

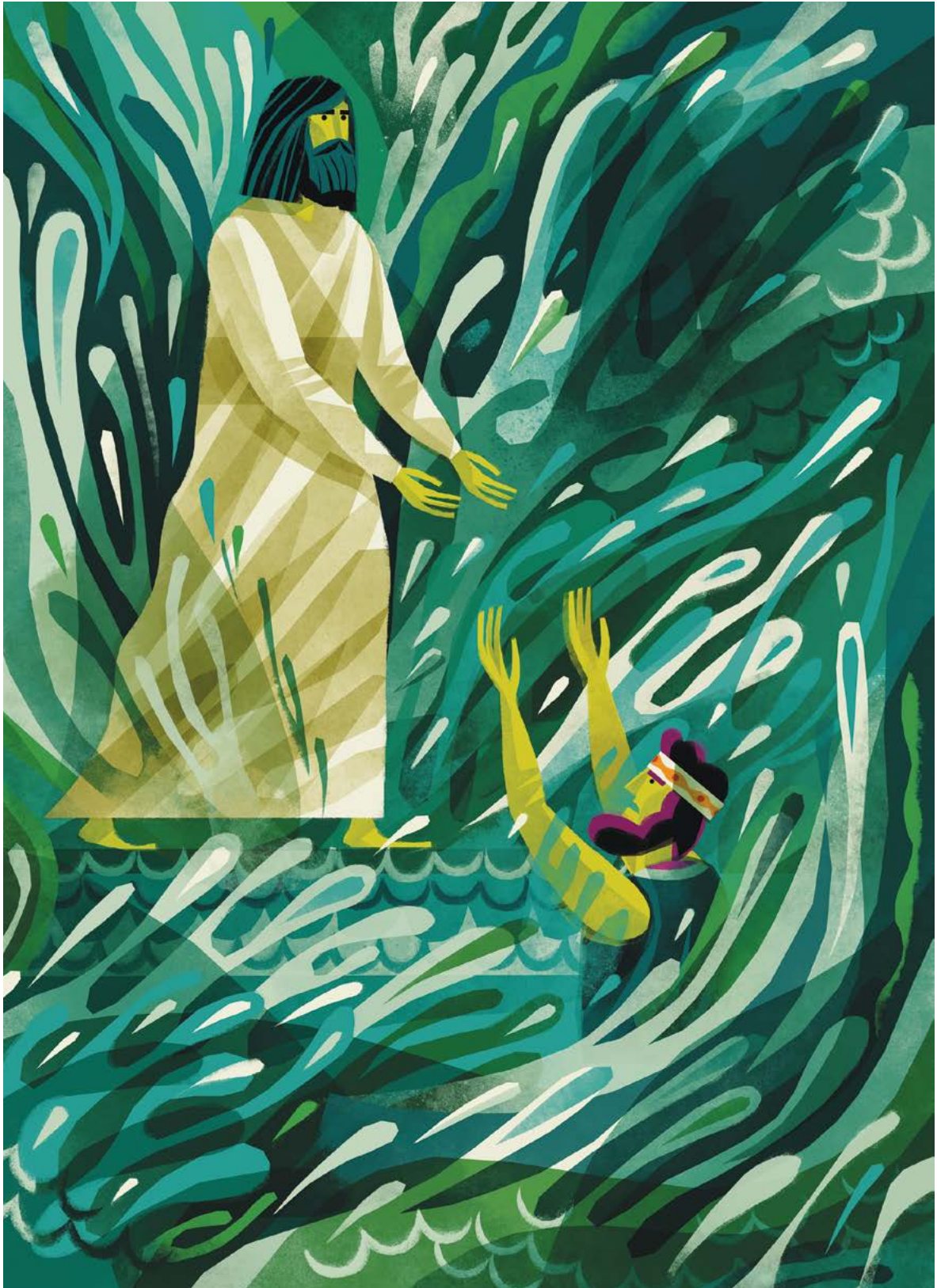
THE BIGGEST STORY CURRICULUM



May
Gospels

1st - 3rd Grade : Red Check Marks

4th - 5th Grade: Green Check Marks



STORY 67

A Walk on the Water

MATTHEW 14

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 14.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



A lot has happened since Jesus's birth. He was baptized by John the Baptist. He was tempted in the wilderness and said no, no, no to the snake's temptations. He called twelve apostles to follow him. He taught the good news of God. He healed many sick people. He drove out demons. He raised the dead. He calmed the wind and waves, saving the twelve from a deadly storm. He fed thousands of people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. A lot has happened.

Jesus needed a break. He was exhausted. He needed physical rest. He needed spiritual rest too. To find it, he told the fully fed crowds to return home. He also sent his apostles away. "Get on the boat," he instructed them, "and sail to the other side of the sea. I'll meet you there soon" (see Matt. 14:22–23). Then Jesus climbed a nearby mountain. At the top, he was finally alone. Well, not really.

His Father was there. Up on the high mountain he talked with his Father in heaven. We call that prayer—talking to our Heavenly Father. But that’s not the end of the story.

TELL THE STORY

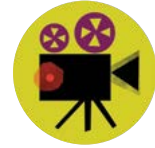
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Because Jesus is
the Son of God, he
can save us when
we cry out to him.

As Jesus was praying, the sun started to set. So he hiked down the mountain. By the time he reached the shore, the twelve were on the boat “a long way from the land” (Matt. 14:24), and it was dark. Why was it taking them so long to reach the other shore? Another terrible storm! The boat was being “beaten by the waves,” and “the wind was against them” (14:24). Because of the wild winds, they couldn’t use the sail. It would be too dangerous. So they rowed and rowed with all their might. But it was useless. They were in big trouble! Just then, Jesus saw them. Wait, how could he see them? “They had rowed about three or four miles” out (John 6:19). That’s a long way to see, even if the moon was fully lit. That’s not the only odd detail of this story. Guess what Jesus did next? He walked on the water! Yes, that’s what the Bible says: “He came to them, walking on the sea” (Matt. 14:25). With wave-parting, wind-ceasing, superhuman speed, Jesus was defying gravity. Incredible!

When the frightened disciples saw him, they screamed, “It’s a ghost!” Who could blame them for being so scared? And who could blame them for thinking it was a ghost since only a spirit could glide across the waters? But Jesus was not a ghost. He yelled to them, “It’s really me! Don’t be afraid.” Peter cried out, “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water” (14:28). So Jesus invited him. Peter got out of the boat, and (this is the oddest part) he started to



Story

67

Matthew

14

walk on water. Just like Jesus! But suddenly, he took his eyes off Jesus, saw the fierce wind, got really scared again, and started to sink. He cried out, “Lord, save me” (14:30). Jesus wasted no time. He reached out, grabbed him, and brought him onto the boat. He saved him. While Jesus was saving him, he also taught Peter that he can trust him no matter what. For all of us, trusting Jesus is the smartest and safest thing to do. “Peter, why did you doubt? You should have kept on believing” (see 14:31). What a good lesson for us to learn too: keep on believing—even when you see the big waves.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

The story didn’t end with the call to believe. When Jesus and Peter got back in the boat, suddenly the wind stopped and the waves calmed down. The twelve must have looked at each other in amazement. This time Jesus didn’t say, “Peace, be still,” but they knew he stilled the sea. They also just saw him walk on water! They knew Jesus was no ordinary man. So, one after the other (or maybe all at the same time), they fell at his feet and confessed, “You really are the Son of God” (see Matt. 14:33).

This confession is also what the Roman soldiers who crucified Jesus said after Jesus died (27:54). And it’s the confession we will make too when we see Jesus clearly! Jesus showed that he was God’s Son and our Savior in many ways. He multiplied bread and fish to feed over five thousand people. He healed every sickness imaginable. He raised the dead. And he walked on water and calmed storms. But his greatest demonstration of power was actually the one the Roman soldiers saw when he died on the cross. That showed God’s power because it’s the way God saved us from our sins. Jesus’s death was unlike any other. He died in our place. Let’s fall down before him and trust him completely, even when the waves seem big. He’s strong enough to save us. Truly he is the Son of God!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What are some miracles we’ve seen Jesus do? What did Jesus do in our story today that is amazing?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is no ordinary man.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
Truly you are the
Son of God.

MATTHEW 14:33

2. **QUESTION:** When Jesus was walking on the waves, were they still or choppy? How did the disciples feel when they saw him? What did Jesus say to them?

TAKEAWAY: If Jesus is with us, we don't need to fear—even when things are scary.

3. **QUESTION:** Why did Peter begin to sink when he was walking on the water? What did Peter cry out as he sank? And what did Jesus do? Will Jesus ever turn us away when we come to him for help and salvation?

TAKEAWAY: Even when we doubt God's promises and are afraid, if we cry out to Jesus, he will save us.

4. **QUESTION:** How did the disciples know Jesus is the Son of God? Then how did they respond to him? How should we?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Son of God; let's fall down and worship him.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Keep Your Eyes on Jesus

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Have children line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, the children move forward. When the leader holds up the red sign, the children freeze. Any child who does not immediately freeze must return to the start. The first child to reach the leader wins. Remind children that when Peter kept his eyes on Jesus, he did not sink into the waters.

Option 2: Sink or Swim

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)



Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Sink or Swim

Supply List: green paper, red paper, glue, craft stick, plastic toy hoops (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a Go and Stop sign by attaching green paper to one side of a craft stick and red paper to the other side.

Divide children into teams of four. Give each team a hoop, and instruct them to hold it by having each team member use one finger. Have teams line up on one side of the room, facing a leader at the opposite end. When the leader holds up the green sign, each team moves forward holding their hoop. When the leader holds up the red sign, each team must drop the hoop and stand inside it. The last team to stand inside their hoop must return to the start. The first team to reach the leader wins. Remind children that Peter did not sink into the waters when he kept his eyes on Jesus.

Option 2: Captain's Orders

Supply List: none

Tell children the room is a ship and they must follow the captain's orders. If the captain shouts "Bow," the children run to the front wall. If "Stern," they run to the back wall. If "Port," they run to the left wall. If "Starboard," they run to the right wall. If the captain shouts "Hit the deck," the children drop to the floor. The last child to the correct wall (or floor) is out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children the disciples were on a boat when Jesus came to them by walking on water.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Eyes on Jesus Binoculars

Supply List: toilet paper rolls (two per child), scissors, yarn, markers, stickers, stapler

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut yarn into 18-inch lengths (one per child). Make sample craft.

Give each child two toilet paper rolls and a piece of yarn. Put remaining supplies on tables. Have children decorate the toilet paper rolls and then staple the rolls together to form binoculars. Staple yarn to the sides so they can hang around the child's neck. Remind children to keep their eyes on Jesus.

Option 2: Waves of Life

Supply List: paper, scissors, blue construction paper, glue sticks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out Matthew 14:27, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid" (one per child). Cut ½" x 9" strips of blue construction paper. Make a sample craft.

Give children the verse and a full-sized piece of blue construction paper. Set paper strips and glue sticks on tables. On the full-sized paper, have children make waves by gluing down both ends of a strip to form a long arch. Next have children glue down the arch in one or two places to form waves. Have children add strips until the page is covered with waves. Glue the verse in the middle of the waves. Remind children that Jesus came to the disciples by walking on water in the middle of a storm.





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Option 2: Walk with Jesus

Supply List: bowls, blue paint, marbles, white cardstock, boxes, spoons, construction paper, markers, scissors, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Put paint in bowls and add marbles. Make a sample craft.

Have children take turns putting a piece of white cardstock in a box and then using a spoon to add some marbles. The first child shakes the box to spread paint around the cardstock to resemble waves. He then removes his paper when complete. Return the marbles to the bowls for the next child. Set markers, scissors, glue, and construction paper on tables. Have children trace their footprint onto construction paper, cut it out, and write “I will walk with Jesus” on it. Have children glue the footprint to the marble-painted paper. Remind children that Peter had faith to step out of the boat and walk to Jesus.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 68

A Dogged Faith

MARK 7

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Mark 7.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



Do you know what the word *circumlocution* means? What about *epistolary*? Could you define *idiosyncratic*? Likely not! Part of growing up means learning lots of new words and what they mean. As we work through the Biggest Story, we have been learning lots of new words and ideas, along with lots of names—like Saul and Samson, Zechariah and Zelophehad. Those are some of the people you might now know from the Biggest Story. How about words? What new words have you learned? *Exodus*. *Covenant*. *Prophecy*. *Scapegoat*. *Repent*. *Idolatry*. *Parable*. Those might be a few. Today's lesson will focus on two important words: *Jew* and *Gentile*. Can you say those words? The Jews were the children of Abraham and the people of King David. They had the Scriptures, filled with all God's promises.

The Gentiles were everyone else—those who weren't Jews. What could Jews and Gentiles have to do with our story? Let's listen and find out!

TELL THE STORY

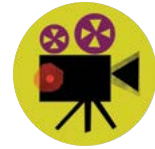
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus saves
anyone who
believes in him.

Up until this point, Jesus has spent all his time in the promised land, teaching and healing the Jews. One day, Jesus decided to go on a long journey “to the region of Tyre and Sidon” (Mark 7:24). That might not seem like a big deal to us, but it was back then. Tyre and Sidon were outside the promised land and *Gentiles* lived there. Even worse, these cities had a bad reputation. In the Old Testament these cities are where God’s enemies—the Canaanites—lived. So, what is Jesus doing in enemy territory?

Let’s keep listening. When he got to that region he slipped into a house. He “did not want anyone to know” where he was (7:24). But that didn’t last long. When word got out that Jesus was in town, a *Gentile* woman knocked on the door. She was a mother whose little girl was possessed by a demon. How horrible! She needed help.

She “fell down at [Jesus’s] feet . . . and begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter” (7:25–26). Usually, Jesus heals people as soon as they ask. This time he did something strange. He replied to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs” (7:27). What did he mean? He was telling her that he first came to provide healing for the Jews (“children”) not the Gentiles (“dogs”). Ouch! But Jesus didn’t say this to be mean and to call her names. He was testing her, because she had something special that he wanted everyone to see. “Yes, Lord,” she said, “I see your point.



Story

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Mark

7

But even the dogs under the table get to eat the crumbs that fall” (see 7:28). That was her way of saying, “I may be a Gentile, but I trust you will have mercy on me too.” Wow! What a *dogged* faith! She passed the test and showed all of us what true faith is. Jesus loves such faith. He declared, “O woman, your faith is great!” (see Matt. 15:28). And then, at that very moment, the demon left her daughter.

Jesus has come to love and save both Jews and Gentiles. He doesn’t save us because of how worthy we are; he saves us when we realize we are low and needy. This Gentile woman knew that. And she was the one Jesus used to show us what great faith looks like.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

If someone asked you what the gospel is, what would you say? Here are three options: you might focus on (1) *who* Jesus is (the Son of God who the Father sent into the world), (2) *what Jesus did* (he lived, died, and rose again), or (3) *what we receive* if we believe in Jesus (the forgiveness of sins and eternal life). When the Bible talks about the gospel in Romans 1, it talks about those three things—*who* Jesus is (“the Son of God” and “our Lord,” 1:4), *what he has done* (“resurrection from the dead,” 1:4), and *what we receive* if we believe (“salvation,” 1:16). But it also adds something else, a fourth important part of the gospel. It talks about *who* the gospel is for. The wonderful answer is “everyone” (1:16)! The good news about Jesus is for “all the nations” (1:5). So, whether we are Jews or Gentiles, like this Gentile woman we can come to Jesus, bow before him, and receive mercy.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What do you think the two words are that our story focused on? What are some things we know about the Jews? Even though they were God’s people, did they still sin? What about Gentiles? What did both Jews and Gentiles need?

TAKEAWAY: Both Jews and Gentiles are sinners who need forgiveness and faith.

3

Engage

Memory Verse
Everyone who
calls on the name
of the Lord will
be saved.

ROMANS 10:13

2. **QUESTION:** What was wrong with the woman's daughter? How do you think this mother felt? Whom did she go to for help? What are some times we might go to Jesus for help?

TAKEAWAY: We should go to Jesus for help.

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus tested the woman and said he came to heal the Jews and not the Gentiles, how did she respond? Did this Gentile woman believe he came to save and heal Gentiles too? Was she right?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus saves everyone who believes in him.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Dragon Tag

Supply List: streamers (one per team), tape

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into teams of four. Have each team form a single file line, and have children hold onto the shoulders of the person in front of them. Attach a streamer to the back of the last person in each line. On “Go” teams run together to try to pull the “tail” (streamer) off other teams while avoiding getting their tail pulled by other teams. If a team's tail is pulled, or if a team breaks apart, they are out. Continue play until one team remains. Remind children that, in Christ, Jews and Gentiles are no longer enemies but family.

Option 2: Jew, Gentile, Jesus!

Supply List: masking tape

Before Class: With masking tape make a line that gives ample space for all children to stand.



Have children stand on the line facing the same direction. Explain that if the leader calls out “Jew,” they jump to the right of the line. If “Gentile” is called, they jump to the left. And if “Jesus” is called, they jump onto the line. If a child jumps incorrectly, she is out. Have a leader randomly call out “Jew,” “Gentile,” or “Jesus” until one child remains. Remind children that Jesus came for everyone and that we should run to him in faith.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Jews and Gentiles

Supply List: two plastic toy hoops, balls (five balls of the same color for each team)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Divide the room in half and set a hoop on the far end of each side. Put five balls of the same color in each hoop (e.g., five red on one side, five blue on the other side).

Divide children into two teams, the “Jews” and the “Gentiles,” and assign each team to one side. On “Go” teams try to steal balls from the other side and place them inside their own hoop without being tagged by the opposing team. Any child who is tagged is out and must return any balls in his possession to the opposing team’s hoop. Once a ball has been successfully stolen, it cannot be stolen back. The first team to steal all the opposing teams’ balls and place them inside their team’s hoop wins. Remind children that even though Jews and Gentiles were divided, Jesus came to save them both.

Option 2: Oh Crackers!

Supply List: crackers

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Give each of the children a cracker, and have them place it on their heads. When the music plays, the children must walk around the room while balancing the cracker on their heads. If the music is slow, they must walk slowly. If the music is fast, they must walk quickly. If the music stops, they must freeze. If the cracker falls off a child’s head, he is out. Play continues until one child remains. Remind children that the Gentile woman begged for crumbs from Jesus’s table and had great faith.



Story

68

Mark

7

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: For Everyone!

Supply List: paper, scissors, watercolor paint, paintbrushes, cups, water, construction paper, crayons, glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a simple outline of the world about 8 inches in diameter. Make a sample craft. Put water in cups.

Give each child a world paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the world and then paint the land (continents) green and the water (seas/oceans) blue. Children then write “Jesus came for everyone!” on a piece of construction paper and glue the painted world to the construction paper.

Option 2: Dog Mask

Supply List: paper plates, scissors, craft sticks, pom-poms, glue, construction paper, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut paper plates in half (one half per child). Cut two eye holes in each half-plate toward the top of the curved edge. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a half plate. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children attach a craft stick to the left side of their plate. They then design and cut out dog ears from the construction paper. Have them glue the ears to the sides of the plate and glue on a pom-pom to make a nose. They can add spots or colors to the mask as desired. Remind children that Jesus used an illustration of dogs and bread to talk with a Gentile woman about saving faith.



Option 1: “For God So Loved the World” Magnet

Supply List: cardstock, red paper, scissors, blue and green markers, glue, magnets

Before Class: Gather supplies. On white cardstock make copies of 8-inch-diameter circles. On red paper make copies of a heart (that will fit in the circle) with John 3:16 typed inside it. Make a sample craft. Put blue and green markers on table.

Give each child one circle and one heart paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the circle and heart. They then color the circle until it resembles a globe. Next, the children glue the heart to the center of the globe and attach a magnet to the back.

Option 2: Faith Acrostic

Supply List: paper, markers or colored pencils, stickers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a piece of paper. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children write FAITH vertically in large letters on the left-hand side of their paper. As a group, brainstorm words that describe Jesus, using the letters from FAITH. Have each child choose the words she likes best and write them next to the corresponding letter on her paper. Children then decorate their acrostic using provided materials. Remind children that the Gentile woman had great faith in Jesus and in his power to heal her daughter.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 69

Confessing Christ

MATTHEW 16

BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Matthew 16.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

The Bible is filled with questions: "Did God really say?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Are you the king of the Jews?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But it's not just the Bible that's filled with questions, life is as well: Do you want fries with that? Is your room cleaned? What is your favorite show? Why did you do that? What color are your eyes? Where is the farthest place you have traveled? Where do babies come from? Do you like video games? Do you feel sad? Does God love us? So many questions!

That last question is a very important one, isn't it? In today's lesson, we hear another important question: Who is Jesus? How would you answer that question right now? Was Jesus just a great teacher, a good man, an amazing

miracle-worker, or another God-sent servant like Abraham, Moses, and David? Or was he something (someone!) more? Let's find out the right answer.

TELL THE STORY

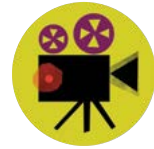
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook



Play *The*
Biggest Story
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus is the
Christ, who came
to suffer, die, and
rise again.

One day Jesus and his disciples traveled to a place with a *big* name: Caesarea Philippi. It was a *big* name because it was named after some important people: the Roman Emperor (Caesar) and the Jewish ruler of that region (Herod Philip). But its importance didn't stop there. It had not one but two temples. One was the Temple of Augustus built to honor a Roman Emperor. The other was a temple to the Greek god, Pan. Not Peter Pan, just Pan—the god of the goats. Yep, the god of the goats! Anyway, it was in this *big* place—a place filled with worship of the wrong rulers and dead idols—that Jesus asked his disciples a *big* question: Who is Jesus?

First, he asked, “Who do *people* think I am?” The disciples replied: “Some people say you are John the Baptist risen from the dead. Others think you are the prophet Elijah who has returned. We’ve also heard people say that you are another prophet like Jeremiah or Isaiah” (see Matt. 16:13–14). Then Jesus asked a second question, “But who do *you*—my close followers—say that I am?” (see 16:15). Peter, who was like that kid in class who always raises his hand first, answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). A great answer; the right answer! But there was one important element Peter was missing.

He understood Jesus was the Christ, but he didn't yet understand what Jesus came to do. He thought the Christ (the long-awaited King) would rule like most earthly kings ruled—with power and might. The farthest thing from his mind



Story

69

Matthew

16

was that the Christ would be killed on a cross. But that's precisely what Jesus told him was about to happen. "I must go to Jerusalem," Jesus said, "to suffer and die" (see 16:21). Peter didn't like this direction one bit. "No!" he rebuked Jesus. "This shall never happen to you" (16:22). Peter was upset. But Jesus was more upset. He was sad Peter's mind was so far removed from the mind of God. Peter's plan was that the Christ would rule in power now, without any suffering and death. God's plan was that his Son would rule in power *through* his sufferings, death, and then resurrection. It's good to know that Jesus is the Christ. It's better to know how this Christ would rescue his people.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

A lot of questions we ask are not life or death questions. Your answer to the question of your favorite ice cream flavor doesn't determine if you'll live forever. But there is a question that does—Jesus's question: "Who do you say I am?"

The gospel clearly teaches that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the always-existing Son of God. We need to know *who* Jesus is, just like Peter did. But we also need to know *what* he came to do. Did he come to rule as earthly kings ruled? No. Jesus came to suffer and die; Jesus also came to rise from the dead. And through his suffering, death, and resurrection he took the penalty we deserve and brought the kingdom of heaven down to earth. First comes the cross, then comes the crown. If we trust in Jesus—that he came for us, suffered and died for us, and rose from the dead for us—we will live forever in his perfect kingdom.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. **QUESTION:** What were some questions you were asked before you came to church today? What's the most important question in our story? What was Peter's answer to that question? Why is that the most important question?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2. **QUESTION:** What did people think the Messiah would be like? How was Jesus different than they expected? What do you think you would have ex-

3

Engage

pected the Messiah to be like? Why is God's plan of Jesus's coming to suffer and die better?

TAKEAWAY: God's ways are better than our ways.

Memory Verse

You are the
Christ, the Son of
the living God.

MATTHEW 16:16

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus told his disciples he would suffer and die, what did Peter do? Jesus rebuked Peter because he knew Satan was tempting him to skip the suffering and go straight to ruling as king. What would have happened if Jesus had decided to skip the suffering and death on a cross? Who would pay for our sins?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus came to suffer, die, and rise again for sinners.

4. **QUESTION:** What are some ways that Satan might tempt you to take the easy path? Jesus resisted Satan and took the hard path to the cross. If Jesus suffered, do you think we will too? What will we receive if we follow Jesus even if it involves suffering or death?

TAKEAWAY: Following Jesus often means suffering before blessing—the cross before the crown.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Charades

Supply List: none



Select a child to act out a person or thing of choice (e.g., firefighter, doctor, elephant). The child has thirty seconds to act it out while the remaining children guess who or what it is. Whoever guesses correctly has the option to either be the next person to act or to choose which student goes next. Remind children that we don't have to guess who Jesus is—God's word tells us.



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Option 2: Rock Stacking Relay

Supply List: tables, bowls, rocks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set up tables on the far end of the room and place a bowl with five smooth, flat stones on each table (one table per team).

Divide children into teams, and have each team line up single file. On “Go” the first child runs to his team’s table and stacks the five rocks on top of one another. The rocks must stay stacked for three seconds. If the rocks fall, the child must try again. The child then puts the rocks back in the bowl and runs back to tag the next person in line, who repeats the process. The first team to have all team members finish wins. Remind children that though following Jesus can be hard and slow it still is the way to go.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Rock, Paper, Scissors

Supply List: masking tape

Before Class: Using masking tape, divide the room in half and mark a safe zone on each side.

Divide children into two teams. Teams will play “Rock, Paper, Scissors” using their bodies. For “rock,” children cross arms on their chest with closed fists on opposite shoulders. For “paper,” children put arms straight up in the air with palms flat. For “scissors,” children put arms out in front, crossed at the wrists. Have each team meet briefly to decide if they will be rock, paper, or scissors. Then have the teams line up facing each other on either side of the masking tape. When a leader says, “Rock, Paper, Scissors, Show,” both teams must show their choice. Rock beats scissors, paper beats rock, and scissors beats paper. The team that loses must run to their safe zone before being tagged by someone from the other team. If tagged, the child joins the opposing team for the next round. Play continues until one team is eliminated. Remind children that Jesus defeated Satan every time he was tempted by him.

Option 2: Never Have I Ever

Supply List: none

Have children sit in a circle and hold up five fingers. Ask children to think of something they have never done that most people have done. Then pick a child to start, who will say, “Never have I ever . . .” (been on an airplane, gone on a roller coaster, gone fishing, etc.). Everyone who *has* done the named thing must put down one of his or her fingers. Continue around the circle with children taking turns making “Never have I ever” statements. Once a child has put all five fingers down, he is out. The last person remaining wins. Remind children that Jesus did something no one else has ever done when he lived a perfect life and died on the cross for our sins.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

Option 2: Name Rocks

Supply List: large, flat, smooth rocks (one per child); permanent markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.



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Set supplies on tables. Each child chooses a rock, draws a cross on it, and writes his or her name under it. On the other side have children draw a crown with Jesus's name under it. Then they can decorate their rocks. Remind children that when we follow Jesus, the cross comes before the crown.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

Option 2: Known and Loved

Supply List: paper, colored pencils, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Children should write their name in large block or bubble letters in the center of a piece of paper and then decorate their names. Next, children can walk around the room and write one word to describe the child whose name is on each paper. Encourage children to write kind, descriptive words with creative lettering.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



STORY 70

Glory Mountain

MATTHEW 17

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 17.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1

Read

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

In the Biggest Story some big things happen on mountains. Do you remember what happened to Noah's Ark? After many days, "the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat" (Gen. 8:4). From there God told Noah to bring his family and all the animals off the ark. Do you remember what happened to Abraham when he took Isaac to Mount Moriah? God stopped Abraham from sacrificing his son, and God provided a ram in Isaac's place. Do you remember what happened to Moses on Mount Sinai? He received the Ten Commandments. Do you remember what happened on Mount Carmel? God sent down fire from heaven to consume Elijah's sacrifice. There are other important mountains in the Bible, like Mount Zion (where Jerusalem sits), and Mount Eremos, where Jesus is believed to have preached the Sermon on the Mount. Today's story takes place

on another mountain. It's officially called Mount Tabor, but we'll call it Glory Mountain because of something glorious that happened there. Before I tell you the story, I'll give you one hint. It involves a strange word: *transfigured*. Not *transformed*. Not *Transylvania*. *Transfigured*.

TELL THE STORY

Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the
Bible passage
together



Read from
*The Biggest Story
Bible Storybook*



Play *The
Biggest Story*
video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus is the
glorious Son
of God, who is
perfectly holy.

Have you ever climbed a big hill? How did you feel when you reached the top? Were you out of breath? One day Jesus took Peter, James, and John on a long hike up a high mountain. We don't know if they were out of breath when they reached the top, but we do know that they saw something awesome. Jesus was *transfigured*! That word means he was changed. But he wasn't transformed from a robot into a semitruck or a caterpillar into a butterfly. Jesus wasn't transformed into another thing. He stayed human; he just showed himself to be who he really was. Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in all his glory. He was human but he was more than just human. "He was transfigured," Matthew writes, "and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light" (Matt. 17:2). Talk about a light show! This was a light show that *showed* Jesus is as pure and glorious as God. The transfiguration showed that Jesus is God's very own Son.

But the light show wasn't over. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, Moses and Elijah appeared and started talking with Jesus. But they didn't look normal either. They also "appeared in glory" (Luke 9:31). Peter and his two friends were seeing a glimpse of what Jesus's forever kingdom would look like. And Peter liked it. Remember, he wanted Jesus to get the crown without the cross. So,



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in a moment of confusion, he said, “This is great. I’ll set up a tent for each of you. We can make this last for a while” (see Matt. 17:4). But that was the wrong thing to say. Jesus had just told him how there could be no crown without the cross. No Glory Mountain without Mount Calvary. Peter needed to listen to Jesus. And that’s what led to the third glorious moment. Right after Peter spoke, a thick cloud rolled in. A talking cloud! God the Father himself was speaking. And here’s what he told Peter, James, and John: “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him” (Matt. 17:5). The disciples fell on their faces in fear. Jesus “touched them” and said, “Do not be afraid” (see Matt 17:7). When the disciples looked up, everything was back to normal. The “glory” was gone. And Jesus continued his trek to Mount Calvary.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

Last lesson we looked at the right answer to Jesus’s all-important question, “Who do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:15), and we learned that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of the living God. Here, on Glory Mountain, what else do we learn about Jesus? We learn that he is the *glorious* Son of God, who—like God the Father and Spirit—is perfectly holy (like the brightest light in the universe). That’s who Jesus is.

Now think about this. It would be surprising if a good man died for our sins. It would be amazing if a very important person—like a king or queen—would take the punishment that we deserve. It, then, is truly astounding that Jesus—the King of glory—should lay down his life for us and die in our place. Peter, James, and John were confused, afraid, and surely stunned on the day Jesus took them atop the mountain. And while we should be amazed, we should not be fearful because we can take comfort in knowing Jesus died for us on Mount Calvary, a hill outside Jerusalem. He showed his glory to us by dying and rising again. What a glorious King!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What important things happened on mountains in the Bible? Whom does Jesus bring on the mountain to learn more about who he is?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: God uses mountains in the Bible to teach important things about himself.

2. **QUESTION:** What did prophets do? Who were the two greatest prophets in the Old Testament? Why do you think they appeared with Jesus on the mountain? Who was the only prophet left after God spoke?

TAKEAWAY: Although Moses and Elijah were great prophets, Jesus is greater because he speaks as God's Son.

3. **QUESTION:** What did God say about Jesus on the mountain? And what did he tell the disciples to do? How do we obey God's command today?

TAKEAWAY: God commanded his people to listen to Jesus.

4. **QUESTION:** What happened to Jesus on the mountain? What was the disciples' response? How do you think you would have responded? Why do you think Jesus wanted his disciples to see him transfigured?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus showed his glory at the transfiguration.

Memory Verse

For the LORD

is a great God,
and a great King
above all gods.

In his hand are
the depths of the
earth; the heights
of the mountains
are his also.

PSALM 95:3-4

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10-15 minutes}

K-2nd

Option 1: Caterpillar Race

Supply List: none

Divide children into groups of five or six. Each team chooses a team name and then forms a "caterpillar" by standing in a single file line and placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front of them. On "Go" the first person in each line takes one step forward. The second person then takes one step and so on until every team member has taken one step. After taking her step, the last person in line yells out the team's name. The first person can then take another step. This process repeats until one team reaches a designated finish line. If a team breaks apart or steps out of turn, they must return to the start and begin again. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butter-

flies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

Option 2: On the Mountaintop

Supply List: none

Have children lie on their backs. When the leader says, "Jesus went up on the mountain," children must jump up to a standing position. The last child to stand is out. Have the leader also yell out silly statements like "Jesus went up on the monkey" or "on the Mickey Mouse." Any child who starts to stand for one of the silly statements is also out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children that when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in his glory, they fell on their faces in fear. Jesus told them, "Get up, don't be afraid."

3rd–5th

Option 1: On the Mountaintop

Supply List: none

Have children lie on their backs. When the leader says, "Jesus went up on the mountain," children must jump up to a standing position. The last child to stand is out. Have the leader also yell out silly statements like "Jesus went up on the monkey" or "on the Mickey Mouse." Any child who starts to stand for one of the silly statements is also out. The last child remaining wins. Remind children that when Peter, James, and John saw Jesus in his glory, they fell on their faces in fear. Jesus told them, "Get up, don't be afraid."

Option 2: Crazy Caterpillar

Supply List: plastic toy hoops

Before Class: Set an odd number of hoops around the room.

Divide children into two teams. Have each team form a "caterpillar" by lining up shoulder-to-shoulder and holding hands. On "Go" each team runs to a plastic toy hoop with hands joined. The first person picks up the hoop with her free hand and puts it over her head. The team must then work together to move the hoop down the line without letting go of each other's hands. When the hoop gets to the last person, he holds the hoop and yells "Butterfly!" Teams continue to collect hoops until they are all collected. If hands separate at any point, the



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team must start over with the hoop they are working on. The team that collects the most hoops wins. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Handprint Butterflie

Supply List: scissors, pencils, construction paper, glue, large craft sticks, permanent markers, googly eyes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Have children use a pencil to trace their hands onto construction paper (with help, if needed). Children then cut out the hands and glue them to a craft stick so the palms overlap and the fingers point outward like wings. Have children add googly eyes to the craft stick and draw in a mouth with permanent markers. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

Option 2: Egg Carton Caterpillars

Supply List: cardboard egg cartons, pipe cleaners, plastic tablecloths, tempera paints, paper plates, paintbrushes, cups of water, glue, googly eyes

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut egg cartons into three-egg strips (one per child). Poke two holes at the top of the strips. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Cover tables with plastic tablecloths. Make a sample craft.

Give each child an egg cup strip. Set supplies on tables, with paints on paper plates. Have children flip their strip so the outside of the carton is facing up. Children then insert the pipe cleaners into the premade holes and bend them



to make antennae. Have them glue googly eyes under the antennae and then paint their caterpillars. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Glory Mountain

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, yarn (white, gray, brown, yellow, and orange), glue

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a simple mountain scene: a large triangle-shaped mountain, a circle for a sun, and the Memory Verse (one per child). Cut random lengths of yarn. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a mountain scene. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children glue white, gray, and brown yarn pieces to fill in their mountains, and yellow and orange yarn pieces to fill in their suns.

Option 2: Coffee Filter Butterfl

Supply List: coffee filters, clothespins, watercolor paints, cups of water, paintbrushes, tiny googly eyes, glue, pipe cleaners

Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pipe cleaners in half. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a coffee filter and clothespin. Set remaining supplies on tables. Have children fold their coffee filter in a tight accordion fold and secure in the middle with a clothespin. Have them use paintbrushes to drip different colors of paint onto their coffee filter until it is completely covered. They then carefully open and fan out the two sides of the coffee filter, keeping the clothespin in place. Next, the children can glue two googly eyes to the clothespin, bend a pipe cleaner, and glue it above the eyes to make antennae. Tell children that when caterpillars transform into butterflies, it can remind us that an even greater transformation occurred at Jesus's transfiguration.



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