

Age-Level Overview

	Open the Bible	Activate Faith
Lower Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jump for joy for Jesus.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles	SPARK RESOURCES: None
WATER JUMP: Kids work as partners in teams to do a relay.	SUPPLIES: Party hat, party blowout, balloons, crepe paper streamers (optional)	SUPPLIES: Flat wooden blocks, or brown paper and masking tape, clothespins with springs, markers, masking tape or paper plates
JUMPING PEOPLE: Kids create clothespin people and make them “jump.”		
Upper Elementary		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Put your trust in Jesus.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Bibles, Searching for Trust Activity Sheet (page 43)
WATER WALK: Kids work with a buddy and a spoon to transfer water across a room.	SUPPLIES: Pencils	SUPPLIES: Large bowls, small bowls, spoons, chairs, pencils
SEARCHING FOR TRUST: Kids look up verses about trust in the Bible.		
All Kids		
WORKSHOP FOCUS: Jesus is with us when we’re afraid.	SPARK RESOURCES: Spark Story Bibles, Spark Bibles, Spark Bible Stickers	SPARK RESOURCES: None
FEAR FREEZE: Kids play freeze tag, with fear being “It.”	SUPPLIES: None	SUPPLIES: Whiteboard or chart paper, markers
PICTURE THAT! Kids play a Picture Charades-type game and try to guess the fears being portrayed.		



Visit www.sparksundayschool.org for more Spark content. Watch a short Lesson Prep Video that will prepare you and give you confidence to explore this Bible story with the kids you are leading. You will also find a downloadable Family Page for this rotation’s story filled with ideas for families to use to explore this story and live out their faith at home.

Workshop Focus: Jump for joy for Jesus.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

- Each week, remember to welcome kids to the rotation. Keep in mind that for some kids, it may be the first time they are visiting your workshop!
- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
- Remember that the Shepherds are there to support you as they accompany kids each week.
- Be sure to visit www.sparksondayschool.org to download the Family Page for this story. Make copies of it and ask Shepherds to distribute it during the Wrap Up.

Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Walking on Water Storytelling

Put on a party hat, and have party blowout handy. If you want to give your room more of a celebration feel, you can hang up inflated balloons or streamers. Enthusiastically greet kids as they come with a hearty toot to the party blowout and say, **Welcome to the celebration!** When all kids have arrived, invite kids to join you in a sitting circle.

I love parties and celebrations, don't you? What kinds of things do we celebrate? (*birthdays, Christmas, Easter, other holidays, etc.*) **Would you like to guess what I'm celebrating today?** Allow all responses. **I'm jumping for joy for Jesus! Let's read our story and see if you can figure out why I'm so excited!** Pass out Spark Story Bibles, assist kids in finding Walking on Water on pages 294-297. Read the story aloud, inviting kids to follow along as they are able.

Let's read the story again, but this time I want you to cover your eyes with your hands when someone is afraid, and jump up for joy when someone is brave or trusting. Read the story aloud, perhaps more than once as long as kids are interested.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles

Supplies

Party hat
Party blowout
Balloons
Crepe paper streamers
(optional)

Allow answers to the following questions.

Why were the disciples afraid at the beginning of the story? (*They thought Jesus was a ghost.*) **What would you think if you saw Jesus walking on water? When did Peter start to sink?** (*when he took his eyes off Jesus, when he doubted*) **Why were the disciples so excited at the end of the story?** (*Jesus could do amazing things; Jesus kept Peter safe.*)

I'll bet you know why I'm so excited about Jesus, don't you? Let's all jump for joy for Jesus! Allow kids to jump for a moment before beginning the first game.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Water Jump

Set Up: Arrange two identical paths of wooden blocks (or paper taped to the floor) for each team to follow. Paths should have blocks (or paper) spaced slightly longer than a kid's stride-length apart, so kids can step on a block with their left foot and a block with their right foot, etc.

Activity Instructions

Divide kids into two teams. Have each team divide up into pairs, and line up the pairs one behind another.

I set up a couple of paths with blocks (or paper) for a relay. I'd like you to pretend with me that these are stones and the floor is water. We're going to jump from stone to stone so we don't fall in the water, with a little help from our partners. Please join hands with your partner and raise them high, so I can see which of you are partners. Take a moment to readjust partners if necessary. **Good, each of you has a helping partner! The first pair in each line should come up to the starting line. The kid on the left will be the first jumper.** Help kids determine which is the left by holding the thumb and index finger of your left hand to form an "L." Demonstrate jumping from block to block (or paper stone to stone). **The other kid has a very important job. You will hold your partner's hand and try to help them stay out of the water. Helpers, it's okay for you to step in the water. Jumpers, you will need to remember to trust your partner to help you. After you jump down to the end of the row of "stones" and back, go to the end of the line. The next time you are in the front of the line, your partner will be the jumper. Any questions?** If time allows, let kids do the relay more than once, changing partners and/or teams.

Good job, there were barely any toes in the water! Was it nice to have someone to trust to help you step from stone to stone? How did it feel to have someone trust you and rely on you for help? We can jump for joy that we can trust Jesus, can't we?

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Flat wooden blocks

Or: 5" x 8" (13 x 20 cm)

brown paper and masking
tape

Jumping People

Set Up: Cut 1/2" (1 cm) off one leg of each clothespin. Using markers, decorate a clothespin to look like a person on the complete side of a clothespin. Practice making your clothespin person jump by having the head (closed end) facing you, and quickly pushing down on the "legs" with your index finger. If your tables are rectangular, use masking tape to make a line down the center. If your tables are round, place a paper plate in the middle. Set out clothespins and markers.

Activity Instructions

Have kids sit around the table(s). **We're going to make people out of clothespins today, and then help them jump. First, let's color the long side of the clothespin like a person, with the person's head at the closed end. You can color a shirt, pants, a dress, shoes—whatever you'd like!** Show kids the example you made.

After all kids are done, tell kids: **Our clothespin people can jump for joy for Jesus, just like us! Watch how I do it.** Demonstrate making your person jump a few times. It would be good to not always be successful so kids know it's okay if they can't do it every time. **I have put a marker in the middle of our table(s), let's see if we can "jump" our people onto it** (if it is a paper plate) **or over it** (if it is masking tape). **Whenever I say, "Jump for joy for Jesus," make your person jump.** Play as long as kids are interested. Encourage all efforts. If time allows, you can also give them a minute to see how many times they can jump their person onto/over the marker.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Clothespins with springs, one per kid
Markers
Masking tape or paper plates (depending on the shape of your tables)

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

Let's see who remembers our story. Can anyone tell me the first part, where the disciples were scared? (*They saw someone/something walking on the water.*) **And then Peter got out of the boat, what happened next?** (*Peter tried to walk on water, started to sink, Jesus saved him.*) **How were the disciples feeling at the very end of the story?** (*excited*) **I'll bet the disciples would have been jumping for joy for Jesus if they weren't in a boat!**

Spark Resources

Family Page



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

We're going to jump for joy for Jesus once more today. During our prayer I want you to join me in saying, "Jump for joy for Jesus!" and as we do we are going to jump in the air once. Ready?

Dear God,

Thank you for Jesus

Jump for joy for Jesus!

For making him so powerful

Jump for joy for Jesus!

And good

Jump for joy for Jesus!

Jesus is always with us

Jump for joy for Jesus!

We can trust in him.

Jump for joy for Jesus!

Amen.

Workshop Focus: Put your trust in Jesus.

Keep these tips in mind as you welcome kids to the workshop and explore the story together.

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- If kids have heard the story several times during previous weeks, read it again! Kids learn through repetition, and every workshop will explore the Bible story in a slightly different way.
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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Walking on Water Storytelling

Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! Today we're going to be talking about trust, so let's start off with a trust exercise. Get in pairs and we'll get started. This exercise works best if kids can choose their own partners since they need to trust the person they are with. Allow time for kids to get into pairs. **Now stand back-to-back with your partner and slightly lean against each other. Don't push hard against your partner, your goal is to keep yourself AND your partner upright!** Give kids a minute to get used to this. **Let's make it a little tougher. I want you to keep your backs against one another, and slowly bend your knees at the same time, and then straighten up again. Remember, the goal is for both of you to stay upright!** Let kids continue to do this for a few minutes.

Gather kids in a circle, and pass out Spark Bibles. **You did a great job with that exercise! Was it hard to do?** Allow time for kids' responses. **Our story today is about a time when Peter really needed to trust Jesus. Let's find it in our Bibles. Turn to Matthew 14:22-33.** Assist kids who are having difficulty by telling them it is on page 1076. When all kids have located the passage, ask for volunteers to read it aloud, one paragraph each.

Spark Resources
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies
Pencils

Invite kids to place an I Read It sticker near the story and to write today's date in the margin.

How would you feel if you saw Jesus walking on the water? Allow kids to respond to this and the following questions. **How was Peter trusting Jesus like you trusting your partner during our opening activity?** (*had to trust or you would fall, Peter fell when he took his eyes off Jesus*) **If you were Peter, would you step out onto the water?**

Peter put his trust in Jesus and made it safely back to the boat. We can put our trust in Jesus, too.

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Water Walk

Set Up: Place two chairs at one end of the room, and two chairs opposite them at the other end of the room. Place a large bowl on each chair. Fill the two bowls on one end of the room with the same amount of water each. This will be your starting line.

Activity Instructions

Divide kids into two teams. Have each team divide up into pairs and line up each pair behind another pair. **We're going to play another game where we need to trust our partners. Each team has the same amount of water in their starting bowls and the goal is to get all of that water into the bowls at the other end of the room first.** Pass out a spoon and bowl to each pair. **One person will carry the water on their spoon and the other will hold the bowl under the spoon to catch any water that spills. When you get across the room, the spoon carrier will put their water into the large bowl. But the small bowl carrier who caught the spills, will bring it back to the original bowl of water and dump it back in. I have a hint for you. You will get done more quickly if you work and move as partners rather than trying to rush. Any questions?** Pause. **Go!** Encourage kids to cheer their team members on.

First I have a question for the kids who held the spoons. How did it feel to know that if you spilled it would be taken care of? And for those of you who held the bowls, how did it feel to help your partner and team?

Trusting in Jesus is like that. We can trust that Jesus will always be with us to help us, no matter where we are or what we're doing.

Spark Resources

None

Supplies

Large bowls, four
Small bowls, one per every two kids
Spoons, one per every two kids
Chairs, four
Pencils

Searching for Trust

Set Up: Make copies of Searching for Trust Activity Sheet for each kid.

Activity Instructions

Gather kids around a table or another area where they can easily write. **At the end of our story today, the disciples were pretty excited, I wonder why?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Does anyone remember what the disciples did with their excitement?** (*They worshipped Jesus, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*) **When we put our trust in Jesus, new things can happen to us, too. Let's use our Bibles to see what those things might be.** Pass out activity sheet copies and pencils. Make sure each kid has a Spark Bible. Kids might enjoy working in pairs on this activity. (*Answer key for Searching for Trust Activity Sheet: reconcile, testify, walk, truth, glory, wisdom, prayers, servant*)

You really did some searching in your Bible to find these words. Good job!

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

We did a lot of trusting today, didn't we? And you put a lot of trust in one another, didn't you? Before we leave today, let's pray a trusting prayer.

Prayer Time

Invite kids to get into pairs again, and sit back-to-back leaning against each other. **Let's bow our heads and fold our hands and pray.**

Dear Jesus,

Thank you for always being with us and loving us wherever we may be. Help us to remember that we can always trust you to be with us and guide us. Be with us now, as we silently ask for your help. Pause so kids can have a moment of silent prayer. **In your name we pray,
Amen.**

Spark Resources

Spark Bibles
Searching for Trust Activity Sheet (page 43)

Supplies

Pencils

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Workshop Focus: Jesus is with us when we're afraid.

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Open the Bible (10 minutes)

Walking on Water Storytelling

Greet kids as they come in, invite them to sit in a circle or at tables. **Welcome to Bible Skills and Games! I'm glad you're here, I had a bad dream last night and I'm still a little afraid.** Tell the kids about your "bad dream," perhaps your cat or dog was lost, or all the lights went off in your house. Make sure it is a fear that they might dream about or can relate to. **Have any of you ever been afraid?** Allow kids' responses. **What do you do to not be so afraid?** Allow all answers, if no one mentions prayer or Jesus, be sure to bring that up.

Pass out Bibles to all kids. **Today's story is about a time when the disciples were afraid, let's read it.** Have younger kids turn to page 294 in their Spark Story Bibles, and older kids to Matthew 14:22-33 (page 1076) in their Spark Bibles. Read the story out loud from the Spark Story Bible, or invite a volunteer to, asking older kids to follow along in their Spark Bibles.

Would you have been afraid if you were one of the disciples? Allow answers. **And if you were Peter, would you step out of the boat to walk on water? I think that was really trusting! At the end, no one was afraid, were they?**

Ask older kids to allow younger kids to choose a sticker for the older kid to place in their Spark Bibles.

Spark Resources

Spark Story Bibles
Spark Bibles
Spark Bible Stickers

Supplies

None

Activate Faith (25 minutes)

Fear Freeze

Set Up: Prepare a large open area where kids can run. This would be a good outdoor activity if weather permits.

Spark Resources

None

Activity Instructions

Gather kids in a large open area. **We're going to play Fear Freeze tag today. I need one volunteer to be "Fear" and another to be "Jesus."** Select volunteers, then explain the game. **[Name] will be Fear, and [Name] will be Jesus. If Fear tags you, you must freeze in place until Jesus touches you. Then you become one of Jesus' disciples and can help unfreeze other players. But even if you are a disciple, Fear can tag and freeze you again. Does everyone understand?** Allow kids to play as long as they are interested, selecting new kids to be Fear and Jesus every couple of minutes.

Supplies

None

Jesus is always with us, no matter where we go or what we do. Just like in our game, trusting in Jesus can unfreeze us from our fears.

Picture That!

Set Up: Place whiteboard or chart paper where all kids can see.

Spark Resources

None

Activity Instructions

Let's play a game of Picture That!, where one person draws a picture of something people might be afraid of and the rest of us try to guess what it is. You don't have to be good at drawing to do this. We just need a simple sketch to help us figure out what you're drawing. Who would like to start? Select a volunteer and ask that person to whisper what they are drawing in your ear. If their idea is not appropriate or if they need help with an idea, be ready to assist them. Possible fears are: the dark, lions, spiders, falling down, getting teased, being lost, not knowing the answer in school, riding a bike, etc.

Supplies

Whiteboard or chart paper
Dry erase markers or markers

After kids have guessed the fear the first person was drawing, select a different volunteer and repeat. Remember to vary volunteers between younger and older kids, and to help kids who get stuck while drawing.

You drew a lot of fears in our game, let's see how many we can list. Write kids' responses on the whiteboard or chart paper. **Are there other things people might be afraid of that we didn't draw?** Allow kids' responses. **And who is with us no matter what we are afraid of? (Jesus) That's right, Jesus is with us when we're afraid, no matter what!**

Send (5 minutes)

Wrap Up

Remind the Shepherds to distribute the Family Page for this story if the kids haven't already received it, and come together for Wrap Up.

We talked a lot today about Jesus being with us when we're afraid. This week if something scares you, remember to close your eyes and say to yourself, "Jesus is with me." I think that will help, don't you?

Spark Resources

Family Pages



Supplies

None

Prayer Time

Gather kids in a circle and ask them to put their arms around their neighbor's shoulders like a football huddle. **Let's say a huddle prayer before we leave today. When I finish the prayer, I want you to all throw your arms up in the air and say, "Amen" with me.**

Jesus,

Thank you for always being there for us. When we are happy, when we are sad, when we are courageous, and when we are afraid. Help us remember that you are always as close as the others in this huddle. Throw your arms up and say, **Amen!**

Searching for Trust Activity Sheet

Trusting in Jesus can help make our lives better. When we trust in Jesus, we can:

_____ our relationships. Colossians 1:20

_____ on Jesus' behalf. Acts 23:11

_____ in _____. 3 John 3

Give _____ to God. 2 Chronicles 7:1

Gain _____, which helps keep us close to God.
Proverbs 3:13

Receive many _____. 2 Corinthians 1:11

Be a good _____ to others. 1 Corinthians 4:1