



SESSION **3**

Jesus does miracles



MEETING AIM

To explore our relationship with prayer in crises.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 8:22-25



BACKGROUND

Being caught in a storm on a fishing boat in the middle of a large lake will be outside the experience of most young people. However, the truths that this story reveals about Jesus, his power and how much we can depend on him in times of crisis are very real. No matter what their backgrounds, all young people go through crises that seem to overwhelm them. How can Jesus, who commands the wind and waves, be relied upon today?

+ GATHERING TIME



You will need: refreshments; a comfortable place to sit and chat

Share your refreshments and chat about the week you have all just had. Go around and ask each person what was the worst nightmare / panicked situation they have ever had. Are there any situations where you have immediately resorted to crying out to Jesus?! This is just a bit of fun, but do go with it if the young people open up about tough times.

+ GAME



Everyone stands opposite a partner with their hands together and finger-tips just touching their partner's. Take it in turns to be the attacker and defender. When you are the attacker you can take as long as you want to suddenly try to slap the defenders' hands with one of yours. The defender's job is to try to spot when you are about to strike and move their hands out of the way and not get slapped. They can only move when the attacker has broken finger-tip contact - if the defender moves away and breaks that contact first they lose that round. The attacker can flinch (as long as they maintain finger-tip contact) in order to make the defender move first. Best of three

and winner goes through to next round. (Make sure your group don't get too violent or slap too hard!)

+ BIBLE EXPLORATION



You will need: chairs, boxes or anything you can use to create a 'boat'; Bible; fans; water pistols;

towels

Invite the young people to create a boat out of whatever you have provided (or what's in your meeting space). If you don't have anything, the young people can use themselves to make their boat!

Read or retell the story with the young people acting it out. When you get to the part when the storm hits, raise your voice as you read or retell. Encourage the group to rock about in the 'boat', shout and scream. Turn on your fans and fire water pistols at the young people to symbolise the wind and rain. Invite the young people to panic and scream aloud, while the disciples are panicking! When Jesus stands up to calm the storm, everyone should fall silent.

If anyone has got particularly wet, give them towels to dry off! Chat about what the disciples must have felt like. Wonder at how and why Jesus stayed asleep for so long, even though the storm was so rough. What connections between this story and the young people's lives now can they make?

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the group these questions, making sure everyone has the chance to contribute:

- Were the disciples right to panic? Why?
- Were you surprised by Jesus' reaction? Why? What would you have thought he would do?
- What would a modern equivalent be of this story?
- How important is it to feel in control?
- What does prayer achieve in those situations?
- Is there a difference between a panicky prayer and a faith-filled prayer? What makes a good prayer? What prayers does God like best?
- What can we do as well as pray?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



Try this method of enacting the Bible story again, but this time, think about stressful and panicky situations that the group might find themselves in during their day-to-day lives. This could be exam stress, feeling scared at night, being trolled online.

Have one of the young people describe a particular situation. Everyone should panic until that person shouts: "HAVE FAITH!" At which point, everyone must fall silent. Try to get everyone to have at least one go.

What conclusions can the young people draw from this exercise? Is it easy to let Jesus take control and calm down? Or do their thoughts and anxieties run away with them still? Share a story from your own life about a time when you had faith in Jesus during a stressful and scary time (or invite a volunteer to visit your group and share a story). Give space for the group to ask any questions they like.

+ PRAYER



You will need: bubble machine or several bottles of bubble mixture; 'The prayers of the saints'

by Matt Redman and the means to play it

Explain that God loves to hear us speak to him. The Bible says the prayers of the saints are like sweet smelling incense (Revelation 5:8) so to illustrate and visualise that we are going to use bubbles to symbolise prayer.

Set the bubble machine going and try to fill the room! Let the young people enjoy being in the bubbles and playing with them.

Follow on from this (you may need to ask them to calm it down a bit!) by playing 'The prayers of the saints' by Matt Redman in the background. Ask the young people to think personally of a prayer - something they need God to help them with or something they want to thank God for. Go around the circle to pray but get the person before each pray-er to blow bubbles into the middle as they are speaking.

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