of the water, just as if he were walking on the road. Walk your fingers over the water.

## \* A Watery Walk (continued)

**Say** Jesus walked on top of the water even with the wind blowing and the waves crashing. Wave a piece of poster board so the children feel a breeze. Remember, it was dark. When the disciples saw Jesus, they cried, "Ahh, it's a ghost!" Have the children repeat this with you.

**Did Jesus scold them? No. God cares about us even when we doubt. Jesus said, "Don't be afraid. It is I."**

**One disciple, named Peter, didn't doubt. He believed. He said, "Lord, if it really is you, tell me to come to you on the water." Jesus told Peter to come to him. So Peter stood up.** Have the children stand up.

**He climbed out of the boat.** Take one piece of

cereal from the small "boat," and float it. **Now Peter was walking on water too. Wow!** Jump up and down with the kids to show excitement at this amazing phenomenon.

### Preschool Leader Tip

Preschoolers may wonder, "Can I walk on water too?" Tell them that this was a special miracle. Remind them to get into water only when they're with mom, dad, or another adult, and remind them to use life jackets until they learn to swim.

**Ask** • How would it feel to be walking on water in the middle of a storm?

• Why could Peter do this?

**Say** Peter walked with Jesus. But then Peter looked around at the waves, and he got scared. He began to

sink! Have your kids pretend to sink under the waves and sit down. **Jesus didn't let Peter drown. He reached out his hand and caught him.** Go to each child, reach out your hand, and pull the child up.

**Jesus cared about Peter when Peter doubted. God cares about us even when we doubt. Jesus and Peter got into the boat. The other disciples saw everything that happened. They said, "Truly Jesus is the Son of God."** Have each child say these words to you. Give them extra cereal to munch on.

### ALLERGY ALERT



Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

## God Cares Even When We Doubt

Help children learn the words and actions for the following poem. Each time you say the poem, choose a child to pretend to be Peter, step out of the boat, and take your hand. Repeat the poem once for each child.

**"Lord, call me to come," was Peter's shout.**

(Put your hands to your mouth.)

**Jesus replied, "Come on! Get out!"**

(Leader motions "come." Children stand up.)

**You can walk on the sea**

(One child gets out of the "boat" and takes a step.)

**If you believe in me."**

(Child holds leader's hand.)

**God cares even when we doubt.**

(Leader pulls child up by the hand.)

To help children apply this lesson to their lives, have them all get back into the boat.

**Say** Name one thing about God that you aren't sure of, one thing that you doubt. As the child does, have him or her climb out of the boat while you hold the child's hand. To each child, say, **God cares about you even when you doubt.**

(continued from page 150)

**Say** But Jesus said to them, “Don’t be afraid. It’s me.”

Peter said, “Lord, if it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water!”

“Come,” said Jesus.

Peter put a foot over the side of the boat and onto the water.

Ohh, that water was cold and wet. And then Peter put another foot over the edge.

**Ask** • What do you think happened to him when both feet were on the water? (He probably sank; he walked on water.)

• How would you feel if you were on a stormy sea with no life jacket? (Scared; I’d swim to shore.)

**Say** Peter stood up, both feet on the water. He may have been waiting for the stormy water to swallow him. But he walked, first one step and then another, toward Jesus. As he was thinking how absolutely amazing this was, he took his eyes off Jesus. The Bible says that he saw the wind and was afraid. At that point, he started to sink!

Point, and have kids stand, say the poem, and then sit down.

**Say** God cares even when we doubt. Peter cried out to the Lord, “Lord, save me!” Have the kids repeat this with you. Immediately, Jesus reached out his hand and caught Peter, who wanted to believe but had real doubts. Jesus said, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?”

Have kids stand, say the poem, and then sit down.

**Say** When they were all in the boat, the disciples worshipped Jesus, saying, “Truly, you are the Son of God.”

**Ask** • What did Peter doubt? (That he could walk on water; that believing in Jesus would keep him from drowning.)

• What doubts do you have about God? (That he cares about me; that he can heal people.)

• How does God feel about you when you doubt? (God loves me; God understands.)

• What did Peter do with his doubt? What will God do with yours?

**Say** God cares about us even when we doubt. You can always come to God with your fears.

### \* “The Doubter”

Show the segment titled “The Doubter”(6). The video shows a curmudgeonly man who doubts everything. After the video,

**Ask** • Why do you think this man doubted everything?



• **Is it good to doubt things the way this man did? Explain.**

**Ask**

• **What's the difference between good doubt and bad doubt?**

(Good doubt helps us learn; bad doubt makes us scared for no reason.)

• **Do you think it's OK to doubt God sometimes? Why or why not?** (Yes, because we need to know for sure what we believe; no, because God is real.)

• **What should we do when we have doubts about God?**

Retrieve the index cards from the picture of Jesus, and hand them to the children. Place a pan of water at the front of the room.

**Say**

**God cares about us even when we doubt. The disciples were full of doubts, too. We'll take turns reading these doubts and putting them in the water as we trust God with our doubts the way Peter trusted Jesus with his doubts.** Have each child read a card, put it on the water, and say, "God cares even when we doubt."

**Ask**

• **What did Jesus do for Peter when he doubted?**

• **What will God do for you when you bring your doubts to him?**

**Say**

**It's OK to have questions about God. It's even better to trust him with your questions. God is a good God. Bring him your fears, doubts, and questions. He won't let you sink in doubt!**

**3**

## **Let's Pray!**

### *The Offering*

Have the children stand inside the masking-tape boat shape. Put the offering bowl at the front of the room.

**Say**

**As you give your offering today, you'll take a step of faith by stepping out of the boat and walking to the front of the room to put your offering in the bowl. When you step out of the boat, pretend that you're walking on water just as Peter did. While you walk to the front of the room, tell God that you trust him to care for you when you have doubts.**

Tap children on the shoulder one by one, and have them step out of the boat to take their offerings to the front of the room and then find a place to sit quietly by the walls and pray silently. Tell the children that if they haven't brought a money offering today, they can simply use the time to pray.

### *Catch the Wonder*

Give each child a piece of newspaper, and keep a piece for yourself.

**Say**

**Let's pretend that these papers are waves of water. As I say this poem, follow along with the actions.**

**Lord,** *(Hold the paper at knee level.)*  
**When I take my eyes off you,** *(Slowly raise the paper.)*  
**I'll go under, under, under.** *(Hold the paper overhead.)*  
**When I cry out, "Lord, save me!"** *(Reach out a hand.)*  
**I'll catch the wonder, wonder, wonder**  
**Of who you are!** *(Point up.)*  
**You care about me when I doubt.** *(Slowly lower the paper.)*  
**I will come out and trust you.**  
**Truly, you are the Son of God!**  
*(Crumple the paper, and toss it in the air.)*  
**In Jesus' name, amen.**

## *Repeated Prayer*

Help kids form pairs for prayer. Ask each pair to share with their partners one thing that they doubt or wonder about God. Then have kids pray for their partners. In their prayers, kids should thank God for caring for us even when we doubt and pray for God to help their partners understand more about God.