

Get Ready!

Jesus, Peter, and the Wind

By: Daniel Smead



Text

Matthew 14:22-33

Key Quest Verse

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” Matthew 14:28

Bible Background

We know Peter as the impulsive apostle, the one who made rash statements and bold declarations of faith (some of which Jesus viewed positively, and others not). When Jesus asked Peter who he thought Jesus was Peter declared Him to be the Christ, and was praised for his answer. However when Jesus predicted his own fate Peter objected, and told his Lord not to talk that way; Peter got himself called “satan” for his opposition that time. When Peter was on the Mount of Transfiguration he brought out the suggestion to build shelters there for Jesus, Moses and Elijah; the text notes that he didn’t know what he was saying. When faced with the prospect of Jesus being left by his friends Peter declared that he, of all, would not leave; then Peter denied Jesus three times before morning. Today’s Bible story joins into that pattern of mixing positive and negative. We can feel that Peter was showing an active faith in suggesting that he walk on water, but he also sank. We can compare his conduct to the 11 men who remained in the boat, but we may end up wondering how to describe Peter as having purely humble positive motives for having stepped out. It is a matter of perspective whether Peter should get more praise or rebuke for his conduct.

It is good to recognize that experience doesn’t necessarily solve the problem of fear. The disciples had already faced a situation that was similar to this one in several ways, in a boat during a storm (Matthew 8:23-27). That account ends with the disciples asking what kind of man Jesus was to do the things he could do. [Note: that story is covered in Unit 2, if you wish to review it. Its application emphasizes dealing with fear. If you did not use all of its activities when you covered Unit 2 you might find some of them helpful for this lesson.] The current story shows some advancement in the disciples’ understanding, as it ends with their acknowledging that Jesus must be the Son of God. Still having voiced this recognition they weren’t yet ready to act upon it consistently, they again fall into fear at Jesus’ arrest. But the disciples were moving forward in faith on a journey that was pushed forward again, with dramatic results, when they received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. The Spirit should be remembered in the context of our Bible story. Peter “saw” the wind and was afraid, but he could not really see it. Rather he heard it, and witnessed its effects. Had Peter really been able to “see” wind perhaps he could also have seen the wind of the Spirit (John 3:8) and have recognized it as the power currently holding up both him and his master.

Get Ready!**Lesson Quest****What I want my students to:****Know:** Jesus will give us all the power we need to do whatever we are supposed to do, but we have the danger of becoming distracted and afraid.**Feel:** Confidence when serving Jesus, and a sense of focus to avoid disruptive distractions.**Do:** Recognize who Jesus is, and thus be able to place their trust in Him and step out in faith.**Leader's Devotion**

Jesus offers his disciples both the opportunity and the challenge to serve him, and even will give us the power with which to serve. But all too often we are afraid to break away from what we are familiar with, and we don't step out in faith. Today's lesson deals even more directly with the dangers involved with having stepped out in faith and then hesitating. Peter was already walking on water when he started to sink. It has been pointed out that Peter gets chided for his lack of faith, but that the other disciples never got out of the boat at all. We could say that they understood their limitations better than Peter did, or we could say that they simply lacked Peter's imagination. Still, the more imagination you have the more problems you can envision, and Peter became afraid.

Your students are young and probably imaginative, capable of anticipating great things in the future but also of fearing dangers that they may never actually face, preventing them from moving. On the other hand, when Peter stepped out of the boat he didn't anticipate the results of his choice and his fears overcame him. That is why Peter drowned, never to be heard of again. Huh? No, Jesus "immediately reached out his hand and caught him." Peter may have had little faith, but Jesus still saved him. And, we would guess, when his attention was brought back to Jesus Peter stopped sinking. Peter was fine as long as he was walking toward Jesus. Your students need to learn to keep their eyes on Jesus, so that they will not sink into worries. We can try to guess what the things are that our students are in danger of fearing, and how we can help them prepare for experiencing them, but ultimately the best solution for all fears is to turn to Jesus.

By the way, don't forget that God empowers you as well. God is prepared to give you all that you need to help your students grow. Amen!

Get Set!



Option A

LOOK AT THE WIND

Materials: Chalkboard and chalk or marker board and marker (a writing surface visible to all students).

Procedure: Ask your students to discuss wind. What do they know about it? [They may bring up that it is tied to the flow of weather over the planet; they may cite figures on how fast it can blow, particularly in tornado or hurricane situations (in that context they might discuss how wind has been known to push sheets of paper or drinking straws into the sides of trees, and generally the quirky effects of the wind); they may mention that it is invisible in general. Possibly your students will bring up the comparison of God’s Spirit (and those empowered by the Spirit) with the wind (John 3:8). If that comparison is not brought up by them now it will come up later in the lesson.]

Sometimes wind is gentle and comforting, but other times it acts powerfully. Wind is known as a force of nature. Even as young children, for example in tornado drills, people learn to be careful about wind. The wind can kill you. What are some situations you want to avoid when there are strong winds? [Standing near power lines; boating; in some cases driving or even standing upright outdoors] **How would you feel if while you were trying to water ski in the middle of a deep lake during a windstorm, without a life vest?** Allow time for responses. **What if you were trying to walk on water in that storm, in the middle of the lake? That is what Peter faced in today’s Bible story.**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Option B

GHOST STORY

Materials: None

Procedure: Ask your students whether they like movies and other stories about ghosts. Have them list a few that come to mind.

Generally ghost stories are meant to be scary, right? For the moment let’s set aside the ghost stories that involve comedy or romance, like *Ghostbusters* or *Ghost*. We will be thinking about the frightening ghost stories. How do characters react when they see a ghost? [They scream, they go stiff, they run away.] **How often does a character see what they think is a ghost and then start up a conversation with it? What would you think about someone in a movie who did that?** [Perhaps that it is similar to a movie character who goes down into the basement alone in search of the knife-wielding killer; it is a dumb move.] **Well, that is what happens in today’s Bible story. But while the man in today’s story overcame his fear to speak to what he thought was a ghost, he didn’t manage to get rid of all his worries.**

GO TO THE BIBLE STORY

Get Set!**Bible Story**

Teacher Tip: Provide markers for students to highlight portions of the story in their Bibles

Begin by having your class read the Bible story. It is suggested that they read the story aloud. You might choose to have the text read by two of your students, one reading all the narration aloud and another performing the spoken words; this would emphasize how little dialogue is here and help the students begin to ponder what is behind what was said.

After the class has read the Bible story (whether individually or aloud), you can convey some of the information below to them. It is set up as in a format to be read aloud, but you could open a discussion time about the basic issues involved and merely introduce some of the information as you see fit, allowing your students to deal with the bulk of the discussion on their own. If you go the route of discussion, you might find it useful to simply ask the questions that begin the first three paragraphs and allow your students to reach conclusions on their own.

Why did Peter want to walk on water? Peter expressed his desire in a way that makes it seem like he was offering Jesus an opportunity to prove that he was not a powerless phantom floating over the waves. We can guess at the presence of some “I want to try that” eagerness to Peter’s statement as well. It seems like he is saying, “Lord if you can do these things then allow me to do them too.” It may be hard to suppose that Peter was giving the matter enough thought in this situation to work it through, but it could actually make sense for Peter to wonder whether he ever would be able to serve God in the ways that Jesus did. So Peter’s story becomes an example of the empowerment available to Jesus’ disciples.

When Jesus asked Peter about his faith, was Jesus really saying that Peter *lacked* faith, or was Jesus asking where it went between the time Peter started out and the time he sank? We have to remember that he did walk on water at least for a moment before he began to sink. You could say that Peter showed more guts (and less caution) in stepping from the boat than did the 11 apostles who stayed behind. Maybe Jesus’ point was that Peter allowed fear and distraction to get between him and his faith; or more basically they got between him and Jesus.

What can we learn from Peter’s brief walk toward Jesus? Here are a few possibilities.

Get Set!

Bible Story cont.

The ability God gave Jesus to do things that are way outside the normal is not restricted to Jesus, because He shares God's power with those who work with Him. It may be hard to see how Peter was working for Jesus by walking on water. The fact that this story was written down and passed through history gives Peter's experience a purpose; *we* learn from it. But Peter himself needed to understand better about following Jesus; hopefully this event helped Peter when he served later in his life. Peter was being allowed to know for sure that Jesus would give him all the power he needed to serve God. He was also given the chance to recognize that he needed to be careful not to let distractions and fears prevent him from using God's power for God's purposes.

When Peter needed to be rescued from his fear of the wind Jesus reached out to him, He didn't leave Peter to deal with his problems on his own (he certainly didn't say "Can't you swim?"). But Jesus did not stop the wind first. Jesus dealt with Peter's fear without removing its cause. We need to be able to trust in Jesus, his love and his help, even when the wind keeps on blowing. Jesus is there, He is no powerless phantom, His power is far stronger than the wind.

Perhaps most importantly of all, we learn that as long as Peter's focus was on Jesus he could even walk on water, but when he took his attention away from Jesus he started to sink.

When your class has either heard the preceding paragraphs read to them, or has discussed these issues themselves (whether with or without input from you) proceed to activity time.

Go!

Sing to the Lord!**MUSIC**

Materials: Hymnals, Chorus books; optional: arrange for someone to meet with you and your students to accompany in singing with a musical instrument

Quest Connection

Read the following to your students: **In the case of Peter and his fear on the Sea of Galilee, the issue was how he placed his attention; on Jesus, or on the wind around him. There are a number of ways we can try to focus our attention on Jesus. That need for focus is part of why people memorize Bible verses, pray, and gather together for worship. Those things have more of an effect than with just fear, but that is part of what they help with. One strong way that our attentions can be focused on Jesus is through songs — we may memorize songs more easily than Bible verses, so that they return to our minds easily when we need them. Today we are going to take some time to sing about Jesus, and to discuss how we feel about some songs.**

Procedure: Several songs are suggested here that you could use for this exercise, but the most important songs to think about are probably those which already mean something to one or more of your students. Perhaps you could start with one of the songs listed here, but then also ask for suggestions from your students. Don't be afraid to learn a new song (consider songs from a youth event your students attended), God works in new ways all the time. But remind your students to think in terms of songs that uplift in the face of struggles or fears. Another thing to look at is the biblical basis for what a song says. Some songs are straight Scripture; it can be important for your students to recognize when there is more than a lyricist behind the words.

Go!

Possible comments on “Redeemed by the Blood of the Lamb.” “You ask me how I know he lives; he lives within my heart” — for many Christians today, their personal experience of Jesus seems to be their ultimate standpoint. That doesn’t mean it is isolated from the testimony of the Bible and the Church, but it is the most certain thing for some. Part of that experience is the calling to serve. Also there is the expectation and experience of being freed from weaknesses, doubts, fears, sins and habits. Notice that even when Peter was too afraid to act in the power that Jesus had authorized for him he was still able to call out to Jesus and be saved by Him directly. Will Jesus call us to something we can’t do? Will Jesus forgive our failures? (Just look at Peter.)

“Jesus, We Celebrate Your Victory”

“Fear Not”

“Amazing Grace”

Close

It is great to get together and praise Jesus. The important thing for today’s lesson, though, is to remember our praises to Jesus when we are *not* together (or even, as in Peter’s case, when other believers are nearby but we are not actively supporting each other). We have to be prepared in every situation. One way to maintain our readiness is to keep words which praise Jesus in our minds more often, speaking words of praise to each other, and singing to the Lord in our hearts (see Ephesians 5:19, 20).

Go!**Facing Fear****CREATIVE WRITING**

Materials: Worksheet “Is Facing Your Fears Really a Good Idea?”, writing utensils

Quest Connection

Peter dealt with his fear of what he thought was a ghost by directly confronting the issue. He spoke to the person in front of him and said “Lord, if it’s you, tell me to come to you on the water” (from Matthew 14:28, this lesson’s Memory Verse). But he ended up going from one fear to another, getting caught up in the fact that he was standing out in the open on a lake in a strong wind. We all have to deal with fear, and we ought to be able to do so by recognizing Jesus.

Procedure: You will help your students identify ways they have dealt with fear in the past, and ways they could try to deal with it in the future. One idea you want your students to think about is people working together – how might things have been different if Peter was not alone in trying to walk toward Jesus? Even apostles rarely worked on their own, they traveled with other believers and supported each other. We are called upon to support each other as believers, and supporting each other against fear is one big way to do that.

Close

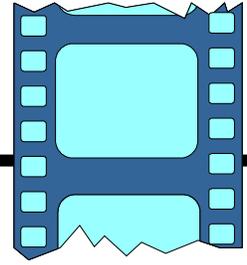
Possible prayer: Lord, you are preparing us to serve You, to show Your love to the world. Please help us to know the power of Your love better, and to put our trust and hope in You when we might otherwise be afraid. Allow us to support each other, and to grow stronger together. In Jesus’ powerful name we pray these things, Amen.

Go!

Silent Movie

DRAMA

Materials: Worksheet “Scripting the Story”; writing utensils; poster board; thick tip magic markers; optional: some costuming elements and props (bathrobes, oars, chairs to simulate being in a boat); a video camera and tape



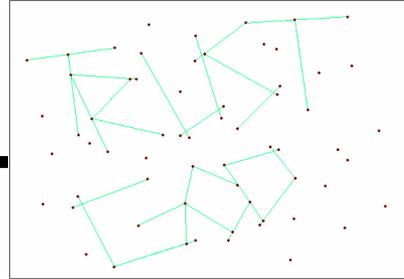
Quest Connection

When motion pictures became a popular way of telling stories it was still years before a method was developed for lining up sound with the images. The films then were silent movies. In those movies the plot tended to be more obvious on screen. Performers would show the characters’ emotions with facial expressions and big gestures. Occasional signs appeared on screen to explain the scene setting or give a necessary piece of dialogue. Today’s Bible story gives some strong images and strong emotions, but has little dialogue. We are going to experiment with playing out a silent movie of this text. In the process we will try to think about what ideas and emotions the characters were going through in each part of the story.

Procedure: You probably won’t even have enough students to play all the parts in the passage, so working in groups is not an obvious way to go, but consider letting your students work as groups initially to provide suggestions about the questions on the worksheet. If it is difficult for your performers to reach agreement on who will take which role(s) they can draw names on slips of paper. Students can work together on preparing the signs on poster board that will be shown between bits of action. You can serve as the “director,” or allow students to take turns doing so. You could even videotape your class’ efforts, though if you were going to do so that would probably mean using this activity for at least two weeks. To get really fancy, your class could pull together music for the background, as would frequently have been played in movie houses during the show (you could record your music on the tape). If you do videotape this silent movie you might send the author a copy of your tape, and we could hold a film festival sometime in the future.

Close

It can be very difficult to get inside someone else’s mind to understand what they were thinking. It is a lot easier to picture ourselves being in a situation and try to figure out how we would feel. But in the case of many Bible stories our guesses are probably greatly contaminated by knowing how the story ends. We can no more guarantee that we would not be afraid walking on Galilee during a storm at night than we can guarantee we won’t be afraid next week – we don’t know what is going to happen next week. But we can trust that we don’t need to give in to fear, and we can ask God to help us deal with our fears.

Go!**Consider the Lilies****WORKSHEET**

Materials: Two worksheets, the first being headed “WWJF?”, and the accompanying worksheet having the dot-to-dot puzzle; writing utensils; optional: Bibles; items that symbolize or relate to common fears, like rubber spiders and snakes, a nightlight, a lectern (related to public speaking) – be cautious not to spark people’s fears by the very symbols you use

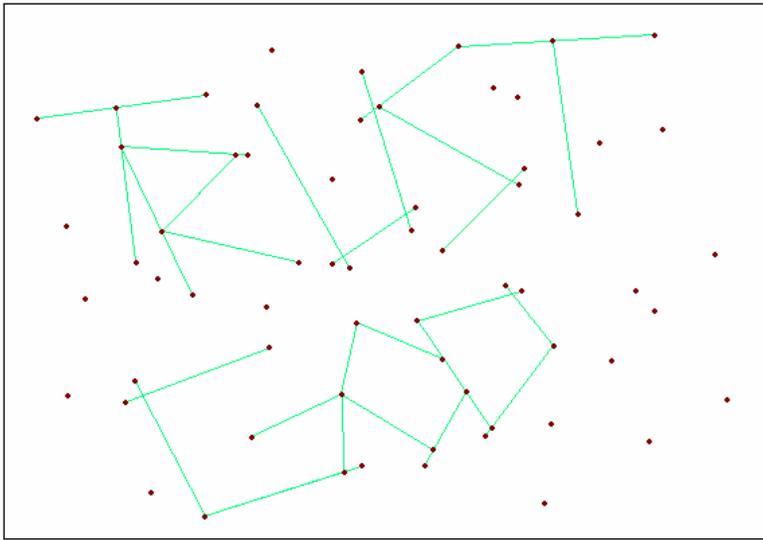
Quest Connection

Fear has played a big role in human history. It is one of the big motivators in fiction, particularly in mystery stories, and something that people are very familiar with. When we speak about particular fears we sometimes describe them as “realistic” and “unrealistic” fears. (At this point you could use your optional “symbols of fear” as illustrations.) Peter was in a situation where, as a fisherman, he would have been very used to keeping an eye on the weather when on Galilee. It was a “realistic” issue for his original profession. But with Jesus he had a new job “fisher of men” and his fear was not a real one – after all, he was walking on water in the first place, so how could the wind hurt him?

Procedure: This activity tries to step beyond normal ways of categorizing fears to consider whether fear in general is realistic for Christians (which is not to suggest for Christians to abandon caution, or not to remember the rules of safety). Ask your students to consider the letters WWJF? and guess what they mean (you could put them on a chalkboard, or just state them). If they are familiar with the WWJD? campaign they probably will figure it out. At this point either let the class read the worksheet (up to the discussion of the puzzle) or continue the discussion without it. Ask if they find “What Would Jesus Fear?” to be an odd question, or do they think that Jesus had fears but simply dealt with them well. This could spark an interesting debate. (You could even suggest the alternative “Why Wouldn’t Jesus Fear?”) You might also ask your students to describe how they think Jesus dealt with the problem of fear, whether or not they consider Jesus shared in that problem with us. (Following time for the class to discuss these issues, if you have not distributed the worksheet do so, and let them look over the first part of the activity worksheet. That may spark further discussion.) After some discussion look at the puzzle.

Go!

The puzzle involves looking up a number of biblical references to connect dots, drawing lines to form words. (At the bottom of this page an illustration shows what the completed puzzle should look like.) Allow students time to ponder the puzzle individually, or if time is lacking introduce the idea of cooperative work to figure out the hidden message (which is “Trust God”). Once that message is found, you might point out the visual metaphor involved – it can be hard to sort out the obvious from the mass of information and events, so we must make an effort to remember the obvious.

**Close**

We are to trust God, something which can be as difficult as it may appear to be obvious. But it is a basic truth. Let’s look at what Jesus advised us in Matthew 6:25-34. Get out Bibles, and have the text read around, or you can read it to the class. Ultimately doesn’t every fear come down to worrying about what comes next, worrying about tomorrow? Tomorrow is in God’s hands, and as long as we put ourselves in God’s hands we can trust that tomorrow is taken care of and get on with living today, each moment that God gives us.

Go!**Run For It!****GAME**

Materials: A clear area to hold a race (indoors or outdoors); tape or other markers for a path; optional: computer for an Internet search

**Quest Connection**

Walking on water may not take a lot of energy, but before his walk was over Peter probably had a lot of adrenaline pumping through him. That is strong stuff, and it changes how we perceive things. We are going to experiment with that powerful substance today and see if we consider Peter’s experience any differently afterwards.

Procedure: Ask your students to describe fear to you, how does it feel when they first experience it, when they are in the middle of it, and when they are recovering from it? After they have shared their descriptions, pair your students off to run the race. Make a long enough course to get their hearts going (perhaps set the race up in laps, if you lack space for the race otherwise, but have the race begin and end with a straight section of running). Arrange for students not running at a particular time to try to distract the runners in the first and the final straightaway of the run by calling from the sidelines. Perhaps the “distractors” could ask the runners if they have their homework done, are ready for a test in class, forgot to tie their shoelaces, etc.; some could simply exclaim “Look out!” when there is no obstacle there. Be careful not to cause runners to become startled and run into something. If there is little space, maybe it would be safer to have only one student in a section of the course at a time.

Go!

After the races, ask the students whether the vocal distractions bothered them more at the start of their run or at the end. Did adrenaline help them to shut out the distractions, or make it harder to do so? Would it be more accurate to say that adrenaline forced them to concentrate more on one thing, and that if they were concentrating on a distraction or a fear it could make it harder to break free from that distraction, but that if they were concentrating on running it made it harder to be distracted?

You might want to have the class do an internet search on the effects of adrenaline. If you do not, at least incorporate into the discussion this fact: adrenaline flow creates tunnel vision, narrowing our pupils and the focus of our eyes. So it would have been all the harder for Peter to look at the wind (or its effects) and see Jesus at the same time. He had to choose which one got his attention.

Help your students recognize that the “fight or flight” reaction our bodies are so attuned to can get in the way sometimes. Sometimes we must strive to achieve calm and peace if we are to serve.

Close

Possible prayer: **Lord Jesus, help us to keep our focus on You. When we look at the world and its problems help us to see the work You are doing, and the work You would have us do, and not simply be distressed over problems. Help us to recognize the beauty and majesty and glory that Your Father put into this world and into its inhabitants. Don't allow us to look at the wind and fear being sunk, but help us to view the wind as a reminder of the power You grant to us. Thank You Lord, Amen.**

Go!**Looking to the Future****RESEARCH**

Materials: Worksheet “Peter Part Two: The Man of Courage”; writing utensils; optional: Bibles to look at more of the story (including Acts 5:17ff, especially vs. 40, 41)

Quest Connection

Peter’s story didn’t end in Galilee. He went on to serve Jesus in a number of situations and a variety of ways. Let’s look at a one to see how Peter may have learned from reflecting on his experiences in today’s Bible story.

Procedure: Your students will individually read the Bible text on the worksheet, which relates to one of Peter’s experiences with threats from the government in first century Israel. They will consider what things Peter could have feared in the situation, and how Peter behaved.

When your class has finished with the worksheets, engage them in discussion about the text. What things might Peter have feared? Various possibilities could be suggested, including: physical harm, imprisonment, being shown up in an argument about his interpretation of Scripture, not being able to “prove” that Jesus is God’s son, speaking to people in public, being shown to be uneducated, meeting famous people. [If you have extra time for this activity, you might extend your examination of the story to Acts 5:17ff, particularly noticing verses 40 and 41 where we get the response of the apostles to actually being beaten.]

Ask if your students have any insights to share from their own brushes with fear based on what they have just been reading about Peter. Once those have shared who wish to, close with the prayer below.

Close

Possible prayer: **Lord Jesus, we know that we have feared many things in our lives, and that we do not need to. Peter once said to You basically “if you are you, let me do this.” Lord, help us to firmly hold on to our faith that You are the Christ, our savior, and that You will provide us with everything we need to serve You. Help us to learn from our own past experiences with fear. Allow us to grow and to serve You, trusting in Your strength and Your wisdom to see us through. Thank You Lord, Amen.**

Is Facing Your Fears Really a Good Idea?

Experience doesn't necessarily solve the problem of fear. The disciples on Galilee in today's Bible story had already faced a very similar situation, in a boat during a storm (Matthew 8:23-27). That account ends with the disciples asking what kind of man Jesus was to do these things. The current story ends with the disciples acknowledging that this Jesus must be the Son of God – progress was being made! Of course even once they voiced these words they weren't ready to act on faith in Jesus in every situation; they fell into fear again when Jesus was arrested. But they were moving forward in faith, and ultimately they received the Holy Spirit. That Spirit has to be remembered in this story. Peter "saw" the wind and was afraid, but he could not really see it. Rather he heard it, and witnessed its effects. Had Peter really been able to "see" wind perhaps he could also have seen the wind of the Spirit (John 3:8) and recognized that as the power holding up both him and his master that night.

What ought the disciples to have learned from their earlier experiences on the Sea of Galilee?

Do you generally benefit more from examining what you are afraid of, or trying not to concentrate on it?

Do you have any fears that you think are probably silly, but you fear them anyway? If so, do you let them get in the way of things you would really like to do or feel you ought to do?

What plans do you have for dealing with your fears?

What help can you get from those around you to help with your fears? Are you ready to seek that help from them?

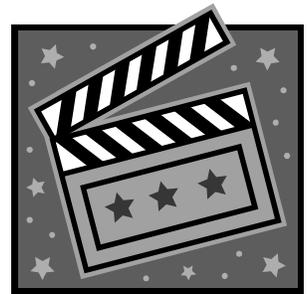
Scripting the Story

Silent film stars showed their emotions on their faces, with the way they moved, and with their gestures. It is important in a film for what a person is feeling to be able to come across visually, but it is even more important when they won't be able to convey it with words. This worksheet will help you to analyze what people in today's Bible story were feeling at different times.

First identify your characters, who is in this text?

What is the motivation for each of these people to be where they are? What are their backgrounds, and their purposes?

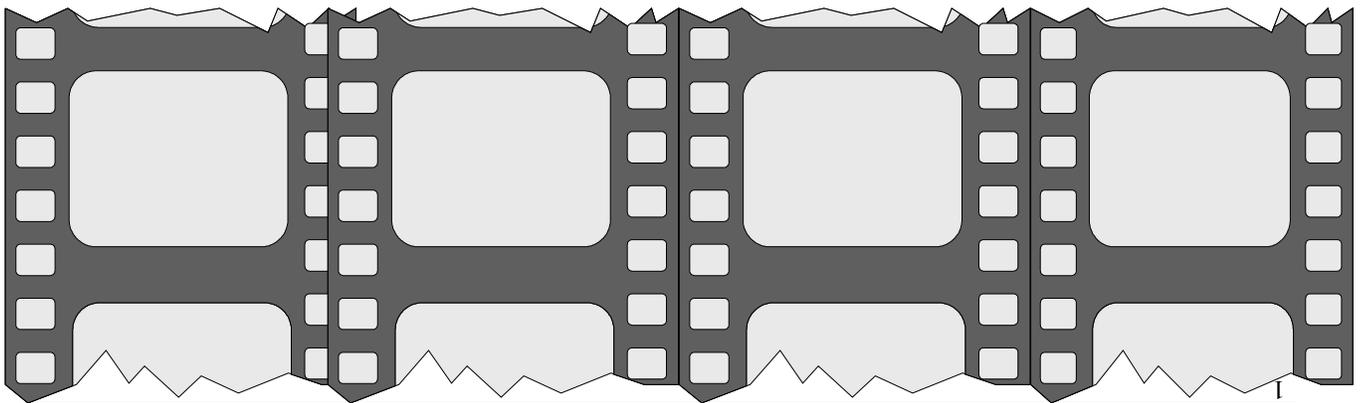
What weaknesses or needs are each of these characters feeling in the story? If this shifts at different points, give a sequence, and note what leads to each change.

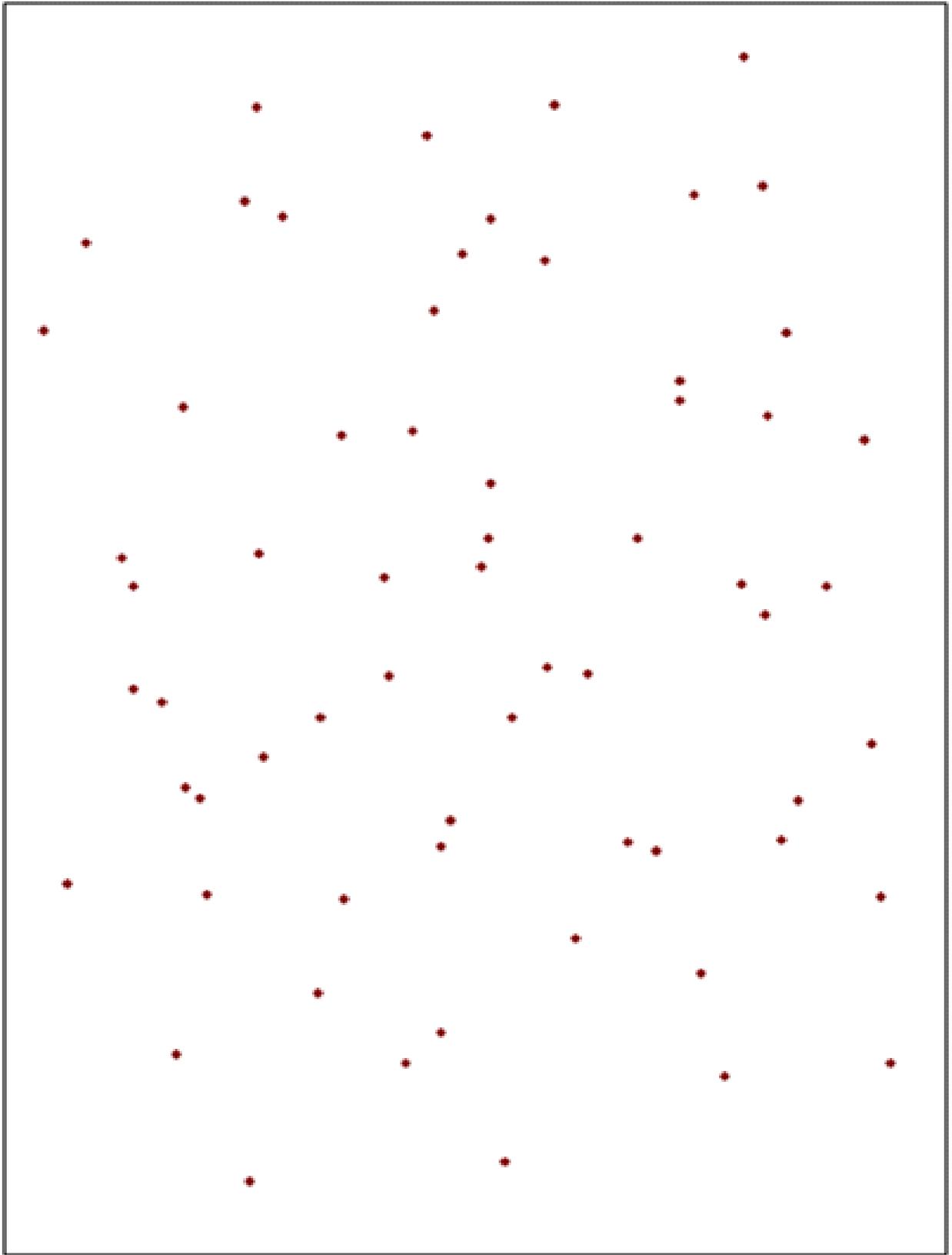


What is the likely aftermath of this story for each character (do they undergo a change, are they aware of new things, trying to change, etc.)? Describe the outcome for each character, and note how it might be possible to convey it visually.

In the boxes at the bottom of this page (and in more which you create, if needed), sketch the individual scenes (showing general placement of individuals, props, etc.) necessary to relay the story to an audience.

What comments should appear on the screen as signs? What dialogue is significant? What narrative elements should be conveyed by words rather than appearing as images?





Peter Part Two: The Man of Courage

The story of the storm on Galilee leaves a strong impression. It seems certain that Peter's time with Jesus had a lasting impression on him. This passage (Acts 4:1-21) gives us a glimpse into Peter's later life. Make notes below about things Peter could have chosen to be afraid of.

The priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to Peter and John while they were speaking to the people. They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. They seized Peter and John, and because it was evening, they put them in jail until the next day. But many who heard the message believed, and the number of men grew to about five thousand.

The next day the rulers, elders and teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and the other men of the high priest's family. They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?"

Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them: "Rulers and elders of the people! If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. He is 'the stone you builders rejected, which has become the capstone.' Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved."

When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. But since they could see the man who had been healed standing there with them, there was nothing they could say. So they ordered them to withdraw from the Sanhedrin and then conferred together. "What are we going to do with these men?" they asked. "Everybody living in Jerusalem knows they have done an outstanding miracle, and we cannot deny it. But to stop this thing from spreading any further among the people, we must warn these men to speak no longer to anyone in this name."

Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, "Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard." After further threats they let them go. They could not decide how to punish them, because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

Today's Bible verse says "'Lord, if it's you,' Peter replied, 'tell me to come to you on the water.'" (Matthew 14:28). Peter not only learned that it truly was Jesus who walked toward him on Galilee that night, he gained an understanding of just who that Jesus was, and that Jesus was calling him to do more than walk on water. Peter accepted God's plans for him, and became a well known worker for the Lord in the early church. Many things could have gone differently along the way, but Peter was not going to worry. He simply intended to serve.

My Journal

Fearing things is not always bad. We don't want to be burned, and we have good reason to avoid it if we can. But a firefighter who is unable to go near fire won't be able to do their job. We can't let fear paralyze us.

Mark Twain said that a cat will sit on a hot stove lid once, and then will never sit on any stove lid again. Am I like that? Have I had some bad experience in the past that still is bothering me, and which keeps me away from things that are not bad but are too similar to my earlier experience for me to be comfortable with them?

