

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 15–20 minutes

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

- Play Stations:
 - Water Sensory Bin
 - Follow the Footprints
 - Jesus Walks on Water Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Sink or Float?
- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder



BELIEF 20 minutes

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 15–20 minutes

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

- Circle Time: Walk Around the Water
- Craft: Watercolor Paint
- Game: Walk on Water

IDENTITY 15–20 minutes

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: Footprint Water Prayer
- Prayer and Blessing
- Closing Game: Build a Boat

Wonder@Home™

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



LESSON 5 FOR LEADERS

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).



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Is the Son of God

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 14

WORD OF WONDER: Job 36:26a

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: large bins with water (2), plastic cups, measuring spoons, bowls, toy boats, toy fish, towels, cardstock (several sheets), scissors (prep only), coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Footprints Sheet (several copies), Jesus Walks on Water Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Water Sensory Bin

Set up: Set out two large bins with some water in them. Provide cups, measuring spoons, bowls, toy boats, and toy fish to play with. Have a few towels available to dry the surfaces after the kids are finished with the play station.

Play: Let the kids have fun playing with the water and objects as they pour, scoop, and explore! See if they can think of some Bible stories that happened around water.

Make It Inclusive: Ask parents or caregivers of children who wear hearing devices that cannot get wet (even accidentally) for ways to modify an activity like this one so their child can participate in classroom activities. Parents will be grateful that you care about their child's needs.

Play Station: Follow the Footprints

Set up: Ahead of time, print several copies of the Footprints Sheet onto cardstock and cut out the pictures of footprints. Scatter them on the floor of your space to make a winding path. You can also set out markers for the kids to color the footprints.

Play: Invite the kids to take turns walking on the footprints. Then let them mix it up to make a different pattern and walk on them again.



Leader Tip: To make it more fun, set out a blue disposable tablecloth to be pretend water and let the kids put the footprints on it.

Play Station: Jesus Walks on Water Coloring Sheet

Set up: Ahead of time, print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of a boat or water-themed activity they would like to do.

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!

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Tac the Cat Picture or puppet

For this section, you can use the cat picture provided, or a stuffed animal cat, or a cat hand puppet. Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

Leader: You may remember our friend Tac, the curious cat. He's always asking questions. He has a question for you. Are you ready?

Tac the Cat: Hi, kids! I've been wondering ... how do some things float in water and other things sink?

Leader: Oh, that's a great question! We just did an experiment to find out about things that float and things that sink. Kids, can you tell Tac which things were able to float?
(Allow kids to list the things that floated.)

Leader: Yes, that's correct! And can you tell Tac which things sank? (Allow kids to list the things that sank.)

Tac the Cat: What? That's so neat! I wonder how that happens! Why do some things float but other things sink?

Leader: Well, I learned in science that whether an object floats or sinks in water depends on how dense, or compact, its particles are. An object will sink in water if it



is made up of particles that are more tightly packed together than the particles in water. An object that is less dense than water will float.

Tac the Cat: Oh wow! That's so interesting.

Leader: I know! God's creation is amazing! Tac, did you know that our story from the Bible today is about a time when Jesus was out on water during a storm?

Tac the Cat: No way! What happened?

Leader: We'll learn about how Jesus walked on the water! He didn't sink! He can walk on water because He is the Son of God!

Tac the Cat: Now that's a miracle!

Leader: It sure is, Tac! A *miracle* is a great sign that God is at work. We'll find out even more about this when we hear God's big story today.

Tac the Cat: That sounds great! Well, I've got more exploring and thinking to do. I personally don't like water because I'm a cat, but I think I'm going to go throw some things in a bathtub of water and see what floats.

Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: What would you like to put in water to see if it floats or sinks? Allow the kids to respond and let them guess whether it would float or sink. **Did you ever stop to think about how God created all of these things and knows everything about them?** Allow the kids to respond. **He can use His creation to do miracles that show us that Jesus is His Son.**

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD**. Today we'll discover that Jesus is the Son of God!

Declaring God's Wonder

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

Show the Early Childhood 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.)

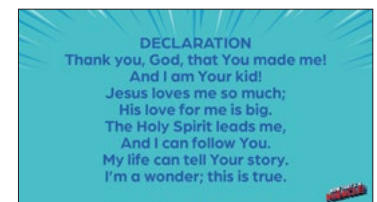
Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

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").



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 5 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **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! Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Today we'll learn about how miraculous and powerful our God is and how Jesus is the Son of God. **Let's sing about Jesus together!** Play songs from the [Now That's a Miracle! Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (optional)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible. That's the first book of the New Testament.

Read the God's Big Story Script provided or read Matthew 14:22–33 from the Bible. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give the kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

Leader Tip: The kids might find it interesting to know that the account of Jesus walking on water is found not only the book of Matthew but also in the Gospels of Mark and John too. Knowing this may help kids understand that what they will hear in today's God's big story really happened, and we can trust that God's Word is true, no matter how surprising it seems.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Story Sound Effects, [Jesus Walks on Water God's Big Story Video](#)

Ahead of time, cue the Story Sound Effects. If you choose not to use the sound effects provided, you can make the sounds throughout the storytelling and invite the kids to mimic you.

Jesus traveled around teaching people about God's kingdom. (Cue the Footsteps Walking sound.) **Jesus had spent a long day helping people and healing people who were sick.** (Cue the Coughing sound.) **After Jesus had fed the large crowd, he sent them home. Jesus told His disciples—His closest followers—to take a boat across a big lake called the Sea of Galilee. Then He climbed up a mountain to be alone. He prayed while it got later and later at night.** (Cue the Crickets sound.)

The disciples' boat was in the water, far away from the shore. (Cue the Water sound.) **It was windy out on the lake, and big waves crashed into the side of the boat.** (Cue the Wind and Waves sound.)

Just before morning, Jesus went to be with the disciples. But He did not use a boat. Jesus walked on the water to get to their boat! (Cue the Water Splashes sound.) **When the disciples saw Him walking in the middle of the lake, they were really scared. They had never seen anything like that before! At first, the disciples thought it was a ghost. They cried out!** (Cue the Scared sound.) **Right away, Jesus let them know who He was. He said, "Be brave! It is I. Don't be afraid"** (Matthew 14:27).

One of the disciples was Peter. Peter wanted to make sure it really was Jesus. He asked for Jesus to call him onto the lake with Jesus. Then Peter could be sure that it really was Jesus (and that Jesus really was walking on water!).

"Come," Jesus told him. Peter stepped out of the boat and onto the water. (Cue the Water Splashes sound.) **He began to walk toward Jesus. Then the wind got strong.** (Cue the Wind sound.) **Peter saw that and got scared. Peter started to sink. "Lord! Save me!" he cried out** (Matthew 14:30).

Jesus took Peter's hand and saved him. When he was afraid of the wind and waves, Peter did not trust Jesus as much. "Why did you doubt me?" Jesus asked him (Matthew 14:31). (Cue the Wind sound.) **Then Jesus and Peter climbed into the boat, and the wind stopped.** (Cue the Water sound.)

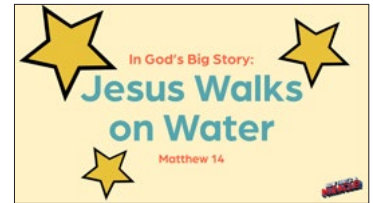
The disciples in the boat were amazed. They could hardly believe what they saw. They worshiped Jesus saying, "You really are the Son of God!" (Matthew 14:33).

When Jesus and His disciples got to the other side of the lake, they got to a place called Gennesaret (GEN-uh-sar-et). The people there recognized Jesus and told others that He was there. Big crowds of people came. People brought their sick friends to Jesus. (Cue the Coughing sound.) **And again, Jesus healed the sick.**

Over and over, Jesus did things that seemed impossible! (Cue the Applause sound.) **Each miracle is an amazing sign that God is at work. He fed large crowds of people. He healed sick people. He**

walked on water. Each amazing thing shows Jesus' power. Jesus can do anything. He is powerful because of who He is. Jesus is the Son of God.

VIEW THE GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO



Connecting the Wonder Truth

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS IS THE SON OF GOD**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen 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 do really cool miracles that seemed impossible. 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)



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 5 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

Circle Time: Walk Around the Water

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 CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids that 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: Footprint Water Prayer

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), large bin with water, markers, towels, trash can

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Footprint Sheet (1 footprint per kid)

Ahead of time, print the Footprint Sheet so you have one footprint for each kid. Cut out the footprints.

Give one footprint to each kid and set out a large bin of water, along with some markers. If you have a large group, you can set out several bins of water. Set out towels and a trash can for cleanup.

In our story today, we learned about a miracle that Jesus did. Over and over, Jesus did things that seemed impossible! Each miracle is an amazing sign that God is at work. He fed large crowds of people. He healed sick people. He walked on water. Jesus can do anything. He is powerful because of who He is. Jesus is the Son of God. We're going to write or draw on this footprint one thing we want to praise God for about Jesus. Then we'll pray and tell God thank You as well put the footprint on the water and think about how amazing it is that Jesus walked on water. We can praise Him! This shows us that Jesus is God!

Invite the kids to write or draw on their footprint anything that they want to say to praise God. It can be a picture of themselves praising God, a heart, a cross, a happy face, or even an abstract drawing. While they're drawing or writing, encourage them to think about what makes Jesus so amazing. When they finish, they can take turns putting their footprint on the water and praying. You'll need to get the footprints out in between each kid's prayer time so keep a trash can and towel nearby.



Prayer and Blessing

After the responding in worship time is finished, pray with them, thanking God for Jesus.

God, thank You for Jesus. Thank You that Jesus is all powerful. Thank You for Your Word that tells us all about the miracles Jesus performed. Thank You for showing us that He is Your Son! We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

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!

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.