

Jesus Calms the Storm

Grades
5-6

CALM

MARK 4:35-41

What's happening in this story?

This story seems straightforward: The disciples and Jesus get into a boat, and when a storm approaches, the disciples are scared and wake him up. Jesus calms the storm and asks why they were afraid. However, when we remember the waters of creation in Genesis and the windstorm at sea in the book of Jonah, Jesus' stilling of the storm identifies him with the Creator of the universe. At the end of the story, the disciples seem to be starting to get it too.

What does this story mean for kids?

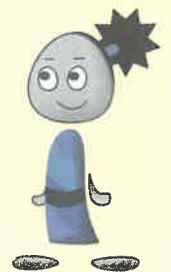
Kids can follow the disciples' emotions: relaxed at first on the boat, frightened during the storm, relieved when Jesus calms the wind and waves. Encourage kids to share times they've been afraid, and remind them over and over that Jesus—who is God!—is always with them during life's troubles. Jesus calmed the storm for the disciples. How does he take care of *them*?

Why this theme?

Action, drama, and suspense. This story is an opportunity both to honor kids' fears and to help them see themselves safe in Jesus' care.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Today's lesson functions on both literal and symbolic levels, and while kids will have a wide range of experience with stormy weather, some may struggle with the complex themes around the *storms of life*. Use caution in asking kids to share about personal experiences of loss.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- White paper
- Markers (regular and thin-tipped)
- Scissors
- Clear tape
- Pens

LESSON SUPPLIES

- None

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have kids draw and decorate storm clouds on pieces of white paper. Create a stormy scene by cutting them out and taping them to a designated spot on the wall.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Raise your hand if you feel pretty calm right now. **What's it like to feel calm?** Allow time for kids to respond. **Being calm helps us focus. It allows us to think clearly and even creatively. But we don't always feel calm. Sometimes our lives get hectic. It's not just severe weather or thunderstorms that can make our lives feel stormy. In our story today, the disciples encounter a terrifying storm. And they do not stay calm.**

Pray together: **Dear God, even when storms bring situations that scare us, help us remember that you created the world and everything in it and you are always with us. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets, pens, and Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Calmness is a recurring theme in the Bible. With a partner, look up the Bible verses listed on your leaflet, and write down a word similar to *calm* that you find in each verse. Give kids time to work. ***Stillness, peace, quiet, and rest* are all calming words and feelings. Why do you think these words are talked about throughout the Bible?** Allow time for kids to respond. **When our lives are hectic, we can trust that God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are with us to help us remain calm.**



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Our bodies are wired with something called the "fight-or-flight" response. This instinct helps to keep us safe in dangerous situations by either fighting (defending ourselves) or running away. It takes a special mind-set to stay calm when things get out of our control. Let's watch how the Whirl kids deal with it.

View Episode 12, "Storm Stress," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Have you ever had to ride out a storm somewhere other than at home? What was that like?**
- **What is the scariest part of a storm for you?**
- **What supplies are important for dealing with severe weather?**
- **What helps keep you calm during bad weather?**
- **If you were Mimi, what else would you have prayed for?**



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is in the book of Mark. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Mark, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1198.



Jesus has just finished teaching and healing a large crowd of people gathered beside a lake. He and the disciples climb into a boat and begin to sail across the lake when suddenly the winds pick up and a storm rolls in, threatening their little boat.

Help kids find Mark 4:35-41 and read it in this creative way together: There are three main parts to this story: setup (verses 35-37), conflict (verses 38-39), and resolution (verses 40-41). Ask for three volunteers, and have each one read one section of the story.

Invite kids to check out what Ruby says about Mark 4:35-41.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- What were the disciples afraid of?
- Why were the disciples angry with Jesus?
- In Genesis 1:9-10 God commanded the waters. What do you think this knowledge would have meant to the disciples when they saw Jesus command the wind and waves?
- How would you describe the disciples' reaction when Jesus calmed the storm?
- What are some other ways the disciples could have responded to the storm?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Calm*. The disciples were scared, and they thought Jesus didn't care if they lived or died. The first thing Jesus did was calm the storm, but he reprimanded them for lacking faith. Let's put a storm cloud in the box by *Calm* to remind us that Jesus can calm our greatest fears.



BIBLE BIT

This story takes place on the Sea of Galilee, which really isn't a sea at all. It is the largest freshwater lake in Israel and is about the same size as Washington, DC.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Mimi prays for a lot of different things. If you watch the video again, ask kids which of Mimi's prayers surprised them most.

OUR CHURCH

Praying for people (intercessory prayer) can comfort them when they feel out of control. Make a list and pray that God will watch over a few different friends each day.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out pens and thin-tipped markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **The disciples were no strangers to water and storms—many of them were experienced fishermen. But this storm was a bad one, making them worry that the boat would sink! Do you think the disciples thought Jesus was better able to handle a storm than they were? When might you think you're better able to handle a situation or problem than Jesus is?**
2. **What's pictured on your leaflet square? (Hurricane) Hurricanes are big storms that often bring damaging winds and flooding rain. As they move, they turn slowly around their center, called an eye. Warm water makes them grow stronger, while cool water and land cause them to become weaker.**
3. **On the clouds of the hurricane, write down things in your life that cause you to feel stressed, sad, worried, or unsure.** This can become a very personal activity for some kids. For kids who want to hide what they write, encourage them to fold their leaflet in half.
4. **Sometimes when our lives are stressful or stormy, we feel powerless to change our feelings or the things that are happening. We feel like the disciples felt when they were certain their boat was sinking.**
5. **But the disciples were in the same boat as Jesus. And so are you. In the midst of your storms, call out to Jesus and listen for him to say, "Peace! Be still!" Find those words hidden in the hurricane on your leaflet, and color them in so they'll be easier to find when you need them.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Staying calm in scary situations is really difficult. The first step is remembering that you're not alone. The disciples were literally in the same boat with Jesus. Jesus is with you too, but in different ways. Sometimes Jesus' words of calm will come from other sources. Name some people in your life who help keep you calm.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

In the event of an emergency, over the radio or TV you usually hear a tone and a voice with important information. Write your own Emergency Alert System message about how to stay calm in the face of chaos.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.