

LESSON 5

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

CURIOSITY 15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

Hands-on activities to spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God

- Welcome Question: What kind of surface would you like to walk on most?
- Curiosity Questions
- Curiosity Activity: Sink or Float?
- Declaring God's Wonder



BELIEF 25–35 minutes • Large Group

An interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder

- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Word of Wonder: Job 36:26a

FAITH 15 minutes • Small Group

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own

- Discussion Questions
- Craft: Watercolor Paint
- Game: Walk on Water

IDENTITY 10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids that they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder

- Responding in Worship: Floating Hearts
- Blessing Your Kids
- Closing Game: Build a Boat

Wonder@HomeTM

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more!

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

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 5 EARLY ELEMENTARY

Large Group or Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

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Series Bumper and Countdown Videos

Choose between the [Now That's a Miracle! Series Bumper Video](#) and [Countdown Videos](#) to introduce the kids to the series.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Water Welcome Question Slide

Before kids arrive, display the Water Welcome Question Slide or write the following question on a whiteboard: "What kind of surface would you like to walk on most?" Set out paper and colored pencils.



As kids arrive ...

Welcome kids as they arrive by greeting them by name. Invite kids to think about the Welcome Question and read it aloud for younger kids. Encourage kids to respond by sharing with their neighbors or by drawing pictures. Help them get started by sharing a few ideas. For example, maybe they would like to walk on water, clouds, gelatin, lava, the surface of the moon, etc.

At your start time ...

Warmly greet the group and invite kids to find someone whose answer to the Welcome Question is similar to theirs. Call on several to share their pictures and answers to the 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

Ask the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious ...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one.

I’m curious ...

- **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?**

Leader Tip: Some kids may not be very familiar with Jesus’ miracles. Give them ideas by telling them about a few of His miracles, such as calming a storm, feeding 5,000 people, or healing a man who was blind.

Curiosity Activity: Sink or Float?

SUPPLIES: bin with water, variety of small items that can get wet (a few that will sink, a few that will float), towels

Ahead of time, gather a variety of small items that can get wet. You’ll need a few that can sink and a few that will float. Some ideas are: a small plastic toy, a spoon, a block, a paper cup or bowl, a ball, etc.

Place a bin filled with water on the table or floor. Have the small items you gathered nearby and provide towels for cleanup. Allow each kid to choose an item and ask whether they think it will sink or float. Let the kid place the item in the water, watch, and then say aloud whether the item actually did float or sink. Some of the results may be surprising to the kids!

If you stepped into this bin of water, do you think your foot would go to the bottom of the bin or could you stand on top of the water? Allow kids to respond. **Our feet would definitely go to the bottom of the bin! Some of you may be able to swim, but we can’t stand on top of or walk on water.**

We’ll hear a story from the Bible today about Jesus walking on water! When Jesus walks on water, it’s a miracle. A miracle is a sign that God is at work! Today’s Wonder Truth is **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD.**

Declaring God’s Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Declaration [Video](#) or Slide (optional)

Show the Declaration [Video](#) or Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

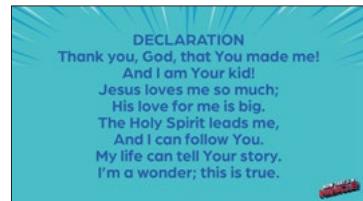
Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.



The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").

Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

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

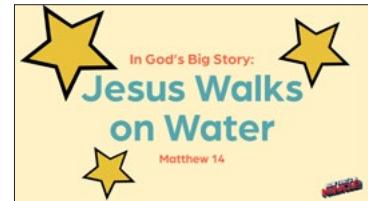
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: songs from the [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

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 songs from the [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!

This lesson includes three opportunities for your kids to enter the story—each one reinforces the others! **HEAR** it read directly from the Bible. **WATCH** it in a video. **EXPERIENCE** it through the live script.



SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Water Title Slide; God's Big Story Video ([Early Childhood](#) or [Elementary](#))

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! Help kids find Matthew 14.

Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll watch and experience more of the story!

Read Matthew 14:22–36 and pause at key words to let kids say the next word aloud. Then do one or both of the following:

- Use the following Jesus Walks on Water Experience It! Script
- View the God's Big Story Video ([Early Childhood](#) or [Elementary](#))

LESSON 5 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 pose.

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!

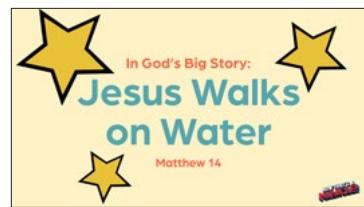
Connecting the Wonder Truth

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Water Wonder Truth Slide

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).



Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, inflated balloon (1 per 4–5 kids)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Now That's a Miracle! Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#) (optional)

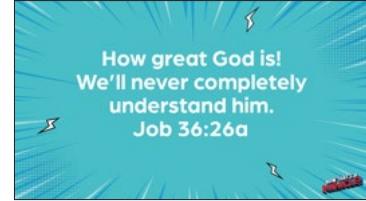
WORD OF WONDER

How great God is! We'll never completely understand Him.

—Job 36:26a

Display the Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#), if using. **Our Word of Wonder for the Now That's a Miracle! series is Job 36:26a. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

We're going to pretend to be the waves and water. Move your arms around like waves. Allow the kids to respond. **We have to keep the balloon up so it doesn't sink to the bottom of the sea (the floor). Don't let the balloon sink by touching the floor!** Let's all work together to bop it and keep it up while we say our verse aloud together.



Encourage the kids to bop the balloon in the air using their hands or feet. If your group is large, you can split the kids into teams, each with their own balloon.

Did you know that when we say something over and over, it helps us remember it? We've been practicing this Word of Wonder for the last several weeks. Let's see if you can remember it all today!

We'll all try to keep the balloon from hitting the floor by hitting it up into the air using our hands and feet. Here's the special part: Each time someone hits the balloon, say the next word of our Word of Wonder! Are you ready? Let's see how many times we can say it! Invite the kids to bop the balloon and say the verse. Do it several times.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **HOW GREAT**—Put one arm straight up for each word.
- **GOD IS!**—Point up.
- **WE'LL NEVER**—Cross arms back and forth in front of you.
- **COMPLETELY**—Bring both arms down from above you to your sides.
- **UNDERSTAND**—Point to your head with both hands.
- **HIM.**—Point up.
- **JOB 36:26a**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **This verse was written by a man named Job. God showed His great power during hard times in Job's life, and Job knew that he could trust God. What are some things we can trust God for?**
- **Our verse says that God is great! How did Jesus show that He is great in God's big story today? (walking on water, calling Peter to walk on water, saving Peter, healing sick people)**

LESSON 5 **EARLY ELEMENTARY**

Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: large blue blanket or blue disposable tablecloth, toy boat

Have the kids sit in a circle around a large blue blanket or blue disposable tablecloth cover. Set a boat on one edge of the blanket or tablecloth.

In our story today, Jesus and Peter walked on water. We're going to stand in a circle and walk around the edges of the water. When I say, "Freeze," you'll stop, and whoever is closest to the boat will walk across the pretend water and answer a question.

Let the kids walk around the outside edges of the blue pretend water. Say, "Freeze" periodically.

Whoever is closest to the toy boat during each round can walk across the water and answer a question.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What did Jesus do after sending the crowd away?** (go to be alone and pray)
- **How did Jesus get to His disciples when they were on the water in a boat?** (walked on water)
- **How did the disciples feel when they first saw Jesus?** (afraid)
- **What happened to Peter when he stepped out of the boat?** (First, he was able to walk on water; then he sank.)
- **What did Jesus do for Peter?** (saved him)
- **Have you been afraid? What made you feel better?**
- **How can you remember to focus on Jesus instead of the things you're worried about?**
- **What do all of Jesus' miracles show us about Jesus?**

Make It Inclusive: Assist kids who have mobility challenges and help them participate in activities as much as possible. A kid who cannot walk around the circle can be your helper, saying "Freeze" or asking questions.

When you're afraid or worried, you can ask God to help you. He'll be with you and help you just like Jesus helped Peter. We can always remember He is the Son of God! Let's talk to God now in prayer!

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for how amazing He is. God hears all our prayers!

Craft: Watercolor Paint

SUPPLIES: cardstock (1 sheet per kid), paintbrushes (1 per kid), watercolor paint palettes, small cups of water, cotton swabs (at least 1 per kid; optional)

Provide a piece of cardstock and a paintbrush for each child, along with a few watercolor paint palettes and small cups of water for the kids to share. Cotton swabs can be used instead of paintbrushes if paintbrushes are not available.

Today we learned about when Jesus walked on water. Let's use water and paint to create a beautiful picture. To begin, dip your paintbrush into the water. Then, put your paintbrush into the color you want to use and begin to paint your picture. Dip your paintbrush in water again when you want to use a new color. You can paint something from today's story, or you can paint something about Jesus' other miracles, such as feeding the people or healing the sick. Using water to paint can remind us that God is powerful and that He is the Son of God!

Allow the kids to complete the craft and let the pictures dry before sending them home with the kids.

Game: Walk on Water

SUPPLIES: blue disposable tablecloth or blanket

Place a blue tablecloth or blanket on the floor to represent the Sea of Galilee. More than one tablecloth can be used for a larger group.

You're going to walk across the pretend water to help remember today's story. One person will be chosen to pretend to be Peter and pretend to "sink" and sit down.

After acting out the story, let the kids see if they can move across the water in different ways. Who can crawl across? Who can hop on one foot across the water? Who can frog jump on the water? Encourage the kids to have fun and think of creative ways to move on the water.

Make It Inclusive: If any of the kids have physical limitations, make sure they are included in some way. Encourage them to add sound effects for the wind and waves or give them space to move across the water in a way that they choose. Everyone can cheer them on!

LESSON 5 EARLY ELEMENTARY

Large Group or Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

Responding in Worship: Floating Hearts

SUPPLIES: cups (1 per 4–6 kids), water, glass plates or pans with edges (1 per 4–6 kids), dry-erase markers, paper towels

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Floating Hearts Slide, [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, fill cups with water (one per 4-6 kids).

Cue music from the [Now That's a Miracle! Elementary Spotify playlist](#) to play quietly in the background throughout the activity. Display the Floating Hearts Slide and gather the kids together.

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.

In today's part of God's big story, Jesus did an awesome thing on the water. How did Jesus show His power in this story? Invite kids to respond.

Yes! Jesus walked on the water! Can any of you walk on water? Allow kids to respond. No matter how hard we try, we can never do this. This act of walking on water is another reminder of just how powerful Jesus is. He has this power because He is the Son of God. What does this mean to you? How can knowing this help you? Invite kids to thoughtfully respond.

Jesus has amazing power and can do anything! Let's do an activity to remind us that Jesus is always with us and can do the impossible—like walking on water!

Help kids form small groups of 4–6 (or keep everyone together if your group is already small). Give each group a glass plate/pan, a dry-erase marker, a cup of water, and paper towels for cleanup. Walk the groups through these steps:



1. Invite each kid to draw a heart on the center of their group's glass plate or pan with the marker. It's best if the shape is drawn in one motion (without lifting the marker and without coloring in the shape). (Be ready to help kids who struggle with drawing or holding a marker.)
2. Ask a leader or older kid to slowly and carefully pour water from the cup onto the plate/pan to cover each of the drawings.
3. Encourage kids to wait and see what happens to the drawings. If nothing happens, gently shake the plate/pan. The hearts should rise to the top of the water and float on top of the water.

What do you see on top of the water? Allow kids to respond.

Jesus is powerful, and He is the Son of God! But there's even more to the story than that. Jesus loves you, and Jesus loves me. The hearts in the pan can remind us of that! And just as Jesus, the Son of God, loved Peter and was with him in a very scary situation, He loves you and is always with you.



Blessing Your Kids

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Water Blessing Slide

Display the Water Blessing Slide. Speak this blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. If you bless kids individually, insert each name into the blessing.

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

BLESSING

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



Closing Game: Build a Boat

SUPPLIES: bowls or pans of water, aluminum foil (1 square per kid), straws (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, put some water in a bowl or pan and set it aside. You'll need one for every small group of kids. If you have a large group of kids, you can prepare several bins of water.

Today we learned from God's big story that Jesus is the Son of God. He performed miracles including walking on water. Do you remember where the disciples were when Jesus was walking on water? Allow kids to respond. That's right! They were in a boat! Let's do a fun activity to help us remember today's story.

Give each kid a square of aluminum foil. Invite them to use the foil to create a boat by folding the sides up a bit. You can have an example to show them if you'd like. After they build their boats, the kids can put the boats in the bins of water.

Leader Tip: If you don't have access to bins of water, kids can take their pretend boats home to try them out. Encourage kids to see if their boat can hold small coins or small objects without sinking.

What was the weather like when the disciples were on the boat? Allow kids to respond. **Yes, it was very windy!** Give each kid a straw. **Use your straw to create wind and waves. Let's see how your boats do in the windy weather!** Allow kids to have fun playing with their boats and making wind until time for dismissal.