

Jesus Helps Us Always



Background Focus

The brains of second graders are still developing, and so their interpretation of events is often very literal. This lesson bridges the gap between a literal and a metaphorical understanding of an event. Understanding the storm at sea metaphorically, we can help the children understand that Jesus is with them during their own stormy times.

We may not realize how often we speak in metaphors. Accepting a drink, we say, “Thanks. That hits the spot.” (What spot? Where?) Speaking of an obstacle we have encountered, perhaps a difficulty with another person that was resolved, we say, “She gave me a run for my money.” (This metaphor comes from horse racing.)

In today’s lesson, with its scriptural account of Jesus calming the sea, we see Jesus actually quieting the Sea of Galilee—but this is also a metaphor for his presence and help with us always, especially in times of trouble, and especially in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Go (10 minutes)

Opening Prayer

- Invite the children to turn to page 1 in their chapter 7 activity booklets and locate the prayer on the page.
- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, “Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God.” Allow about 10 seconds of silence.
- Read the prayer together, then invite all of the children to say, “Amen.” Close with another Sign of the Cross. Have the children put their activity booklets away for now.

Chapter 7




Featured Story

Jesus Helps Us in Times of Trouble (Matthew 8:23–27)

Lesson Goals

- to recognize Jesus as the Son of God who is with us in times of trouble
- to define ourselves as disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- to explain that our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution

Lesson at a Glance

-  **Go** (10 minutes)
 - Opening Prayer
 - Engage Activity
-  **Seek** (30 minutes)
 - Featured Story
 - Core Learning Activity
-  **Find** (20 minutes)
 - God’s Treasure of Forgiveness
 - Lesson Wrap-Up
 - Closing Prayer

Materials Needed

- *The Catholic Children’s Bible* and chapter 7 activity booklet
- a plastic tub of water; at least three plastic boats; a towel
- a piece of newspaper for each child, tape
- materials for any of the optional activities you choose

Music Suggestions

- “Help Me, Jesus (Hebrews 13:6b),” by Jay Stocker (Group Publishing, Inc.)
- “Just Give Me Jesus/’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus,” by New Life Worship Kids (Integrity Music)

Engage Activity

- Place the pan or tub of water on a desk, preferably on top of a plastic tablecloth.
- Invite each child (or three volunteers) to place a boat in the water. Ask the children to share what they think would happen if a storm came up and the wind blew hard. (*The boats would be in danger. They might sink.*)
- Ask a volunteer to make waves in the tub with their hands and sink the boats. If possible, take turns and offer several volunteers this opportunity.
- Explain that something similar happened to Jesus and his followers. Tell the children that a storm came up on the sea, but Jesus saved them!

Seek (30 minutes)

Featured Story

- Invite the children to find Matthew 8:23–27 in *The Catholic Children's Bible* (page 1466).
- Direct them to turn to the Featured Story on page 1468 and place an "I found it!" sticker on the page. Tell them that the words between the leaves on the page are a shortened version of the Scripture verses on page 1466.
- Ask the children to look at the artwork on pages 1468–1469. Invite them to describe what they see in the artwork.
- Read the title of the Featured Story and then point to the vocabulary words at the bottom of the page. Ask a volunteer to read each word, and another volunteer to read the definition.
- Introduce the Bible story to the children by explaining that many of the disciples were fishermen. Include the following information:
 - The disciples fished on the Sea of Galilee, which is a large body of water in Israel.
 - Sometimes Jesus and the disciples used a boat to travel from one side of the sea to the other. And sometimes there were storms on the sea.
- Read the Bible story to the children. Then ask the children several questions to check for comprehension, such as these:
 - What happened while Jesus and the disciples were crossing the sea in the boat? (*a storm came up*)
 - What was Jesus doing? (*He was asleep.*)
 - What did the disciples do? (*They woke up Jesus.*)
 - What did they ask Jesus? (*to save them*)
 - What did Jesus do? (*He ordered the winds and the waves to stop.*)
 - How did the disciples feel? (*They were amazed. They wondered who Jesus was.*)
- Conclude by reminding the children that we know who Jesus is: Jesus is the Son of God!
- Have the children turn to page 2 in the activity booklet and complete the activity. *Answers: 1. b, 2. c, 3. b, 4. b, 5. c, 6. c, 7. c*

Understand It!

- Read Understand It! on page 1469 to the children, and then invite them to summarize what they just heard, asking them key questions about the reading to check for comprehension.
- Review these key points with them:
 - Jesus is with us, not only in the good things of life but also in the storms.
 - When the disciples are in a storm, they wake Jesus and ask for help.
 - Jesus wants us to have faith and trust in him.
- Expand upon these points as follows:
 - Sometimes we are in storms. These storms can be outside of us or inside of us.
 - A storm is anytime we need help. A "storm" is not only a thunderstorm or a hurricane. A hard time in our lives is called a "stormy time."
 - Jesus is more powerful than any storm, because Jesus is God.
 - Jesus is our friend, who is with us in any trouble. He is especially with us when we confess our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Live It!

- Invite a volunteer to read Live It! on page 1469, or read it aloud to the group.
- Ask the children how they might feel if they were out in their boats and a storm came up. Assure them that it is normal to be frightened sometimes. Remind them that Jesus is with them.

Tell It!

- Ask the children to look at the images in Tell It! on page 1469.
- Direct the children's attention to the third frame. Ask the children to read what Jesus says to the storm. (*"Be still."*) Ask the children why Jesus could stop the storm. (*Because Jesus is God.*)
- Invite the children to find a partner and use the images to retell the Bible reading as best they can.
- Have the children use some of the smaller stickers to mark parts of the Featured Story pages that capture their interest. Remind them to save enough stickers to use on the remaining chapter.

Core Learning Activity

Sailing with Jesus

- Explain that Jesus is the Son of God, and each one of us is a **disciple**. Remind the children that a disciple is a close follower of Jesus. Today we are going to take an imaginary boat ride with Jesus, and we will make sailor hats to wear on the boat.
- Distribute a half-piece of newspaper to each child, and direct the children to fold the piece in half. Then fold one corner down to the center, leaving about an inch at the bottom. Then fold the other corner down to meet the previous corner in the center. This will make a triangle. Fold the bottom flaps up on one side and then the other. Use tape as needed. (There are YouTube videos to guide you if necessary.)
- Ask the children to wear their sailor hats and to sit in their desks, fold their arms, and close their eyes.
- Take the group through a guided meditation using the following prompts:
 - Imagine that you are in a boat with Jesus and the disciples. The boat is rocking gently back and forth. Keep your eyes closed but rock gently back and forth. Jesus is tired, so he falls asleep in the back of the boat. You and the other disciples are talking together quietly.
 - Suddenly the wind begins to blow! The disciples quickly pull down the sail. "Hang on!" Peter says. "It looks like we're in for a storm!" The thunder rolls and the lightning flashes. Suddenly the boat starts to tip violently back and forth. You are nearly thrown out of your seat! You are thrown to the right! You are thrown to the left! (*Encourage the children to act this out while seated.*) Hang on tight! You hear the disciples say: "Jesus! Jesus! Wake up! We are about to sink!"
 - Jesus wakes up. He hears the thunder and sees the lightning. He sees the frightened faces of his friends. He sees the big waves and feels the boat tip one way and then the other. He puts out his hand. "Peace! Be still!" he says. (*Pause.*)
 - Everything is still. The disciples are so thankful! They go up, one by one, and say, "Thank you, Jesus." Now it is your turn to go up to Jesus. What will you say to Jesus? Say it quietly now in your heart. (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - Does Jesus say anything back to you in the quiet of your heart? (*Pause for a few moments.*)
 - The boat is heading to shore now. All is calm and peaceful. The disciples look forward to another day with Jesus. And you do too! You may open your eyes now and come back to land!
- Ask volunteers to share what they said to Jesus and what Jesus said to them. Remind the children that Jesus is always ready to help us when we are in trouble.

Process the Activity

- Ask the children to share what they felt as the storm raged.
 - What was it like to be in the boat with Jesus and the disciples during the storm?
 - How did you feel when Jesus said, "Peace. Be still"?

- Explain that Jesus knows us and loves us, using the following points:
 - Jesus cares about us. He knows when we are going through a hard time. He even knows all of our sins, even before we confess them in the Sacrament of Reconciliation!
 - Even when we have made wrong choices, Jesus knows and, if we are sorry, he will bring us peace.
- Invite the children to draw a picture of a scene from this event, and then invite volunteers to share their drawings with the group.

Additional Activity Options

If the core activity would not work for your group for any reason, you may choose to use any of the Additional Activities on pages 58–59 in its place.

✕ Find (20 minutes)

God's Treasure of Forgiveness

- Explain the meaning of today's story as follows:
 - Today we learned that Jesus is the Son of God. He is with us, in good times and in scary times. He is with us during storms, whether they are storms outside or even our storms inside, when we feel bad about what we have done.
 - We are the disciples of Jesus. We are his close followers. He wants to take care of us and to save us, just as he saved the disciples in the storm.
- Link the story to the Sacrament of Reconciliation in these or similar words:
 - Jesus saves us by forgiving our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. After we confess our sins and are given a penance, we are given **absolution**, or forgiveness of our sins through the words and actions of the priest. He extends either both hands or his right hand as he says the prayer of absolution. We give thanks to God and then the priest sends us forth, saying this or another similar prayer: "The Lord has freed you from your sins. Go in peace" (*Rite of Penance*).
- We give thanks to God, and then the priest sends us forth in peace. Pardon and peace are two great gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Just as Jesus calmed the storm, Jesus calms the storms in our lives and gives us peace. We are given peace with ourselves, with God, and with others. Following are other gifts of the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
 - Grace, God's own life in us.
 - We grow closer to God and to all God's people, the Church.
 - We are given a peaceful **conscience**. (Our conscience is the knowledge we have within us of right and wrong.)
 - We are given grace and strength to avoid sin and live as a Christian.
 - We are able to repair some of the harm done to our relationships that our sin caused.
 - We are helped to stay in friendship with God in this life so that we can be happy with him forever in Heaven.
 - We are saved, if we have confessed a mortal sin, from being separated from God forever after we die.
 - We are more ready than ever to follow Jesus as his disciples!
- Conclude by explaining that there are three things necessary for the Sacrament of Reconciliation to be complete: (1) we must have true sorrow for our sins (contrition), (2) we must promise not to sin again, and (3) we must do our assigned penance. Ask the children to hold up their fingers with you as you repeat these three necessary actions.
- Invite the children to turn to page 3 in their activity booklets and complete the activity. Alternatively, you may want to work on the page as a whole group, or to allow the children to work in pairs. *Answers: Across: 2. grace, 4. disciples, 6. sin; Down: 1. peace, 3. absolution, 5. life*

Teacher Note: This content is presented in a child-friendly way in the *God's Treasure of Forgiveness Student Booklet*. You may wish to have the children read all or parts of chapter 7 to supplement your presentation. Or use the concluding points under "Things to Remember" to wrap up the lesson before prayer.

Lesson Wrap-Up

- Invite the children to think back over all of the different things they did in this lesson, and invite volunteers to share some of the key things they learned.
- Take some time to get input from the group, and write their answers on the board.
- Ensure that the following points are made, write them on the board, and circle them:
 - Jesus is the Son of God who is with us to save us in times of trouble.
 - We are disciples of Jesus who call on him in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
 - Our sins are forgiven and we are restored to peace when we receive absolution in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- Ask the children to place the chapter 7 sticker in the correct circle on their treasure maps.



Closing Prayer

- Begin prayer by leading the group in the Sign of the Cross, then saying, "Let us remember that we are in the holy presence of God," followed by a few seconds of silence.
- Play a song from the list of "Music Suggestions" at the beginning of this lesson.
- End by praying an Act of Contrition (see page 1995 in *The Catholic Children's Bible*). Then close with a final Sign of the Cross.



Additional Activities

Materials Needed

- none

Materials Needed

- white drawing paper
- crayons for each child

Lights, Camera, Action: The Storm at Sea (15 minutes)

- Ask the children to act out the account of the storm at sea.
- Arrange the children into groups of at least six (and at most thirteen, to represent Jesus and the twelve disciples). Ask each group to choose one person to represent Jesus.
- Arrange a “boat” at the front of the room, with as many chairs as each small group has participants. Arrange the chairs facing across from each other in rows, to represent the seats along the sides of a boat.
- Tell the groups that they may use the dialogue from the Gospel account as well as improvise their own.
- Allow each group to present its version of the Gospel account.
- Conclude by playing a song or hymn from the “Music Suggestions” for this chapter.

A Split-Screen Picture (15 minutes)

- Distribute a piece of white drawing paper and a pack of crayons to each child. Tell the children that they will be drawing a split-screen picture.
- Ask the children to draw, with a black crayon, a diagonal line across their drawing paper, from the bottom left-hand corner to the top right-hand corner.
- Ask the children to draw, on the upper left-hand side, a picture of the Gospel account of the storm at sea. They might draw the boat, the sea, the lightning and the sky, Jesus asleep, or any other part of the Gospel story. On the bottom right, they should draw themselves at a stormy time in their lives. They might draw coming to a new school or a new house, having to admit to doing something wrong, or saying good-bye to a friend who is moving away.
- Suggest, after the drawings are finished, that the children write a prayer on the back and then sign their names. For example: “Dear Jesus, thank you for being with me when I came to my new school. Love, Lydia.”

Jesus Calms the Storm: A Video and Meditation (15 minutes)

- Show the video “Jesus Calms the Storm,” by KidsHubTV and available on YouTube (2:09). This account follows the longer version found in Mark 4:35–41.
- Discuss the following questions:
 - Because we are all baptized, we are all “in the same boat” with Jesus. How do you feel to be in Jesus’ boat?
 - When the disciples got into the boat, they did not yet know Jesus very well. What did they ask at the end of the boat ride? (*“Who is this, even the wind and the waves obey him?”*)
 - The disciples were slowly coming to realize something. What were they slowly coming to realize? (*That Jesus was God.*)
- Remind the children that Jesus is God and is with us always and will always be with us when we are in trouble. Explain that Jesus is always ready to forgive us in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Materials needed

- a computer with Internet access
- a computer projector