

BIBLE TIMELINE ASSEMBLIES

67. PETER WALKS ON WATER

Bible Base: Matthew 14: 25-33

Key Christian Belief: Following Jesus means learning to live God's way.

Aim: To show that Jesus can help us live God's way.

Introduction

Ask the children to stand. Explain that when you count down from three you want them to jump up in the air and touch the ceiling. Assuming no one succeeds ask them to gather all their energy together and try again. Then ask them all to sit down again.

Point out that some things are just impossible. No matter how hard you try, they can't be done. If time permits ask the children to see if they can lick their own elbows. Tell them that there are, apparently, one or two people who can do it but for most of us this too is impossible!

Today's story is one of many stories in which Jesus friends saw him do something that they would have thought was absolutely impossible.

Bible Story

The story below has been adapted with permission from an original story by Bob Hartman in Telling The Gospel published by Kingsway.

Explain to the children that when they hear them in the story, they are to say the following words with you, as follows:

Blew	(with both hands cupped around your mouth)
Wooh	(sounding and acting like a ghost)
Phew!	(wiping one hand across your brow, relieved)
Canoe	(pretending to paddle a canoe)
You	(pointing to someone straight ahead of you)
Two	(holding up two fingers - like a peace sign)
Shoe	(touching one of your shoes)
Oh pooh!	(shrugging shoulders, sadly)
Wahoo!	(with a fist pump, joyfully)
True	(with one finger pointing up)

Explain that at the end of a busy day, as night was falling, Jesus had sent his disciples back home across the lake of Galilee by boat while he Himself went a little way up into the mountains to pray. Invite the children to rock gently from side to side, as if they are on the boat with the disciples, as you tell them what happened next.

Peter and his friends were sailing one night
Peter and his friends were sailing one night
Peter and his friends ere sailing one night
When the seas grew rough and the strong winds blew.
When the seas grew rough and the strong winds blew.
When the seas grew rough and the strong winds blew.

They were straining at the oars with all of their might
They were straining at the oars with all of their might
They were straining at the oars with all of their might
When they thought they saw a ghost. (Wooo!)
When they thought they saw a ghost. (Wooo!)
When they thought they saw a ghost. (Wooo!)

'That ghost looks like Jesus' said Peter to his friends
'That ghost looks like Jesus' said Peter to his friends
'That ghost looks like Jesus' said Peter to his friends
And all of his friends were relieved. (Phew!)
And all of his friends were relieved. (Phew!)
And all of his friends were relieved. (Phew!)

'But if it's Jesus' said Peter 'He's walking on water.'
'But if it's Jesus' said Peter 'He's walking on water.'
'But if it's Jesus' said Peter 'He's walking on water.'
'He hasn't got a canoe!'
'He hasn't got a canoe!'
'He hasn't got a canoe!'

'If you're really Jesus' said Peter to the ghost man
'If you're really Jesus' said Peter to the ghost man
'If you're really Jesus' said Peter to the ghost man
'Tell me to come walking on the water to you!'
'Tell me to come walking on the water to you!'
'Tell me to come walking on the water to you!'

'Step out of the boat!' said Jesus to Peter.
'Step out of the boat!' said Jesus to Peter.
'Step out of the boat!' said Jesus to Peter.
'There's room out here for two!'
'There's room out here for two!'
'There's room out here for two!'

So Peter stepped out and started walking to Jesus
So Peter stepped out and started walking to Jesus
So Peter stepped out and started walking to Jesus
With nothing but the sea under his shoe.
With nothing but the sea under his shoe.
With nothing but the sea under his shoe.

When Peter saw the waves He stopped trusting in Jesus
When Peter saw the waves He stopped trusting in Jesus
When Peter saw the waves He stopped trusting in Jesus
And he began to sink. (Oh pooh!)
And he began to sink. (Oh pooh!)
And he began to sink. (Oh pooh!)

So Jesus helped Peter back into the boat
So Jesus helped Peter back into the boat
So Jesus helped Peter back into the boat
And everything was calm again. (Wahoo!)
And everything was calm again. (Wahoo!)
And everything was calm again. (Wahoo!)

'You're somebody special' they all said to Jesus.
'You're somebody special' they all said to Jesus.
'You're somebody special' they all said to Jesus.
'The Son Of God - it's true!'
'The Son Of God - it's true!'
'The Son Of God - it's true!'

Exploring Christian Belief

So what was the impossible thing that Jesus friends saw Him do in this story? They saw him walking on water!

Out on the lake Jesus' friends were having a hard time. They were struggling against the wind - and starting to think they were never going to make it to the other side. Then they saw what they thought was a ghost coming walking towards them. Imagine how relieved they must have been to see that it was Jesus!

Even though Jesus had not been in the boat with them, he had known exactly what was happening to them. And when he had seen the difficulties they were having he had immediately come walking across the water to be with them and to help them.

Jesus friends learned that night that nothing is impossible for Jesus. They knew now that no matter how tough things got, they could always count on him to be with them and to help them. Nothing could ever separate them from him. In this case there was a big lake in the way - but the lake was no problem for Jesus. He just walked across it!

And Christians believe that the same is still true today. We can always count on Jesus to be with us and to help us when things are tough. He has promised in the Bible that he will be with us. And wherever Jesus is, things always seem to calm down again - just as they did in this story.

So if you are ever struggling with something - thinking you're never going to be able to make friends with someone in your class who annoys you, you're never going to be able to learn how to do something or you're never going to get through a tough time you are having - instead of panicking, why not talk to Jesus about it? Remember he knows all about it. He has promised to be there with you. And nothing is too hard for him!

But Jesus wasn't the only one in this story who walked on water. Peter did it too! How come Peter was able to walk on water? It was because he trusted in Jesus.

Peter reckoned that if Jesus could do it, he could help him to do it too and he was right! In this case, Jesus invited Peter to step out of the boat and when he did so, Jesus helped Him to walk on water. But this does not mean that Jesus wants everyone to walk on water - so I don't recommend trying it next time you are at your swimming pool!

However, I believe there is one other impossible thing that Jesus did that he does want us to do now too. Jesus was the only person who ever pleased God perfectly and now he wants us to learn to live God's way as he did. And Peter was right - if Jesus can do it he can help us do it too!

And what is the secret? I think the secret is to keep your eyes fixed on Jesus. For as long as he did this, Peter was able to walk on water. For us it means thinking about the kind of person Jesus was and asking him to help us day by day to become more like him.

Think what an adventure this was for Peter. When he stepped out of the boat, he found himself doing things he had never been able to do before. And I believe that is what following Jesus is like. As we learn to trust him we may often find ourselves doing things we have never done before or maybe even thought were impossible. Maybe you'll find yourself forgiving someone who has hurt you, tidying up your room without having to be asked or giving the last piece of cake to someone else instead of grabbing it for yourself! And this will be a sign that you are growing more and more like Jesus.

Christians believe that nothing is impossible for Jesus. No matter what we are going through, we can always trust him to be with us and to help us. And best of all, if we ask him to, he can help us learn to live God's way - and do things we have never been able to do before. What adventures will you have with Jesus this week?

Prayer