

What Does It Mean to be a Disciple of Jesus Christ?

A Disciple Focuses on Christ, not his Problems

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Lesson Three

Lesson Objective: That instead of being overwhelmed by problems in their lives and in the world, students would focus on Christ and trust in him.

Bible Passage: Mt. 14: 22-33

Bible Truth: Peter sank when he focused on the problems around him instead of focusing on Christ.

Before You Begin:

- ◆ lots of sheets of newspaper
- ◆ a blackboard or large paper to write on
- ◆ strips of paper or index cards
- ◆ pencils for each student
- ◆ materials for "trust reminder"
- ◆ blank paper for each student
- ◆ colored pens or pencils,
- ◆ optional: tape or glue, pictures and/or magazines
- ◆ large piece of paper with a cross drawn on it
- ◆ tape.

Opening:

Allow a few students to respond to the following question:

- *Would someone give an example of a time in your life when everything seemed to go wrong?*

Then divide the group into two teams and have them stand on opposite sides of the room. Put a line of masking tape on the floor to indicate the boundary between the two sides. Give each team a stack of newspapers and have them wad up all the sheets of newspaper. Then when you give the word they should throw them onto the other side of the room, working as a team to keep their side as empty of paper as possible while filling the other side. After a minute or two (or when they begin to get bored) call an end to the game and as the referee, you decide which side appears to have the least number of paper wads and wins. Then have the students collect the papers and throw them away.

After the activity say,

Life often feels like this activity; just when you finish one project you are assigned two more or just when one friend is getting over a problem another friend's boyfriend breaks up with her. Sometimes our minds get clogged with worries, like the room was littered with the papers. Today we are going to see what Peter learned about how to deal with problems and worries in his life.

Interactive Learning

Have the students brainstorm about things that worry teenagers and write their answers on the board or paper. If they get stuck help them think about specific concerns about family, friends, school, work, the nation, and the world.

Then pass out the index cards and pencils and ask each student to write on the card the two things that most worry them.

Bible Application

Pass out handout, “A Beginner's Guide to Walking on Water” and pencils. Ask students to complete the top half of the handout by reading Mt. 14:22-33 and filling in the blanks of the story. As soon as you see that most students have finished, read the story out loud, asking a student to fill in the correct answer when you get to a space.

(Hint: fill out a sheet yourself first so you have the correct answers in case the student makes a mistake.) When you have finished ask the students to complete the rest of the handout on their own, then come together as a group to discuss it by asking:

- *Would someone share with us a time that you faced a difficult situation in which your relationship with Jesus made a difference?*

- ***What does Jesus tell us in the verses that we read in Mt. 6 and 10 that should help us to not worry?***
- ***Why can we believe Peter when he tells us to cast our anxieties on God because he cares about us? [because he had experienced God's faithfulness for many years]***

Commitment

The really important lesson we learn from the life of Peter today is that when we take our focus off Jesus and his promises to take care of his disciples, we can sink into fear and anxiety. This lesson is not something that you hear once and then live out for the rest of your life. Rather, focusing on Christ instead of our problems takes effort and trust. We need to be reminded frequently of how much God loves us and of his promises to take care of us. As we experience his faithfulness in our lives we grow in our trust in him. I want each of you to think right now of something that symbolized trust to you. It could be one of the images we've just seen of Peter walking on the water, or of beautiful flowers or a sparrow. Or it could be something like a baby in their parent's arms, whatever reminds you of security and trust. Now I want you to create a visual reminder for yourself of being able to trust in God.

Give each student a blank piece of paper and lay within reach of everyone materials for making their trust reminder. Have available colored pens or pencils and if you want glue and pictures of things like flowers, birds, etc. Maybe have an example made ahead of time. Encourage them to use one of the verses from the worksheet as a headline or title. (Keep in mind that some people will take a long time and others will need some encouragement to do anything at all. Make sure you save enough time for the closing)

If you have time, ask them to form pairs and explain to each other the meaning behind what they have made. If you don't have much time, just ask a few people to share theirs with the class.

I hope that these help you focus your mind on Christ when you are faced with difficult situations.

Closing

We have talked in general about how God cares about you and can be trusted. In closing we want to put in his hands the things that most concern us today.

Pass out pieces of tape to each student and explain that they will tape to the cross the card or piece of paper where they have written the two things that most worry them.

Ask them for privacy's sake to tape it with the writing facing the wall. Invite them to pray silently while they do this saying to God that they want to trust him with this worry so they are giving it to him. After everyone has finished, close in prayer.

A Beginner's Guide to Walking on Water

Read Matthew 14: 22-33 then fill in the blanks in the following story:

One afternoon after Jesus had been teaching all day, he told me and the other disciples to _____ (v. 22) while he _____ (v.23) When it started to get dark we were in the middle of the lake, but not making much progress because the wind was against us. Even though I'm a fisherman and have spent most of my life in boats, I was kind of anxious because we were being tossed around by huge waves. Then suddenly out of the darkness we saw a figure walking across the water and we thought it was _____ (v. 26) It said, "Take courage, it is I. Don't be afraid." I thought it was Jesus so I said, " _____." (v. 28) The figure said, "Come." I guess I was so overwhelmed to see him walking across the water like it was land that right there in the middle of the lake I jumped out of the boat and started walking on top of the water right towards Jesus. All of a sudden I realized what I was doing. The wind was howling around me and the waves were really big. As I started to think about the wind and the waves, I took my eyes off Jesus, got really scared and began to sink. I cried out, " _____." (v. 30) Jesus reached out, grabbed my hand, and said to me, " _____." (v. 31) As soon as we got to the boat the wind stopped completely. I had seen Jesus heal people and teach with amazing authority and wisdom. I had seen demons and now even the weather obey him. I had to _____ him. (v.33)



When it comes to trusting Jesus in tough situations I usually:

- 1) stay safely in the boat
- 2) jump out, but usually sink fast
- 3) experience the excitement of getting through tough times by trusting in him

Peter had heard Jesus teach the "Sermon on the Mount." Read Mt. 6:25-34 and write down some ideas from these verses that could have helped him trust in God and not worry:

What did Jesus say to his disciples in Mt. 10: 29-30 to encourage them not to be afraid?

As an old man, after a lifetime of following Jesus, what advice did Peter give to other Christians in 1 Peter 5:7?