

A Storm

Lesson At-a-Glance

Scripture Reference
Matthew 8:23-27

Lesson Focus
Jesus is with you to calm the storms of your life.

Bible Memory Verse
"They were amazed, saying, 'What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?'"
Matthew 8:27

Gather (10 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|--|--|-----------------|
| Arrival Activity Kids play a game in which they act like wild storms and then go still. | Spark Activity Pages, Spark Coloring Pages | Colored pencils |
| Circle Time Kids learn the word <i>authority</i> and that Jesus has authority over everything. | Spark Song CD, Spark Songbook | Music source |
| Opening Prayer Kids do an interactive prayer imitating big waves. | None | None |

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| A Storm Story Kids engage in the story by finding the almost identical phrase in both Bible versions, then discussing it. | Spark Story Bibles Spark NRSV Bible | None |
| Fear and Faith Kids explore different fears and learn some names for those fears. | Leaflets | Pencils, crayons, internet device |

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|--------------------------------|--|
| Stormy Seas Kids make a storm collage with Jesus at the center. | Leaflets, Spark Bible Stickers | Glue sticks, scissors, construction paper (assorted colors) |
| Calming the Storm Kids make wind chimes to remind them that Jesus has authority over the storms in our lives. | None | Wire coat hangers (1 per kid), yarn, plastic yarn needles, a large quantity of small items that tinkle or clink, hot glue gun (optional) |

Send (5 minutes)

| | Spark Resources | Supplies |
|---|--------------------|----------|
| Closing Conversation Kids look at Faith on the Go! and practice the Bible Memory Verse. | Leaflets | None |
| Closing Prayer Kids do an interactive prayer, acting out the calming of the storm. | Spark Family Pages | None |

Bible Background

Jesus' disciples followed him into a boat. As experienced fishermen, they might have known a storm was coming, but they took a risk and followed Jesus. This is a story of Jesus' authority. Jesus' words changed the weather. The sea became calm. As in the beginning with God, so here with Jesus powerful words affect creation. Jesus' contrast of fear and faith is important. Jesus says, "Do not be afraid" more than he says anything else. Even going about your usual day-to-day routine, you can be caught off guard. You may feel overwhelmed and swamped. You may not only feel threatened, but really *be* threatened in some way. You may be afraid. Following Jesus and being in the boat with Jesus makes all the difference. Call on Jesus, who can calm the storms of life and calm your fears.

Why This Story Matters

Kids of all ages experience fears and difficulties in their lives, from what we would consider trivial matters, to extreme life challenges. To the person involved, all of these storms of life are frightening. Kids need to know that Jesus is with them and will help them through.

Gather (10 minutes)

Arrival Activity

If some kids arrive earlier than others and you need a lesson-based activity, make copies of an Activity Page and Coloring Page and set them out for kids to try.

Welcome to Sunday school! We're going to play a game called Wild and Still. When I say "Wild," I want you to act completely wild and crazy, but don't move out of your spot, and be careful not to hit anyone around you. Then, when I say, "Be still!" I want you to freeze in place, and then return to a calm position. Try this a few times, until kids get the idea of the authority of your voice.

Spark Resources

Spark Song CD
Spark Songbook

Supplies

Colored pencils

Circle Time

Invite the kids to sit in a circle. **When we played Wild and Still, why did you stop acting wild when I said "Be still"?** Get the kids to understand that they were listening to you because you have authority—you're the one in charge in the classroom. Define authority for them. **What do you think Jesus has authority over? (Everything!) You? Me? What about nature? What about a storm? (Yes!) In today's story, we're going to hear about how Jesus calmed a storm just by talking to it!**

Sometimes things happen in our lives that are scary or difficult. We can think about those things as storms. Do you think Jesus has authority over that kind of storm? (Yes!) Jesus is with us all the time and can help us be calm and still inside, even during storms.

Spark Resources

Spark Activity Pages
Spark Coloring Pages

Supplies

Music source

MUSIC RECOMMENDATIONS

Song 1: "Jesus Loves Me" (tracks 14 and 31 on Spark Song CD, page 76 in Spark Songbook)

Song 2: Piggyback song to the tune of "Sing a Song of Sixpence"

Jesus' climbed into a boat on Galilee.

His disciples joined him and headed out to sea.

Jesus fell asleep as winds began to rise.

A storm soon caused the boat to rock and almost to capsize!

"Wake up, Jesus, save us!" the disciples cried.

Jesus stood up tall and spread his arms out wide.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no trust in me?"

"Peace, be still," he called out to the wild and stormy sea.

At once the wind died down and all the waves went flat.

His friends had no idea just what to make of that!

They said to one another, "We just don't understand!

Who is this that even storms obey his strong command?"

Opening Prayer

We're going to do "the wave" for our prayer today. After every line, we'll stand up one at a time and throw our hands in the air all the way around the circle and then sit down again. Say a prayer asking God to help us in our times of need, pausing after each petition to do the wave around the circle.

God, please be with us when we're scared. Pause.

Please be with us when we're sad. Pause.

Please be with us when we're confused. Pause.

Please be with us when we're angry. Pause.

Please be with us when things aren't going well. Pause.

Please be with us no matter what storms we experience. Pause.

Remind us that you are always with us, no matter what. Pause.

Amen.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

None

Open the Bible (15 minutes)

A Storm Story

Invite kids with NRSV Bibles to each find and sit with a buddy with a Spark Story Bible. Invite the older kids to look up the story in their Spark NRSV Bibles on page 1067, and the younger kids to find A Storm on pages 286-289 of the Spark Story Bible. Older kids can help younger kids when they have found their own pages.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bible

Spark NRSV Bible

Supplies

None

Older buddies, first read the story from your Bible to your younger buddies. Allow time for this. Now, if younger buddies are readers, read the story from your Bible to your older buddy. If not, older buddies read it from the Spark Story Bible to your younger buddy. Allow time for this. Invite the older kids to place an “I Read It” sticker next to this passage.

Now work together to find the one phrase that is almost exactly the same in both Bibles. Spark NRSV Bible: “Why are you afraid . . . ?” Spark Story Bible: “Why are you so afraid?”

Why do you think the disciples were afraid? Ask at least one older kid and one younger kid to give ideas. **Why do you think Jesus was surprised about that?** Again, allow kids of different ages to give their ideas. **What did Jesus say to the disciples in the rest of this sentence in the older kids’ Bibles?** (“*you of little faith*”) **What do you think Jesus meant by that?** (*If the disciples knew who Jesus was, they would have trusted God to take care of them.*)

Bible Memory Verse

“They were amazed, saying, ‘What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?’” Matthew 8:27

Read the Bible Memory Verse out loud to the group. **Who are “they” in this Bible verse?** (*The disciples*) **Why were they amazed?** (*Because Jesus made the storm stop just by talking to it.*) Read the BMV again, then break it into short phrases and have the kids repeat it, making the phrases longer and longer until the whole verse can be repeated. Challenge kids to do it themselves for the group.

Fear and Faith

Jesus asked the disciples why they were afraid and then said they had little faith. What do you think faith is? (*Belief in God, and that God is in charge of everything and we will be okay, no matter what happens.*) **If you’re human, you have fears—they are natural and normal things. What are some things kids might be afraid of?** The dark, spiders, storms, getting lost.

Do an internet search for “Phobia Names” to find a list of the top 100 phobias in the world. When the kids come up with a fear, tell them what the technical name for it is, if it’s on the list. See if they can come up with one that isn’t on the list.

Faith helps us overcome our fears by putting our trust in God to help us. On your leaflet, in the first boat, draw a picture of yourself with something you’re afraid of. Be creative, showing your scared expression. In the second boat, draw a picture of yourself praying and having faith that Jesus has authority over your fears. If you’ve used the online phobia list, have the kids write the name of the fear they’ve chosen to illustrate. Older kids can help their younger buddies do this.

Invite kids to read and discuss the Bible Bits together.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
Pencils
Crayons
Internet device

Activate Faith (15 minutes)

Stormy Seas

A storm can mean rain and lightning and thunder, but it can also mean things happening in our lives that are scary or difficult. Can anyone give an example?

Engage kids in a discussion of things in their lives that they might see as storms. If they are having difficulty, you might suggest things like a bully at school, a friend who isn't being nice, a hard test coming up. *Tip: Be sensitive to kids in your group who might be experiencing extreme challenges such as poverty, violence, divorce, or serious illness. If you know of such things, you might want to discuss with their parents or your pastor ways to allow them to share that are safe and helpful.*

When we are experiencing storms in our lives, we have stormy seas in our hearts. What does it feel like to be scared? Help kids identify how their bodies feel when they are experiencing difficulties, such as pounding heart, fast breathing, sweating, upset stomach. **No matter what storms we are experiencing in our lives, Jesus is with us, holding us in his arms, calming the storms in our hearts.**

In the heart space on your leaflet, use small pieces of construction paper to make a collage of a strong storm. Then cut out a cross and glue it in the center to remind you that Jesus is with us in the middle of the storms of our life. Kids can cut or tear small pieces of paper to make their storms. Consider making a sample collage prior to class as an example for kids.

Ask for volunteers to read the Did You Know? items aloud. Invite kids to place a sticker or special marking next to the item they find most interesting.

Living Water Relay

Jesus calmed the storm with just his words. Jesus calms the storms in our hearts with his love. Today we're going to make wind chimes. Every time the wind blows and you hear the chimes ring, you can remember that Jesus' love and our faith can turn scary storms into beautiful music.

Prior to class time, cut yarn into 12-inch lengths, enough for each kid to have six pieces of yarn. Set out a container of items that tinkle or clink (examples include metal washers, glass beads, small tin cans, keys, small bells, spoons, etc.). Give kids each a wire hanger, a plastic needle, and six strings. Older kids can help younger kids thread the string through the needle and tie a large knot in one end of the string. Kids will string six to ten items onto each string, with knots in between them to keep them separated. Then the strings will be tied onto the hanger close enough together so they will hit each other in the wind. A dab of hot glue may need to be applied to keep the strings in place on the hanger.

Spark Resources

Leaflets
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

Glue sticks
Scissors
Construction paper (assorted colors)

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Wire coat hangers (1 per kid)
Yarn
Plastic yarn needles
A large quantity of small items that tinkle or clink
Hot glue gun (optional)

Send (5 minutes)

Closing Conversation

Remember that no matter what is going on in our lives, Jesus is with us, helping calm the storms in our hearts. Look at the Faith on the Go! part of your leaflet. Does anyone want to share one you might try this week? Encourage kids of all ages to share ideas.

Let's practice the BMV together again. Does anyone remember it? Encourage kids to try. Then break it into short phrases for the kids to repeat, putting them into longer phrases until you can say the whole thing together.

Spark Resources
Leaflets

Supplies
None

Closing Prayer

Distribute Spark Family Pages to kids and draw their attention to number 2 under Family Conversations. **We talked about this a little today in Sunday school. You can talk with your parents and the rest of your family about it at home too.**

This time, instead of making the wave, we'll practice being storms and calming down when Jesus tells us to. Everyone stand up and hold hands. Let's send waves around the circle. Make them nice, big waves, but be careful not to yank too hard on anyone's arms. Then each time I pause in the prayer, the waves should get a little bit smaller, and at the next pause, smaller, and at the next pause, smaller, until our hands are just resting down by our sides.

Dear God, sometimes we can be very scared and there are storms in our hearts.

Remind us that you love us. Pause.

Remind us that you take care of us. Pause.

Remind us that you have authority even over the wind and waves. Pause.

Help us to feel safe. Pause.

Help us to find peace. Pause.

Help us to share your peace and love with others. Amen.

As you say goodbye to kids, make sure they take home the leaflet and Family Page.

Spark Resources
Spark Family Pages

Supplies
None