

LEADER HELPS

Using the Daily Discipleship Guide to Lead a Bible Study Group

The *Daily Discipleship Guide* was created for the purpose of building disciples. As the leader of the group, you play a major role. You can build disciples through the group Bible study time, encouraging daily Bible engagement, facilitating smaller groups, and apprenticing future leaders.

Building Disciples through the Group Time

Leading the group Bible study time is the most direct way you will build disciples. Each week, you will introduce the group to the Bible passage, examine the key message in that passage, challenge the group to act on that passage, and encourage them to reflect more deeply in the week that follows.

Building Disciples by Encouraging Daily Bible Engagement

Encourage your group to engage with the Bible daily. For example, learn to comfortably ask if group members are studying the Bible. You may want to use a statement instead of a question, such as, “I hope you took a look at the Day 3 activity for this week.” Let them know that you are using the Daily Exploration section as well. Set the standard. From time to time, demonstrate how to use the section, guiding them through Day 1 as a group. Consider calling on pre-enlisted volunteers to share with the group what they are learning and how they are using the Daily Exploration section.

As teachers, we have taken on the responsibility of encouraging everyone on our ministry list (class roll, membership list, etc.) to engage daily in Bible study. We can’t make them do it, but we can provide them with a tool and encourage them to use it.

Building Disciples through Smaller Groups

Talk It Out is designed for smaller groups of three to four people to meet weekly. The goal of the smaller groups is simple: holding ourselves and others accountable for living a Christ-honoring life. Lead the group to form their own initial groups of three by gender (men’s smaller groups and women’s smaller groups). This tends to work better than assigning groups. You may want to encourage the groups to form based on neighborhoods or proximity to work. As the Bible study group grows, you may need to reorganize the smaller groups, but try not to regroup too often so that trust can be built within each smaller group.



Courage

Session 1 • Matthew 14:22-33



ENGAGE

PREPARE: Display **Pack Item 1** (*Map: Jesus's Ministry Beyond Galilee*) and **Pack Item 3** (*Poster: Peter in Matthew's Gospel*). Print one copy of **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in Matthew's Gospel*) for each adult in your group.

READ: Enlist a volunteer to read the opening paragraph on page 9.

ASK: What do you consider to be your biggest fears? (p. 9) Allow adults to share their responses. Discuss how fears change over time, highlighting the difference between things we fear as children and things we fear as adults.

SAY: *Regardless of what forms the fears take, they are still very real. And they have the potential to throw our lives into chaos.*

CONTEXT: Point out that today's session focuses on how Jesus helps His people face their fears and respond in faith. Highlight this information from **Understand the Context** to share background for this session:

- “Following John's death, Jesus withdrew to be alone with the disciples to sort through His response to such tragedy. This desire to be alone was interrupted by the crowds that followed. Jesus showed compassion

by healing the sick late into the afternoon. The result was a hungry crowd of five thousand men, not including the women and children. Jesus miraculously fed all of them.” (p. 9)

TRANSITION: *As you reflect on today's verses, let your fears come to the forefront of your heart and mind. Intentionally face those fears as you study what Jesus did in this passage.*

EXPLORE THE TEXT

OVERVIEW: Direct attention to **Pack Item 1** (*Map: Jesus's Ministry Beyond Galilee*) to set the geographic focus for the upcoming sessions.

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 14:22-27 aloud as the group notes words that stick out to them from the verses. Encourage adults to talk about how the crowd might have felt at being sent home and how the disciples felt being sent out on the lake by Jesus.

EXAMINE: Enlist a volunteer to read **Did You Know?** on page 11. Remind adults that many of Jesus's disciples were experienced fishermen who probably had dealt with storms on the Sea of Galilee before. Share the following:

- **(14:24-25)** The word “battered” sometimes referred to torture or great distress. The disciples were struggling against the natural elements. By this point they probably were wet, cold, and exhausted. They also had been rowing for several hours. Jesus had dismissed them around sundown and now it was nearing sunrise. The wording suggests between 3 a.m. and 6 a.m. That’s when “Jesus came toward them walking on the sea.”
- **(14:27)** “It is I” relates to the divine name (“I Am”) in Exodus 3:14. Thus, along with walking on the sea (Matt. 14:25), Jesus also claimed equality with God by using the divine name for Himself.

ASK: When has Jesus’s presence been especially meaningful to you? (p. 11)

READ: Invite the group to read silently Matthew 14:28-30, instructing them to consider carefully how they hear Peter’s voice as he speaks to Jesus.

ENGAGE: Encourage a few volunteers to describe Peter’s emotions, both before he left the boat and once he began to sink. Highlight these truths:

- **(14:28)** The conditional statement “if it’s you” could be read as a statement of uncertainty, perhaps even doubt. But Matthew used the Greek conditional form that assumes the truth of the statement. Thus Peter’s words could be rendered, “Lord, since it’s you.”

SAY: *Once Peter’s faith was overcome by fear, he began to sink. But he was smart enough*

to cry out to Jesus. The same Lord who called him out of the boat would rescue him from the waves.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to **Pack Item 3** (Poster: Peter in Matthew’s Gospel) and explain that the group will see Peter show up several times in Matthew 14–28. Point out Peter walking on the water on the chart. Share that Peter’s act of courage and faith are mentioned only in Matthew’s Gospel. Encourage volunteers to share how Peter’s actions in these verses challenge them to trust Jesus more.

ASK: What step of faith are you prayerfully considering right now? (p. 11)

READ: Invite a volunteer to read Matthew 14:31-33 aloud as the group carefully listens for what caused the storm to calm. Point out that the storm was not rebuked by Jesus in this instance; rather, it simply stopped when Jesus and Peter got into the boat.

RECAP: Summarize the following and engage adults in responding with their own insight:

- **(14:32)** “Calm occurred the moment Peter and Jesus got into the boat. The presence of Jesus in the boat most likely calmed the storm in the hearts of the disciples as well. Not only did the wind stop, but suddenly the boat was at the shore, a goal the disciples had labored for most of the night to accomplish. . . . These nature miracles of Jesus were not for show, but always to meet the need of the moment. In this case, it was the rescue of the disciples. This was a tangible response to a desperate situation.” (p. 14, Day Four)

ASK: How do you tend to respond to Jesus's power when you experience it? (p. 11)

PRAY: Highlight Jesus's words to Peter in verse 31. Challenge adults to consider the measure of their own faith and the strengths of their doubts. Encourage adults to scan the QR code for the **Explore the Bible Prayer Guide** (p. 11). Invite them to follow the prompts in the prayer guide and to pray Matthew 14:31 back to God.

DISCUSS: Direct attention to the Summary Statement for this session: *Jesus is greater than anything we fear* (p. 8). Allow adults to share how they see that truth revealed in today's passage. Point out that we can be sure that Jesus is in control and can calm any storm we face. Challenge adults to demonstrate Peter's courage by stepping out of their "boat" and to refuse to let the "winds" distract them from what Jesus is doing in their lives.

CHALLENGE

SUMMARIZE: Review these points from this week's Bible passage:

- We can trust Jesus to walk with us in the storms of life.
- When Jesus issues an invitation, we can step out with confidence knowing that He is with us.
- Jesus's power should lead us to worship Him.

HIGHLIGHT: Allow adults to share which of these statements provide the greatest encouragement for them today.

DISCUSS: Direct half the group to read and reflect on the **Apply the Text** question on page 11. After a few minutes, review responses. Talk about how the responses should shape their prayers and their daily walk with Jesus.

REFLECT: Help adults remember that Jesus is Lord of every storm and that no struggle is outside of His power and authority. Say: *As we walk toward Jesus in our storms, we can believe He has the power to get us where we need to be.* Challenge the group to reflect on God's faithfulness each day as a way to gain courage and establish hope for the future.

PRAY: Remind adults to use **Pack Item 9** (*Handout: Praying Scripture in Matthew's Gospel*) as a way to pray the truths of today's session back to God. Invite adults to pray silently for the people beside them, specifically that they would know Jesus is with them in their storms.

AFTER THE SESSION

Send a text or email to the group reminding them of the truths of this session. Note that there are hundreds of verses that urge us to reject fear. Suggest they choose one verse to reflect on this week and to share that with the group.