

SMALL GROUP

TODAY'S WONDER TRUTH: JESUS WALKS ON WATER



WORD OF WONDER:

How great God is! We'll never completely understand him.
- Job 36:26a

GOD'S BIG STORY:

Jesus Is the Son of God
(Matthew 14)

GOD'S BIG STORY QUESTIONS:

- What did Jesus do after He sent the crowd away? *(He went up a mountain to a quiet place and prayed.)*
- How did Jesus get to His disciples when they were on the lake in a boat? How did His disciples respond when they saw Jesus walking on the lake? *(Jesus walked on the water! The disciples were frightened and thought He was a ghost, so they cried out.)*
- What did Peter ask Jesus to do? **What happened next?** *(Peter asked Jesus to call him onto the lake. Jesus told Peter to "Come," and Peter stepped out of the boat and began walking toward Jesus. Then Peter noticed the wind, got scared, and began to sink. Jesus grabbed Peter's hand and saved him.)*
- When have you been scared? Is it ever hard to remember that Jesus is with you and is more powerful than your situation? **Why do you think that is?** *(Note: Some kids may share aloud, but others may want to simply think about their answers silently.)*
- Jesus is God's Son, and He is powerful! How can knowing that affect the way you live?

Welcome Question

- What kind of surface would you like to walk on most?
- Today we're going to hear about a time when Jesus showed who He was by walking on something unexpected! But first, it's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

- What do you think would have been the most amazing of Jesus' miracles to see in person?
- If you saw Jesus face to face, how would you know it's Him?

Curiosity Activity: Possible or Impossible?

- In this game, your job is to decide whether something is possible or impossible. Point to the two signs. We'll read a question on the screen, and if you think it can be done, you'll move to the "Possible!" sign. If you think it cannot be done, you'll move to the "Impossible!" sign.
- After you've moved to one sign or the other, you'll pause to hear the answer. OK, let's get started!
- Advance to Possible or Impossible? Slide 2.
- Read the following words from the slide or invite a kid to read the slide out loud: **Possible or Impossible? Can humans jump to the moon?** Invite kids to move to a sign; then reveal the answer: Impossible. **The moon is over 240,000 miles away. The official record for the highest a human has jumped from a standing position is 63.5 inches (161.3 centimeters).**
- Gather kids back in the middle and advance to slide 3: **Possible or Impossible? Can a cat bark like a dog?** Invite kids to move to the "Possible!" or "Impossible!" sign. Then reveal the answer: Impossible. **Cats don't have the vocal chords needed to bark.**
- Gather kids in the center and advance to slide 4: **Possible or Impossible? Can plants grow without sunlight?** Invite kids to move to the "Possible!" or "Impossible!" sign. Then reveal the answer: **Possible. Plants can grow under artificial lights, like LED light. However, it's impossible for plants to grow without any light at all.**
- Gather kids in the center and advance to slide 5: **Possible or Impossible? Can humans breathe underwater (without special equipment)?** Invite kids to move to the "Possible!" or "Impossible!" sign. Then reveal the answer: **Impossible. Humans don't have gills!**
- Gather kids back in the middle and advance to slide 6: **Possible or Impossible? Can a house float across the ocean?** Invite kids to move to the "Possible!" or "Impossible!" sign. Then reveal the answer: **Possible. People have turned houses into houseboats. It just takes some skilled engineering!**
- Gather kids in the center and advance to slide 7: **Possible or Impossible? Can humans walk on water (without any equipment)?** Invite kids to move to the "Possible!" or "Impossible!" sign. Then reveal the answer: **Impossible. The human body is much denser than water. Our feet are not large enough, nor can we move them fast enough to keep us on the surface, and gravity pulls us down with more force than the water pulls us up.**
- Gather kids back together. **Walking on water is impossible! Yet in today's part of God's big story, we're going to hear about two people who did the impossible!**
- **Most importantly, we're going to learn what this shows us about Jesus. Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD—and He really is!**

Word of Wonder Activity

- Today in God's big story, we learned that Jesus walked on water! He really is the Son of God who does amazing miracles! Let's declare how amazing God is by saying our Word of Wonder together. Open your Bible to Job 36:26a. Invite kids to read Job 36:26a several times together.
- Let's take turns hopping on each section of the Word of Wonder in the order of the verse. Say the word as you land on it. We can see how quickly everyone can get through the verse. If you have a stopwatch, consider timing how long it takes for everyone to get through the verse. Then challenge kids to see if they can do it faster in a second round!
- To make the activity more challenging for preteens, leave more space between each section of the verse and challenge kids to do certain movements to get from strip to strip, such as jump backward, frog-hop on all fours, or jump with their eyes closed.

Responding in Worship: Imaginative Prayer

- Jesus spent a lot of time with His friends, the disciples, while He was on earth. And He did a lot of miracles—amazing signs that God is at work! Still, it took a while for the disciples to truly understand that Jesus is the Son of God.
- How many of you like to imagine or picture things in your mind? Allow kids to respond.
- One of the ways that we can pray and ask God for understanding is through the practice of imaginative prayer. How many of you have ever heard of it? Allow kids to respond.
- Imaginative Prayer is imagining ourselves in the story as a form of prayer. So, here's what we're going to do. We're going to hear a part of God's big story again, but this time, we're going to imagine ourselves in the story. Let's get comfortable and close our eyes. Pause for kids to get comfortable.
- Come, Holy Spirit. We open our imaginations to You.
- Nighttime was now approaching quickly so Jesus sent His disciples in a boat across a big lake called the Sea of Galilee. Then He sent the crowd away and climbed up a mountainside to a quiet, private place. Jesus was finally alone, and He prayed into the night.
- Imagine that you're on the boat. The boat is now far away from the shore. It's dark, and Jesus is not with you. What do you notice around you? Pause for five seconds.
- You feel the wind on your face, and the waves are crashing against the boat. What are you feeling right now? Pause for five seconds.
- You've been on the boat for a while now. The sun is about to start rising. You see something— someone—in the distance. It's a person—walking on the water! Who do you see? Pause for five seconds.
- The other disciples are saying that it must be a ghost. You hear their panicked cries. Now how do you feel? What do you notice on the disciples' faces? Pause for five seconds.
- The person is getting closer. You hear Him speak: "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matthew 14:27). How are you feeling? Relieved? Frightened? Excited? Pause for five seconds. How is He doing this? What are you thinking now? Pause for 10 seconds.
- Then you hear Peter's voice. He is questioning if this is Jesus. Are you wondering the same thing? Pause for five seconds.
- Jesus calls out to Peter to come. What expression do you see on Peter's face? Do you want to join him? Pause for five seconds.
- Peter steps out of the boat. There is a strong wind, and you feel the boat jerk. Then you hear Peter's cry: "Lord! Save me!" (Matthew 14:30). You see Jesus grab Peter's hand and pull him out of the water. They get into the boat, and the wind immediately stops. Who is this man? Pause for five seconds.
- You look around and see the look of amazement on the other disciples' faces. What expression is on your face? Pause for five seconds. Then you see the disciples worshiping Jesus and saying, "You really are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33). What are you doing? How are you worshiping Jesus? Pause for five seconds.
- Now open your eyes. What was that like for you? Allow kids to respond.
- Give each kid a note card and a writing utensil. Invite them to write what they experienced through this prayer. How did you experience Jesus as the Son of God in this story? Allow time for kids to respond through writing or drawing.
- Jesus, the Son of God, loves you and is always with you. May you continue to imagine being with Jesus, knowing that He is powerful.

SMALL GROUP PRAYER

Every one of us feels scared sometimes. As followers of Jesus, we can remember that the same Jesus who walks on water loves us and is with us! Jesus is the Son of God, and He is ready to help us with whatever we're going through. Let's talk with Him in prayer now!

Invite kids to join you in a circle to spend time talking to Jesus. Ask whether anyone has a question, something they would like to share with Jesus, or a prayer request. Give each kid a chance to participate, then close in prayer, remembering to thank Jesus for loving us!