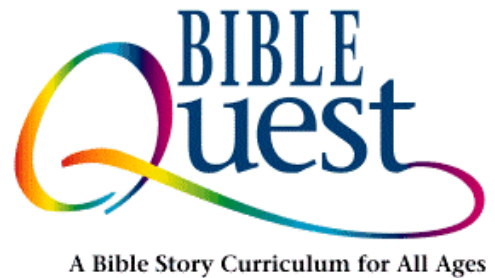


## Workshop



### Bible Storytelling

#### Enter into Planning

As you prepare to lead this workshop, read the article “Telling a Story.” Recall the last time you heard a story. It might have been a family tale, a joke, or a sermon example. Why does that story stay in your mind?

Read Matthew 14:22-33. When were you as afraid as Peter was when he stepped out of the boat? When have you felt tossed around by dark forces over which you had no control? Who stood by you and held out a hand for you?

Review the plan for the workshop. The workshop is designed for a two-hour period. It can be adapted to your situation and the needs of the learners in your group. Practice telling the story from Matthew until you feel comfortable with it.

Think about the people who will be attending this workshop. Name each one aloud. Write each name on a separate index card. Create cards for people who may come that you do not yet know. After the workshop write a comment about each person and his or her contribution to the group that will remind you of that person as a storyteller.

Pray for wisdom as you lead the workshop and openness to the interpretations other may bring.

#### You Will Need

- ◆ name tags
- ◆ light refreshments
- ◆ dark sheet or fabric
- ◆ stuffed lion
- ◆ copy of the article “Telling a Story”
- ◆ rolls of black and blue crepe paper
- ◆ Handout “Matthew 14:22-33 in Episodes”
- ◆ pencils

## Prepare



### **Create the learning environment**

*Light refreshments, name tags, dark sheet or fabric*

Storytelling often happens best in an informal setting. You may want to provide light refreshments to help the participants feel at ease.

Arrange the chairs in the room in a circle so that all participants will be able to see one another. For the beginning of the workshop, you do not want the participants at tables.

Place name tags near the entrance so the participants can put them on as they arrive. Name tags are important if even one person in the group does not know someone. If you or someone you know is artistic, make name tags in the shape of a lion.

Hang a dark sheet or lightweight fabric the size of a sheet on one wall.



### **Gather and get acquainted**

*Stuffed lion*

When all the participants have arrived, invite them to sit in the circle for introductions. You may begin this activity by modeling what you want others to do. Holding the stuffed lion, give your name and complete in one phrase the sentence, “The last time I encountered a lion was ...” Then pass the lion to someone else in the circle. The participants are free to define lion in any way they choose (a real animal at the zoo, a character in a book or movie, a challenge that seemed like a lion).

## Tell



### **Go on a lion hunt**

Place the stuffed lion in the middle of the circle and then tell the group that you are going to take them on a lion hunt. They are to say and do everything you do to be an echo. As you lead the hunt, use big gestures. You may follow this outline and make your own adaptations.

We’re going on a lion hunt.

Let’s go!

Kiss my spouse.

Open the door.  
Shut the door.  
Open the gate.  
Shut the gate.  
Great day!  
Grass. Medium grass. Tall grass. Low grass.  
No grass.  
Let's climb a tree. Look left. Look right.  
See a lion? Nope. Climb down the tree.  
Uh oh! Big river. Gotta swim.  
Ready? Dive!  
Uh oh! Crocodiles!  
Swim faster. Made it across.  
Uh oh! Mud. Deep mud. Medium mud.  
No mud.  
There's a cave! Big, dark cave. Really dark cave!  
I'm scared. You go first. No, you go first.  
**You go!**  
OK, let's go together.  
Anybody see a lion? Nope.  
What's that fuzzy thing?  
What are those yellow eyes?

**It's a lion! Run!**

Out of the cave. Through the mud. Into the river. Up the tree. Down the tree. Through the grass. Open the gate. Shut the gate. Open the door. Shut the door. Kiss my spouse. We made it!

**Practice bodily expression**

Now that the group has warmed up and begun to use gestures to tell a story, invite them to stand. You are going to practice some other gestures for a different story. Have them spread out so that they do not run into one another. Read each action and give a moment for the participants (and you too!) to try it.

Use your face and your body:

- ◆ get into a boat get out of a boat
- ◆ push a boat away from shore
- ◆ sit in a boat on calm water sit in a boat on turbulent water
- ◆ stand alone on the shore in the dark after a long, hard day
- ◆ show fear
- ◆ cry for help
- ◆ show relief

**Set the scene**

*Rolls of black and blue crepe paper*

Have the participants help you move the chairs to near the wall where you have hung the dark fabric. Arrange the chairs to make a boat that will hold all of you. If your group is large, you may want to make more than one boat. Put streamers of crepe paper on the floor around the boat for water.

Invite everyone into the boat.

**Tell a Bible story**

*Handout "Matthew 14:22-33 in Episodes"*

To help set the context of the story as you sit together in the boat, remind the listeners that the fourth watch is the hours between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m., so it was dark. As you tell the story of the disciples and Jesus, invite the people in the boat to respond with the body expressions you have just practiced. This will not be in echo fashion, as in the lion hunt, but in response to what they hear.

Tell the story by using the handout, or from memory.

**Connect****Respond to the story**

While you are still in the boat, invite the participants to respond to the story. What did they hear that they had never heard before? What was a new Aha!?

Get out of the boat and have the participants choose partners. Each partner is to describe a time when he or she was really scared or when his or her faith was radically tested.

**Hear the story again**

Call the group back together and tell the story again. This time have them simply sit and listen.

**Practice the story**

*Handout "Matthew 14:22-33 in Episodes, pencils"*

Thomas Boomershine in his book *Story Journey* (Abingdon, 1988) offers a guide to mastering the basics of biblical storytelling. A basic technique he proposes is to print the story in episodes to facilitate memorization.

Distribute the handout and invite the participants to read the story silently. As they read, have them underline key words or phrases that repeat in the story. Name each episode based on what happens. These steps give clues to the storyteller for remembering the story.



## Go to “blab” school

Another technique Boomershine suggests is a “blab” school. It is helpful for a group learning a story to be given five or ten minutes for individuals to work on the story before telling it to a partner. Give these directions:

“There are some basic rules about this time. First, find your own space. Then tell the story to yourself in a loud voice. Everyone else is going to be telling it too. You’ll be fine as long as you tell it loud enough that you can’t hear everyone else. But if you are timid and quiet, other people will bother you. Therefore, talk loudly, and you’ll be okay. This is going to be organized chaos. Enjoy it! After a few minutes, when I give the signal, find a partner and tell it to each other.” (*Story Journey*, S 8)

## Celebrate



## Identify connections

There have probably been some activities that stretched the participants, either physically or mentally. What do they think differently about the story of walking on the water than they thought when they arrived? Connections with Bible stories move in two directions: from episodes in our own lives, the context of our stories; and from the Bible story as a vessel into which we pour our experience. As we explore our connections with the story, we pay attention to the movement of God’s spirit within us, individually and as a group (*Story Journey*, 98-99).

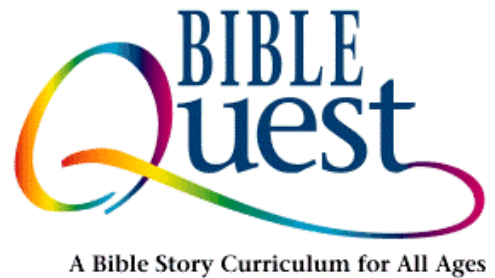


## Tell the story again

Invite a volunteer from the group to tell the story. Assure him or her that all the other group members will help if he or she gets stuck. Do not use the handout, but if help is needed, remind the teller of the name of the episode. When the story has been told, applaud and cheer the storyteller for a job well done. Depending on your time and the size of your group, hear the story more than one time. It is a celebration of the workshop to hear the participants tell the story.

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## Handout



### Matthew 14:22-33 in Episodes

- ◆ And immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds.  
And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up into the hills by himself to pray.
- ◆ When evening came, he was there alone.  
But the boat by this time was many furlongs distant from the land, beaten by the waves.  
For the wind was against them.
- ◆ And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea.  
But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!"  
And they cried out from fear.
- ◆ But immediately he spoke to them, saying, "Take heart, it is I.  
Have no fear."  
And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."  
He said, "Come."
- ◆ So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus.  
But when he saw the wind, he was afraid.  
And beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me."
- ◆ Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"  
And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased.  
And those in the boat worshiped him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

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