

Lesson 4

JESUS WALKS ON WATER

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus walks on water across the Sea of Galilee toward His disciples and calls Peter to join Him, showing that He really is the Son of God!

WORD OF WONDER: How great God is! We'll never completely understand him. —Job 36:26a

- PRE-SERVICE
 - OPTION 1 Multisensory Activity: Walk It Out!
 - OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Possible or Impossible?
- Welcome Question: What kind of surface would you like to walk on most?
- Curiosity Questions
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Praise The Lord, Goodbye Yesterday
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Great Are You Lord
- Blessing Your Kids



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

It was irrational. The disciples had no mental framework for what they were seeing. Yet there He was—Jesus, walking atop the wind-tossed waters. It's no wonder they assumed the figure before them was a ghost. It's no wonder they were terrified.

Read Matthew 14:22–36 slowly. What do you notice about Jesus? When do you think the disciples became fearful? Would you have become fearful when you spotted someone walking on the water, or would you have also felt fear—the kind that mingles with awe and leaves you without words—as Jesus stepped into the boat and the wind died down?

Until this point, the disciples had no mental framework for understanding the fullness of who Jesus is. So, when they watched Him walk calmly on the waves, they were terrified. And the only rational conclusion they could draw was that this Jesus truly must be the Son of God.

Spend a few minutes quietly reflecting on Jesus. Imagine His face looking at you as He steps into the boat. What is it about Jesus that leaves you in awe? What is it about Jesus that makes you say with His disciples, “Truly you are the Son of God” (Matthew 14:33 NIV)?

—**Sharron Jackson**

Ministry Volunteer and Curriculum Developer

Wonder Ink Development Team

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

In this passage, the disciples refer to Jesus as the “Son of God” for the first time. In Exodus 4:22, God refers to Israel as “my firstborn son” (NIV), but this title used for Jesus is more formal, designating His deity.

WHAT?

Once again, Jesus shows His power over a storm, this time by walking calmly on top of the water rather than speaking to tame the waters. For the disciples, this establishes their understanding of Jesus as the Son of God, who has power over the sea.

WHERE?

Jesus sent the disciples ahead on the boat, going to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. They were headed in the direction of Capernaum and Bethsaida and far from shore when the waves began pounding the boat. Jesus walked on the lake to meet them there.

WHEN?

Jesus walked on water immediately after He fed the 5,000, and just previous to that, His friend and relative John the Baptist was killed at the command of Herod Antipas. These events took place about midway through Jesus’ three-year ministry.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:

While it’s common to focus on Peter’s actions, the most amazing thing about this story is Jesus’ walking on water. The disciples had witnessed Jesus heal people, cast out demons, and feed 5,000 people. But it was seeing Him walk on water that prompted them to conclude, “You really are the Son of God!” (Matthew 14:33).

Lesson 4 **ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN**

Large Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

OPTION 1 Multisensory Activity: Walk It Out!

SUPPLIES: eggs in cartons (2 cartons, 12 eggs per carton), balloons (2–3), cookie sheet, clear plastic containers (2, large enough to step into with both feet), sand or rocks, water, towels (4), plastic tarp or thick towel (optional)

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any food allergies or sensitives among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity! Keep in mind eggs and latex are common allergens.

Before the activity, set up four stations at the front of the room:

Station 1: Set two full egg cartons open side by side. (Consider placing a plastic tarp or thick towel under the cartons to minimize cleanup in case eggs break.)

Station 2: Blow up 2–3 balloons 75 percent full of air. Put them under a cookie sheet.

Station 3: Partially fill a clear plastic container with sand or rocks.

Station 4: Partially fill a clear plastic container with water.

Leader Tip: When choosing volunteers to try walking on the various surfaces, select kids you think are mature and up for the challenge. They will need to take off their shoes and socks and follow instructions well. Have an adult volunteer help the kid step onto the eggs.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids may be uncomfortable touching different textures with their feet or able to easily take off their shoes. Consider allowing all the kids to take a turn touching the surfaces with their hands before anyone attempts to walk on them.

Gather the kids and **display the Walk It Out! Slide**. **There are four stations here. One has eggs, one has balloons, another has sand (or rocks), and the last one has water. I'm curious: Which of these do you think you could walk on?** Allow kids to share their thoughts freely. **Who would like to try?** Choose four kids to come to the front and take off their shoes and socks. Ask the first kid to step carefully onto the eggs with one foot on each carton. Her weight should be evenly distributed over all the eggs. Ask the next to step carefully onto the cookie sheet with both feet. If his weight is evenly distributed, the balloons shouldn't pop.

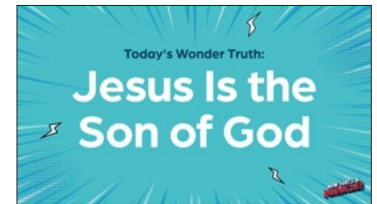


Invite the third to step onto the rocks or sand, again making sure to evenly distribute her weight onto both feet. Last, ask the fourth to step carefully onto the water.

After a few seconds, ask all four kids to carefully step off their surface. Have towels available to wipe or dry their feet. Talk as a group about the activity:

- Did anything surprise you about this activity?
- Have you ever tried to walk on water at a pool or at the beach? What happened?

Walking on water is impossible, right? Well, in today's part of God's big story, we're going to hear about two people who did the impossible! **Display the Water Wonder Truth Slide**. 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!



OPTION 2 Interactive Game: Possible or Impossible?

SUPPLIES: paper (2 sheets), permanent marker (prep only), tape

Ahead of time, write "Possible!" with a permanent marker in the center of a sheet of paper. On a second sheet of paper, write "Impossible!" Tape the two signs to walls on opposite ends of the room.

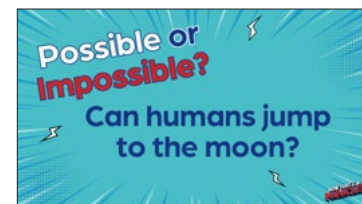
Gather the kids in the center of the room (between the "Possible!" and "Impossible!" signs). **Display the first Possible or Impossible? Slide**. **In this game, your job is to decide whether something is possible or impossible.** Point to the two signs. **We'll read a question on the screen, and if 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!



Make It Inclusive: The more concrete thinkers in your group might view these facts from a different perspective and arrive at differing answers. That's OK! Allow them to share their answers and rationale freely. If any kids decide that all the facts are possible with God—that's great too!

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.**

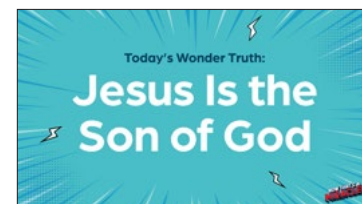
Gather kids in the center and **advance to slide 4: Possible or Impossible? Can plants grow without sunlight?** Invite kids to move to the “Possible!” or “Impossible!” sign. Then reveal the answer: **Possible. Plants can grow under artificial lights, like LED light. However, it’s impossible for plants 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! Display the Water Wonder Truth Slide. 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!**



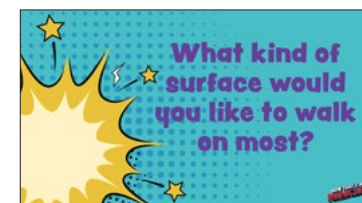
Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION

At service start time, draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question. Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

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 for small group.



Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is _____ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the Water Declaration Slide.

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You show us Your power, (Kids repeat.)

And we believe Jesus is the Son of God! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You show us Your power, (Repeat)
And we believe Jesus is the Son of God! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)



Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for loving us and for always being with us. Please show us Your power today. We invite Your Holy Spirit to help us understand Your Word better so we can recognize that Jesus is Your Son. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

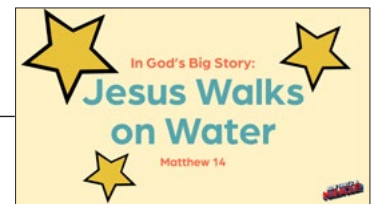
Worship

Today we'll hear about something amazing Jesus did that showed His disciples—and us—that He really is the Son of God! Let's worship Jesus now!

Play worship songs [Praise The Lord](#), [Goodbye Yesterday](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

[Display the Water Title Slide](#). Tell kids that today's part of God's big story comes straight from God's Word, the Bible. Remind kids that the stories about Jesus recorded in the four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—really happened, no matter how surprising they seem!



Today we are learning about a powerful moment when Jesus did something only He could do. He walked on the water and helped His friends when they were afraid in the middle of a storm. As you watch, think about what Peter did when he kept his eyes on Jesus and what changed when he looked at the waves. How can trusting Jesus help us when we feel scared too?

[Watch the Gods Big Story Video](#)

Lesson 4 JESUS WALKS ON WATER

EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

Encourage kids to spread out and find a seat. Invite them to listen carefully to the story so they can be ready to help you tell it!

It had been a long day for Jesus and His disciples—His 12 closest followers. After hearing that His relative, John the Baptist, had been killed, Jesus had wanted to be alone. But a crowd had gathered around Him, and He had compassion on them and healed the sick among them. When evening came, the people were hungry so Jesus had fed them miraculously with just five small loaves of bread and two fish.

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.

This next part of the story gets a little more intense. There are a lot of actions and emotions in the story, and I'd like your help telling the story! Let's stand up and express what we think the people in the story may have been feeling and doing. When I say, "3 ... 2 ... 1," you'll choose a pose that shows us what the people in the story are doing and feeling. Then when I say, "Freeze!" you'll keep that pose in place. I'll keep telling the story, but when I say, "Unfreeze!" you need to listen carefully so you can change your position to a different pose that shows us what the people in the story are doing and feeling in that moment. I'll walk around to make sure everyone is staying frozen!

Here we go ... Jesus was finally alone, and He prayed into the night. 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Encourage kids to freeze in place. Walk among them as you continue the story.

The disciples' boat was now far away from the shore. It was windy out on the lake, and big waves crashed against the side of the boat.

Unfreeze! Find a new pose in 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Pause as kids move into a new pose.

Just before sunrise, Jesus went to join the disciples. He walked on the water to reach their boat! When they saw Him walking on the lake, they were frightened—no one had ever seen anything like that before! The disciples thought Jesus was a ghost so they let out a panicked cry!

Unfreeze! Time to find a new pose, and remember, the disciples were afraid! 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Pause as kids shift poses.

Immediately, Jesus spoke to them and said, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid" (Matthew 14:27).

Jesus' friend, Peter, questioned whether it really was Jesus. Peter asked Jesus to call him onto the lake with Him. This way, Peter could be sure it really was Jesus and that Jesus really was walking on water!

"Come," Jesus told him. So Peter stepped over the side of the boat and onto the water.

Unfreeze! Peter is walking on the water! What do you think he looked like in that moment? 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Pause for kids to respond.

Peter began to walk toward Jesus. Peter noticed the strong wind, and he once again got scared. Peter started to sink. He cried out, “Lord! Save me!” (Matthew 14:30).

Unfreeze again! Peter is sinking! 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Pause for kids to shift poses.

Instantly, Jesus grabbed Peter’s hand and rescued him. In fear, Peter’s faith had wavered. “Why did you doubt me?” Jesus asked him (Matthew 14:31). Then Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped immediately.

Everyone on the boat was in awe of what they had just seen.

Unfreeze! What do you think the disciples on the boat looked like after watching all this happen? Ready? 3 ... 2 ... 1 ... Freeze! Pause as kids move into a new pose.

The disciples worshiped Jesus saying, “You really are the Son of God!” (Matthew 14:33).

When Jesus and His disciples got to the other side of the lake, they arrived at a place called Gennesaret (GEN-uh-sar-et). The people there recognized Jesus and spread the word to others about His arrival. Again, large crowds gathered. People brought their sick friends to Jesus. And again, Jesus healed the sick.

Unfreeze! Great job! Let’s have a seat. Give kids time to sit down.

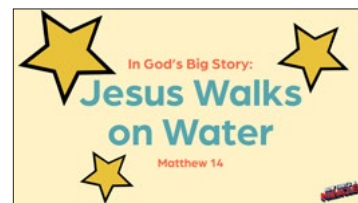
Over and over, Jesus does the seemingly impossible! He feeds large crowds and heals sick people and walks on water! Each amazing thing Jesus does points to His power over creation and His power and authority as God’s Son. That is a miracle—an amazing sign that God is at work. Jesus is the Son of God!

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Water Wonder Truth Slide. Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

It’s incredible that Peter walked toward Jesus on the water, but the most amazing thing about this story is that Jesus walked on water!

The disciples had witnessed Jesus heal people, cast out demons, and feed 5,000 people. But it was seeing Him walk on water that prompted them to say, “You really are the Son of God!” (Matthew 14:33).



In Awe of God’s Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God’s story.

Wow! What an incredible story! What would it have been like to see Jesus walking to you on the water? Give kids time to think and share.

By the end of this passage, the disciples knew that Jesus really is the Son of God. What do you think caused them realize this? Give kids time to think and answer.

Responding in Worship

SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

***Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



WORSHIP VIDEO: GREAT ARE YOU LORD

Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids. Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Jesus truly is the God of miracles! May you always remember that Jesus, the Son of God, loves you and is with you!