

Peter Walks on the Sea

Peter Walks on the Sea	1
Scene Summary	1
Scripture	1
Players	1
Special Props	2
Script – Peter Walks on the Sea	3
Supplemental information	5
Reflection questions	6
Suggested Crafts	6

Scene Summary

Peter walks on the sea presents the dramatic story of a man's faith in Christ. Scenes include: Jesus going to the mountain to pray...His disciples take their boat and row toward Capernaum...a storm comes up at sea...Jesus walks toward them on the water...the men think He is a ghost...Jesus calls to them...Peter asks permission to walk on the water to meet Him...he walks on the water...until he looks at the waves and feels the wind, then begins to sink...Jesus rescues him...they step into the boat...the storm ceases...the men worship Jesus.

Scripture

(Mat 14:22-33 NIV) Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. {23} After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, {24} but the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it. {25} During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. {26} When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. {27} But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." {28} "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." {29} "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. {30} But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" {31} Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" {32} And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. {33} Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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Players

- **Narrator** – The play's "catechist" or teacher should be a good reader with a clear voice.

- **Disciple 1, 2, and 3** – These are the main players of the story. Names could be assigned to these characters, such as John, James and Andrew. Since the names are not given by the text other than Peter, the assignment is arbitrary.
- **Jesus** – God’s One and Only Son.
- **Peter** – A person that is at home on boat. Peter was willing to try.

Special Props

- Normal items from the prop box such as cloaks, veils, robes and headdresses.

Script – Peter Walks on the Sea

Jesus: [speaking to the disciples by the lake] We have fed the people, and I know that you are tired. Take the boat and go to the other side of the lake. I will tell the people good-by and join you later.

Narrator: Slowly the disciples climbed into the small boat.

Disciple 1: I would have rather stayed with Jesus.

Disciple 2: So would I, but Jesus insisted that we go on ahead.

Narrator: The men watched as Jesus walked back to the people, then headed for the boat. They watched the water slap against the sides of the boat as they steered it out into the lake. They looked toward the shore.

Disciple 3: Jesus is sending the people away. I don't think that they want to leave either.

Disciple 1: Now He's going up the mountain, probably to pray.

Narrator: They watched until Jesus was out of sight. The sun went down quickly and the sky grew darker. The once soft breeze began to blow stronger. The waves became larger.

Disciple 2: Looks like a windstorm coming. Get the sails down.

Narrator: [with some excitement] Quickly the men let down the sail as the big waves rocked the boat. Harder and harder the wind blew. Harder and harder the men rowed. The waves and the wind tossed and turned the little boat. By the dim light of the moon, the men could see that they were getting no closer to the shore. Each man dug his oar into the water, but it was impossible to steer the boat.

Disciple 3: [very scared and pointing] Look, out there! It's a ghost!

Narrator: Everyone turned and stared at the figure in the moonlight. As the Person came closer the men were so scared that they could hardly move their tired arms.

Disciple 1: [excited] It's a ghost, a ghost!

Narrator: The waves continued to rock the boat as the men held the oars tightly.

Jesus: [strong voiced] Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid.

Peter: [loudly] Lord, if it is really you, tell me to come to you on the water.

Jesus: [holding out His hand] Come!

Narrator: Quickly Peter climbed to the side of the boat and stepped into the water. He didn't think about the strong wind or the high waves. Keeping his eyes on Jesus, Peter walked on the water toward Him. Then suddenly Peter felt the strong wind blowing his hair and his clothes. He looked down at the waves and the dark, deep water. Suddenly Peter was afraid. [excited] He began to sink.

Peter: [scared] Lord, save me!

Narrator: Jesus quickly reached down His hand to Peter and held him up.

Jesus: [compassionately] Why did you doubt Me Peter?

Narrator: Jesus helped Peter walk to the boat.

Disciple 2: [helping] Here, take my hand.

Narrator: Immediately the wind stopped blowing and the waves became smaller and smaller. The lake became calm. The men looked at Jesus. They did not know what to say.

Disciple 3: [to himself] He walked on the water! And He has power to stop the strong wind!

Peter: [to himself] He saved me!

Disciple 1: [strongly] Truly you are the Son of God! Yes, you are God's Son.

The End

Supplemental information

The disciples had just seen a miracle. A boy's small lunch had been enough to feed a large crowd. It had been an exciting day. Jesus insisted that the disciples return in the boat while He sent the people back to their homes.

As the disciples rowed out into the Sea of Galilee, they watched the crowd begin the long walk back to town. Then they saw Jesus walk up into the hills alone. Jesus did not often have the opportunity to be alone. During the days He taught His disciple or the people, and sometimes both. He walked from town to town. He had no home of His own, so He stayed with friends. Often, He wanted to be alone to pray to His Heavenly Father. As the disciples saw Jesus go up into the hills, they knew that He wanted to talk to God.

The Sea of Galilee lies nearly 700 feet below sea level. Its water is clear and blue. It is about 13 miles long and in some places, it is 7 miles wide. On the eastern side of the sea, hills rise steeply up to almost 2000 feet. On the west, there is a broad shoreline with hills rising gently. In New Testament days, there were at least nine towns settled on its shore. Today there are only two. The Jordan River runs through the Sea of Galilee, keeping its waters fresh. A great variety of fish are still found in the sea.

In New Testament days, there were fleets of fishing vessels, hauling in fish for the nearby markets. Fish was exported throughout the Roman Empire. Because of the high basalt cliffs on the east and the hills on the west, there are atmospheric downdrafts and sudden storms, some of them violent.

The disciples, after leaving Jesus on the eastern shore, had just about 6 miles to reach the other side, crossing the northern tip of the sea. It was spring, maybe late March. In the evening, the bright moon reflected off the water and lighted their faces. They had not rowed far when they noticed the wind became stronger. Soon it became violent and it was impossible to make progress. They had started at dusk and at 3 in the morning, they were perhaps only halfway across. They must have been exhausted from rowing against the wind, yet they were making no progress.

As Jesus walked on the water near the small boat, the moonlight reflecting on the water would have made His garments have a "ghost like" appearance. The men were fearful. They were amazed and relieved when Jesus identified Himself.

Peter, boldly asked permission to walk out on the water to meet Jesus. The disciples had seen Jesus perform many miracles. This day and night, they had seen Him perform at least three. He multiplied the bread and fish, He walked on the water and He stilled the raging storm. They had known that He was God's Son, but now it seemed this truth had been made more real to them.

Reflection questions

- Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples ahead and the crowd away?
- If you were one of the disciples, how would you feel about leaving Jesus on the shore as you got into the boat?
- Why were the disciples afraid when they saw the Person walking on the water?

Suggested Crafts

- Let the students use dark blue or black construction paper with colored chalk to draw Jesus, Peter and the rest of the disciples in the small boat.
- Make cutouts of the boat, Jesus and Peter for the students to use as visual aids in retelling this story to their parents or siblings.