

# Open Bible Stories – Jesus Walks on Water

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## Introduction

### Key Idea

The story of Jesus walking on water teaches us that Jesus has all power of nature and creation.

### Core Belief Verse

*"For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities---all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together."  
Colossians 1:16-17*

### God's Big Story

The eternal God created all things in six days.

He made a good and perfect world.

He made humans in his image to fill the earth and rule over creation.

But humans rebelled against God and ruined God's creation.

God set to restore his world through his promise.

God made a covenant with Abraham. He promised to bless all nations through Abraham.

God kept his promises across the generations.

God provided Abraham with a promised child, Isaac.

God gave Isaac a wife, and she bore twins Jacob and Esau.

God blessed Jacob and his sons, and the blessing continued to the next generation.

God rescued Joseph, one of Jacob's sons, and used him to rescue his family.

God caused his people, the Israelites, to multiply in the land of Egypt; eventually, they became slaves.

But God raised up a deliverer, Moses, to deliver his people from their slavery.

God judged the Egyptians with harsh plagues; in the final judgment, he passed over his people, who covered their doorposts with the blood of a sacrificed lamb.

Then, God delivered the Israelites by bringing them out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea on dry land.

God made a covenant with the Israelites and made them his people.

God tested Israel in a series of wilderness wanderings and eventually brought his people into the promised land of Canaan.

God raised up deliverers to lead Israel and rescue them from their enemies.

God formed Israel into a kingdom. He made a covenant with King David and promised to send a king that would rule his people forever.

Many of Israel's kings were evil, and the kingdom of Israel was divided into two kingdoms.

God sent prophets to warn his people of God's judgment and call them to repent.

When Israel did not repent, God sent his people into exile. After many years, he brought them back to the land.

Throughout the Old Testament, God promised to send his Messiah to deliver his people from their sin.

After many years, the prophet John was born. He would prepare people for the coming Messiah.

At the perfect time, God sent his Son, Jesus, to be born of a virgin Mary.

When John and Jesus grew up, John baptized Jesus as a sign that Jesus was God's beloved Son.

Jesus endured all manner of temptation without ever sinning.

When he was thirty years old, he launched a public ministry of preaching, teaching, and healing.

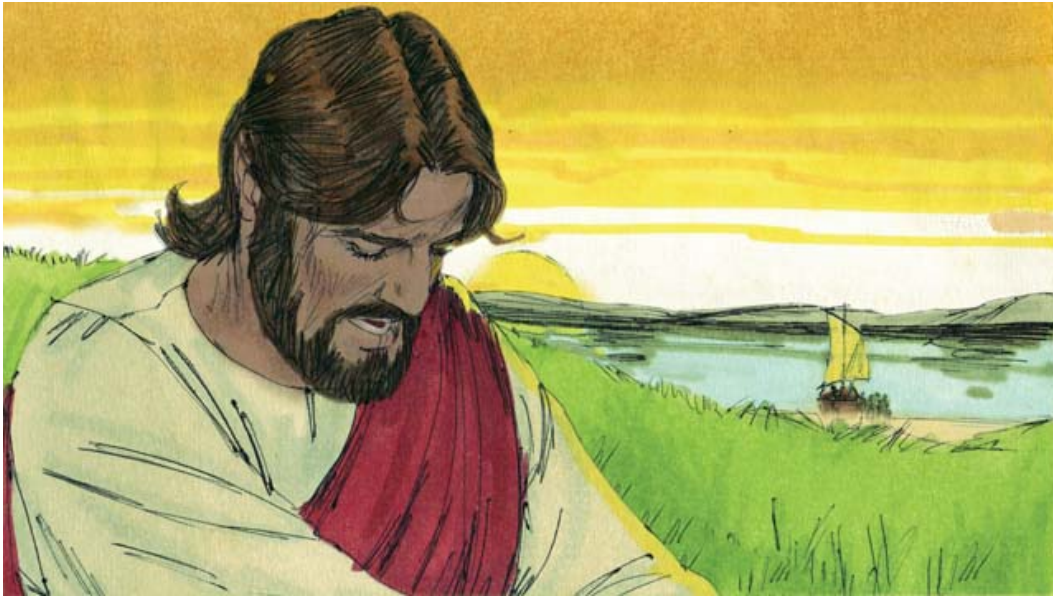
He taught his disciples about the life of compassion, sacrifice, and forgiveness.

Jesus performed many miracles: he fed a crowd of five thousand, he walked on water.

## The Story: Jesus Walks on Water

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31-01



After Jesus fed the crowd, he told the disciples to get into a boat. He told them to sail to the other side of the lake while he stayed behind for a little while. So the disciples left, and Jesus sent the crowd to their homes. After that, Jesus went up on a mountainside to pray. He was there all alone, and he prayed until late at night.

31-02



During this time, the disciples rowed their boat, but the wind blew hard against them. When it was late in the night, they had only reached the middle of the lake.

31-03



At that time, Jesus finished praying and started to go back to meet his disciples. He walked on top of the water toward their boat.

31-04



Then the disciples saw him. They were very afraid because they thought he was a ghost. Jesus knew they were afraid, so he called out to them and said, "Do not be afraid. It is I!"

31-05



Then Peter said to Jesus, "Master, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." Jesus told Peter, "Come!"

31-06



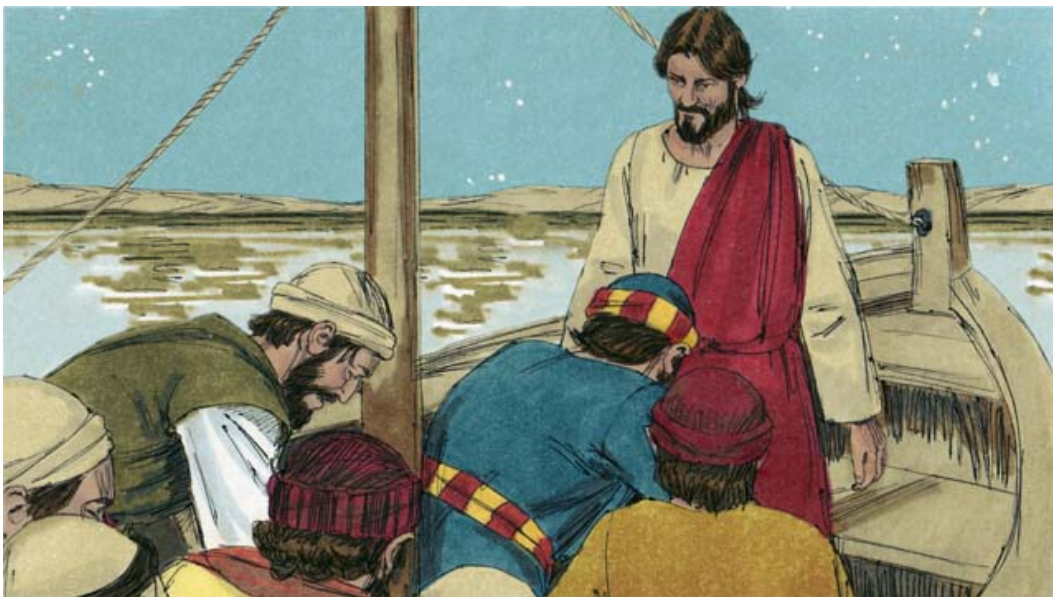
So, Peter got out of the boat and started walking to Jesus on the surface of the water. But after walking a short distance, he turned his eyes away from Jesus and began to look at the waves and to feel the strong wind.

31-07



Then Peter became afraid and began to sink into the water. He cried out, "Master, save me!" Right away, Jesus reached out and grabbed him. Then he said to Peter, "You have so little faith! Why did you not trust me to keep you safe?"

31-08



Then Peter and Jesus got into the boat, and the wind immediately stopped blowing. The water became calm. The disciples were amazed and bowed down to Jesus. They worshiped him and said to him, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

*A Bible story from: Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21*

## Community Study: We Rejoice—Finding Joy in Suffering

- **Key Idea:** experiencing great joy in the midst of painful suffering
- **Key Passage:** Romans 5:1-5
- **Main Session:** OBS 31 (Jesus Walks on Water)

### Pray to God (5 minutes)

Divide the community into groups of 2-3 people. Have each member identify a challenge in their life that they are currently facing. Spend a short time praying for God's comfort and peace in each of these personal situations.

### Sing a Song (3-5 minutes)

Choose a song to sing to praise God and encourage one another.

### Recite the Core Belief Verse (3-5 minutes)

The verse below summarizes the teaching of the current passage. Read the verse out loud as a community. Read it again several times as a group until the whole community can recite it from memory.

The men marveled and said, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?" Matthew 8:27

OR

May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be praised. He is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort. God comforts us in all our affliction, so that we can comfort those who are in any affliction. 1 Corinthians 1:3-4

### Read the Passage (3-5 minutes)

God provides comfort for his people in the midst of suffering and hardship. As a community, read the following Bible passage together to understand what it means to be committed to Jesus and his work.

1 Since we are justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we also have our access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in the certain hope of the glory of God. 3 Not only this, but we also rejoice in our sufferings. We know that suffering produces endurance. 4 Endurance produces character, and character produces certain hope, 5 and that hope does not disappoint because the love of God has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us. Romans 5:1-5

### **Explore the Passage** (10-15 minutes)

Our commitment to God does not depend on our strength. God comforts and strengthens his people in the midst of suffering. As a community, use the following questions to discuss the teaching of the biblical passage.

1. How has Jesus made it possible for humans to have a restored relationship with God?
2. How does this passage tell believers to respond as they go through suffering and hardship?
3. Why can/should believers rejoice while they go through suffering and trials?
4. How can your community develop habits and practices that will encourage each other in the midst of suffering and persecution?

### **Share Your Thoughts**

Read the passage below. Then, think about what it means to endure suffering and hardship. Share your thoughts with the community.

2 Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you experience various troubles. 3 You know that the testing of your faith produces endurance. 4 Let endurance complete its work, so that you may become fully developed and complete, not lacking anything. James 1:2-4

If we endure suffering in a way that pleases God, it would look like this...

## **Movement 1: Understand the Story**

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*Read each question aloud. Give the group time to answer before sharing the answer.*

### **Observation Questions**

*31-01*

**What did Jesus tell the disciples to do while he dismissed the crowd?**

He told them to get into a boat and sail to the other side of the lake.

**What did Jesus do after he sent the disciples away in their boat?**

Jesus stayed behind a little while and went up on a mountainside alone to pray.

**Who was with Jesus on the mountainside?**

Jesus was all alone.

**How long did Jesus pray on the mountainside?**

Jesus prayed there until late at night.

*31-02*

**What problem did the disciples have during the night as they rowed the boat?**

During the night, the disciples rowed the boat, the wind was against them, and they only reached the middle of the lake.

*31-03*

**What did Jesus do after he finished praying?**

After Jesus finished praying, he started to go back to meet his disciples.

**How did Jesus get to their boat?**

Jesus walked on top of the water toward the boat.

*31-04*

**How did the disciples react when they first saw Jesus?**

They were very afraid because they thought he was a ghost.

**What did Jesus say to them to calm their fear?**

He said, "Do not be afraid. It is I!"

31-05

**Why did Jesus tell Peter to come to him on the water?**

Jesus told Peter to come to him because Peter asked him to do that to show that it really was Jesus.

31-06

**How did Peter respond to Jesus' command for Peter to come to him?**

Peter got out of the boat and started walking on the surface of the water.

**What did Peter do after walking on the water for a short distance?**

After walking a short distance, Peter turned his eyes away from Jesus.

**What did Peter begin to notice when he turned his eyes away from Jesus?**

He began to look at the waves and to feel the strong wind.

31-07

**What happened to Peter when he became afraid of the wind and the waves?**

He began to sink into the water and cried out for Jesus to save him.

**What did Jesus do when Peter called out for help?**

Jesus reached out and grabbed Peter.

**What did Jesus say as a rebuke to Peter?**

Jesus said, "You have so little faith! Why did you not trust me to keep you safe?"

31-08

**What happened after Jesus got into the boat?**

The wind immediately stopped blowing, and the water became calm.

**How did the disciples respond to this miracle?**

The disciples were amazed. They bowed down to Jesus, worshiped him, and said, "Truly, you are the Son of God."

## **Movement 2: Theological Questions**

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### **What Does This Story Teach Us?**

1. What are various challenges we experience as a threat to faith?  
How was the faith of the disciples challenged in this story?
2. How should we rightly understand who Jesus is? What does this story teach us about the identity of Jesus?
3. What does it look like to respond to Jesus in faith? How do the positive and negative responses in this story teach us about the nature of faith?

## **Movement 3: Live It Out**

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### **Personal Implications & Applications From The Story**

*Guide the group to discuss practical obedience from this story and name concrete next steps.*

1. What particular challenges are you facing in your life?
2. How is Jesus calling you to trust him?
3. How do you think you would have responded if you were Peter?
4. Think about this week. Where does "Jesus Walks on Water" challenge you to obey God in a practical way?
5. How does this key idea shape one decision you need to make right now: The story of Jesus walking on water teaches us that Jesus has all power of nature and creation.

## **Movement 4: Retell the Story**

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*Invite the group to retell the story several times until they can tell it clearly and faithfully.*

1. Can someone retell "Jesus Walks on Water" from beginning to end in their own words?
2. Retell this story again, but focus on what God did at each key moment.
3. Retell the story in three parts: beginning, middle, and ending. What changed in each part?
4. If you were teaching this story to your family tonight, how would you tell it simply and clearly?

### **Church Ministry**

Reflect on how this story can edify and mature the Christian community. Design a way to minister this story to your church community.

**Ministry Preparation:** Take time to consider how you could minister this story to others. Record some ministry ideas below.

**Ministry Implementation:** Minister this story to a group of believers as you had planned. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with other believers. Record your ministry plan below.

**Ministry Reflection:** Think about what you learned from ministering this story to other believers. Reflect on your experience below.

## **Movement 5: Share It**

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*Help each person plan how they will share this story with others before the next gathering.*

**Report-back next meeting:** Who did you share with, and what happened?

1. Who is one specific person you will share "Jesus Walks on Water" with this week?
2. When and where will you share this story with them?
3. What is the one main truth from this story you want them to remember?

### **Mission Engagement**

Consider how you will witness this story to unbelievers. Design a way to share this story and engage them in what it teaches about Christianity and the gospel.

**Witness Preparation:** Take time to consider how you will witness this narrative to unbelievers. Record some ideas below.

**Witness Implementation:** Share this story with an unbeliever. Use the information in this study to help develop a teaching/lesson or lead a discussion of this story with others. Record your witness plan below.

**Witness Reflection:** Think about what you learned from sharing this story with unbelievers. Reflect on your experience below.