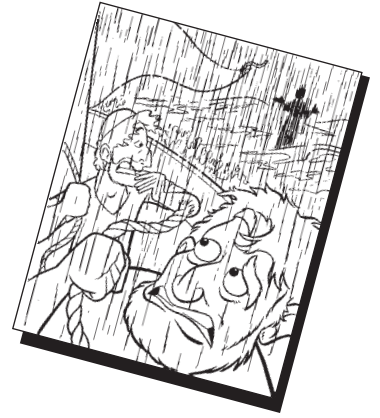




Jesus Walks On Water

Matthew 14:22–34



LESSON GOAL

Students will trust Jesus, the Son of God.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus walked on the water.
- Jesus commanded Peter to come to Him on the water.
- Peter began to sink because he lacked faith.
- When Jesus stepped on the boat the wind stopped.

KEY VERSE

“Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’”
—Matthew 14:33

APPLICATION

- Trust that Jesus will give salvation to all who believe.
- Trust, serve, and obey Jesus
- Keep your focus on Jesus.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Defines Discipleship
Matthew 16:13–17, 21–27

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

After the disciples had come back from proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and performing miracles across Israel, they were eager to tell Jesus about “all things, both what they had done and what they had taught” (Mark 6:30). The disciples’ time of sharing with Jesus was cut short by the formation of a massive crowd who had gathered around Jesus because of all the miracles He did (John 6:2). Although the disciples were full of messages and miracles, Jesus used the crowd’s need of food to draw the disciples’ attention where it belonged—toward Himself! Jesus knew what He was going to do but He chose to test the disciples by challenging them to find food for the people (John 6:5–6; Matt. 14:16). Sadly, the disciples did not look to the Creator but to their deficient funds and the massive crowd. How shocked they must have been when Jesus provided the crowds with more than enough food! He even provided twelve baskets of leftovers for His beloved disciples.

Although Jesus’ miracle should have challenged the disciples to greater faith, the Gospel of Mark reveals that the disciples “had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened” (Mark 6:52). Despite Jesus’ amazing miracle, they refused to reevaluate their understanding of Jesus in the light of His power over creation. They had grown accustomed to Jesus’ miracles and were content with their perception of Him. The disciples did not yet know Jesus as He was. As evening turned into night, Jesus continued to challenge His disciples’ faith. By the next morning, the disciples would be so amazed by what they saw that night that they would confess, “Truly You are the Son of God” (Matt. 14:33).

The Disciples’ Departure (Matt. 14:22–24)

Following Jesus’ miraculous feeding, the crowds were ready to make Jesus king by force (John 6:15). Jesus knew that the crowds only wanted more food and were not willing to repent and place their faith in Him. Jesus quickly diffused the situation. He commanded His disciples to leave by boat and go to the western side of the Sea of Galilee (Matt. 14:22). He also sent away the multitudes (14:23). (The crowds would look for Jesus the next day in hopes of finding another free meal [John 6:22–26].)

After sending away the multitude, Jesus “went up the mountain by Himself to pray” (Matt. 14:23). The Bible does not record what Jesus prayed for. Besides enjoying the presence of His Father, Jesus may have prayed for wisdom in dealing with both the crowds and His disciples. Jesus surely also submitted His will to the Father’s. During Jesus’ 40 days of temptation, Satan had offered Jesus the kingdoms of the world (Matt. 4:8) and now the multitudes desired to make Him king. Neither were in accordance with God’s plan. Jesus may have also been submitting His

upcoming miracles on the Sea of Galilee to the Father. Unlike the miracle Satan challenged him to perform, the miracles Jesus would do were not for the purpose of exalting Himself (Matt. 4:5–6).

While Jesus was praying, the disciples were finding it impossible to cross the Sea of Galilee. The disciples had probably intended to follow the shore towards Capernaum but a strong wind had blown the boat off course (Matt. 14:24; Mark 6:47; John 6:18). Despite the rowing of experienced fishermen, the boat had been forced “three or four miles” south toward the center of the Sea of Galilee (John 6:19). The disciples, battling fiercely to get to shore, had forgotten about their Master, but He had not forgotten about them.

The Disciples’ Doubting (Matt. 14:25–31)

The Gospel of Mark reveals how Jesus saw His disciples from the mountain: “Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land. Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them” (Mark 6:47–48). The majestic Messiah turned His supernatural gaze toward the disciples struggling at sea. During the fourth watch (between 3 and 6 a.m.), “Jesus went to them, walking on the sea” (Matt. 14:25). The laws of gravity were not laws to the Son of God who holds all things together.

Although the disciples had seen Jesus feed the multitude less than twelve hours before, they were terrified to see a man moving toward them across the surface of the water. Their limited faith did not have room for a man who could walk on water. The only thing they could relate it to was stories about ghosts. The weary men could do nothing but cry “out for fear” (Matt. 14:26). Jesus did not reprimand the disciples for their fear and lack of faith. Instead, Jesus encouraged them by saying, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid” (Matt. 14:27). By pointing to Himself, Jesus calmed the disciples’ fears.

Perhaps of all the disciples, Peter was the quickest to embrace the reality of what he saw. The man on the waves was the same man whom he had left everything to follow. In one day, Peter had seen Jesus heal many, feed a multitude, and now walk on water. Only a few minutes prior, Peter had been terrified, but now his faith had grown. Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water” (Matt. 14:28). Peter had no doubt that he really was speaking to Jesus. Peter based his request to walk on the water on the fact that he was in the presence of his Lord. When Jesus commanded him to come, Peter obeyed and walked on the water to go to Jesus (14:29). His faith in Jesus translated into action.

Even though Peter exercised faith in coming to Jesus, his faith was still weak. Before reaching Jesus, Peter took his eyes off Jesus and focused on the storm surrounding him. When Peter “saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid” (Matt. 14:30). Peter had been a fisherman and knew how dangerous storms on the Sea of Galilee could be. He had already spent hours that night battling the fierce winds. Perhaps the fierce wind pushed him toward the water and the waves drenched his clothes. Suddenly the reality that he was standing on the sea in the middle of a storm hit Peter and he panicked. As his faith in the Messiah dissipated, so did his safety. Peter began to sink. In desperation, he called out the only thing he could: “Lord, save me!”

Jesus first rescued and then reprimanded the drowning Peter. To rescue Peter, Jesus “stretched out His hand and caught him” (Matt. 14:31). Jesus could have rescued Peter with only a word, but He chose mercifully to stretch out His strong carpenter hands to strengthen the panicking Peter. While Jesus’ grip was encouraging, His words revealed that Peter’s faith still needed to grow. He identified Peter as one of “little faith” and asked Peter why he doubted. Peter’s unbelief was irrational. In

addition to the miracles he had seen that day, Peter had already seen Jesus calm a previous Galilean storm. Instead of dwelling on the truth of what he knew, Peter focused on himself and self-preservation. Ultimately, his unwillingness to abandon himself to Jesus' care nearly cost him his life.

The Disciples' Devotion (Matt. 14:32–34)

As soon as Jesus and Peter entered the boat, "the wind ceased" (Matt. 14:32). The disciples responded to these miracles by worshiping Jesus. They said to Him, "Truly You are the Son of God" (14:33). Their faith had grown in response to what they had seen Jesus do. While before "they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened" (Mark 6:52), now the disciples were "amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled" (Mark 6:51). Jesus' walking on the water snapped them out of their apathy. They were forced to question who Jesus was and realized that He was the Son of God. Yet even after seeing Jesus walk on the water, Peter was still subject to doubt. The disciples were learning to grow in faith as they embraced the Messiah, the Son of God. John records one more miracle that occurred in the early morning: "Immediately the boat was at the land where they were going" (John 6:21). The boat with its passengers was miraculously transported to Gennesaret (Matt. 14:34).

Conclusion

The author of Hebrews states that "without faith it is impossible to please Him" (Heb. 11:6). Jesus graciously cultivated the disciples' faith in Himself so that it would be possible for them to please the Father. They needed to respond to Jesus' miracles by trusting in Him and worshiping Him as the Son of God. Believers today must cultivate their faith in Jesus. He alone sustains in the midst of trials and enables sanctification. Believers must pursue Christ with a singular focus and trust Him as the authority over their lives. Those who have not come to faith in Christ must trust Him for their redemption and submit to Him in repentance.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

What were Jesus and the disciples doing in the beginning of this story?
Jesus and the disciples were looking for a quiet place to take a break.

What did they find when they came to the shore?
They found a multitude of people who had followed them.

What did Jesus do for the people?
Jesus healed the sick.

What did the disciples say when it was getting late?
They said that Jesus should send away the people to find food.

How much food did they have?

All they could find were five loaves of bread and two fish.

What did Jesus do with the loaves and fish?

Jesus thanked God for the food and gave it to the people. When they were done they were all full and there were 12 baskets of leftovers.



Small Pan of Water

Using a small pan of water (pie pan, shallow bowl) demonstrate some features of water from the lesson, such as wind on the water (blowing, using a fan, blowing through a straw), a boat race across the pan, or things that float and sink.



Large Pan of Water

Using a large pan of water, have a teacher or volunteer to try to walk across the water. Will they float or sink? Variation: Command, a leader to walk on the water. Of course, they cannot because they trusted a man with no power. However, in the lesson, Peter trusted Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who gave him a clear command to walk on the water, and he did. Now, if Peter could trust Jesus Christ who had power over the elements, who are you going to trust for your eternal life, salvation?



Will It Float?

Bring into class something like a tank, pitcher, etc. of water where the students can observe the water and the objects inside. The object of this activity is to get the students thinking about what floats and what sinks. Bring in some objects (that will not break the container) such as a piece of wood, a doll, a coin, etc. Begin this game by asking the students if they think different objects will sink or float. Put the objects into the water and let them watch it float at the top or sink to the bottom. Ask the students what would happen if a person were to get into the tank. Would they float or sink? Some may say float and others say sink. Would a person be able to stand on top of the water? The students should say that people can not stand on top of the water. Explain that in today's lesson someone will stand right on top of the ocean. The disciples were very nervous but then they realized who it was. Let's listen to today's lesson and find out who was walking on the water.



Out On The Water

Introduce today's setting by asking the students how many of them have been out on a boat in the ocean or on a lake. Possibly some of them have even tried to water ski. Discuss some of the things that people do out on the water. Now ask the students if any of them have ever walked out of the boat onto the water. In today's lesson the disciples will see a figure out on the water. They will think it is a ghost and be afraid. Let's find out what happens next.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Jesus still had a lot to teach His disciples. Even though they saw Him do many great miracles, they still did not have great faith in Him, or even accept that He was the Son of God. Jesus would continue to test their faith in Him, and the next miracle that He would do would cause them to say, "Truly, You are the Son of God" (14:33).

Jesus had just shown great compassion on a large crowd by healing their sicknesses and diseases, and feeding their hungry stomachs by miraculously creating enough food for everyone to eat. Jesus knew that the crowds did not respond to this miracle the way that they should have. Instead of seeing that Jesus was God and that they needed to repent of their sins, they wanted Jesus to be their earthly king, because He could keep them healthy and full of food. Rather than allowing the crowd to get to thinking about that, He sent them all home, and He told the disciples to take the boat and go ahead without Him. After everyone had gone, Jesus went up on the mountain by Himself to pray.

While Jesus was praying, the disciples were in their boat, trying to get to the next shore where they would stop. It was late at night, and the winds came up and blew them far off course. They were certainly tired, and having to struggle with the boat and the wind only made it worse. It was a dangerous situation. Jesus could see the disciples struggling with the wind in their boat, because He was at a high spot up on the mountain. Jesus decided to go to the disciples out on the boat. But Jesus did not have a boat. The disciples were out in the sea, and Jesus did not seem to have a way to get to the disciples' boat. But nothing is impossible for Jesus, because He is God. Jesus walked right out onto the water. Instead of sinking into the water or swimming, Jesus walked right on the water, just like He was walking on land!

As Jesus neared the disciples' boat, they saw Him, but they did not know it was Jesus. They were so scared. They saw a man walking on water, but men don't walk on water! They only thing they could imagine was that they were seeing some kind of a ghost! They screamed and cried because they were so afraid. But Jesus said to them, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid" (14:27). When the disciples saw that the man was Jesus, they calmed down. Peter was the first one to realize what He was seeing. He had been right in thinking that no man could walk on water, because Jesus was not an ordinary man. Only the Son of God could do such a thing. Peter knew that he could put his faith in the Son of God, trusting Him with his life. Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). When Jesus commanded him to come, Peter obeyed and he, too, walked on the water toward Jesus. His faith weakened though, when he noticed the gusting wind. He was very scared! When his faith weakened, he started to sink. He did the only thing he could to be saved; he called out, "Lord,

save me!" (14:30)

Jesus rescued Peter, but then reprimanded him. "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" (14:31) As soon as they climbed into the boat, the wind stopped, and they were suddenly transported to the shore where they had been heading.

It was an important night for all of the disciples. They came to an understanding about who Jesus was, and their faith grew because of it. "Truly, You are the Son of God," they said (14:33).



Lesson Questions

What did Jesus and the disciples do at the beginning of the story?

Jesus went up on a mountain by Himself to pray. The disciples got in the boat to cross the Sea of Galilee.

What had happened to the disciples while Jesus was praying?

The winds began to blow fiercely and the disciples were finding it impossible to cross the Sea.

What did Jesus do after praying?

Jesus began walking on the Sea of Galilee toward His disciples.

What did Peter ask Jesus when he saw Him out on the water?

Peter asked if he could come out onto the water also.

What happened when Peter walked out onto the water?

Peter was distracted by the wind and waves and sunk into the water.

What happened when Peter sunk into the Sea?

Jesus reached out and saved him. When Jesus got back into the boat the storm stopped.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



Maps and Pictures

Use a map to bring this lesson to life. Show the students a map where the disciples traveled to and from on the boat. Explain where Jesus may have gone to pray and explain what the overall region was like. Another resource that may be helpful for illustrating this lesson to the students is pictures of the region. These pictures can be found on the internet, computer resources, pictorial encyclopedias, etc.

Praise and Worship

He Is Lord

King of Kings

Fairest Lord Jesus



Jesus Stops the Wind

Jesus sent all the crowds away,
(wave goodbye)

And went alone up a mountain to pray.
(walk fingers up, the palms together)

On a boat in the sea, the disciples were rowing,
(pretend to row)

Wind blew them off course; it was blowing and blowing,
(wave hands dramatically back and forth)

Jesus walked to the boat, through the wind, on the sea.
(walk fingers)

The disciples were all as scared as can be.
(hold hands at mouth)

Jesus said, "It's me, be happy, fear not,"
(point up, then point to happy face)

When he stepped in the boat, the wind came to a stop.
(wave hands dramatically back and forth, then clap on the word 'stop'
and hold still)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

"That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments." —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Heart Response

Materials: copies of "What Is Your Response to Jesus' Miracles" craft pages, sandpaper (or rocks on cardboard), cotton balls (or soft craft balls), glue.

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page. Have him or her glue sandpaper to the "Hard Heart" and cotton balls to the "Soft Heart." Explain to the class the difference between the two hearts.



Jesus Stretches out a Hand

Materials: copies of "Jesus Stretches out a Hand" craft pages, brad, crayons, and glue

Directions: Give the students the base sheet and ask them to decorate and color the page. They may then take Peter's arm and glue it reaching from the bottom left corner towards the top right. Jesus' arm can then be attached to the top right corner with a brad. Finally, the students may glue a wave across the bottom front of the page. Jesus preformed an amazing miracle when He walked on the water. Because He is God He had the authority to allow Peter walk out on the water to

Him. As Peter walked out to Jesus he was distracted by the wind and the waves and sank into the water.



“Peter’s Faith Is Tested”

Materials: Peter, Jesus, disciples, boat (1/4 circle), waves and copies of “Peter’s Faith is Tested” on cardstock

Directions: Precut a slit on cardstock. Give the above materials to the students and ask them to color the background and individuals. The students should glue Jesus to the right side of the page. Attach Peter to a craft stick and then insert him through the slit. The student can move Peter across the water and have him sink. Attach the waves to the bottom of the page to cover the slit.



Walking on the Water

Use this fun time to review the events of today’s lesson. Spread out a large sheet on the floor. Have two teachers hold the front corners of the sheet and set a fan at that end. Turn on the fan and give the sheet some slack to allow air to pass under and over the sheet. The sheet should look like the ocean and the wind should remind them of the storm. Instruct the other students to sit and take turns walking on “the water.” Use this time to review the lesson’s events with the students.

Coloring Pages

Give each child a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.



MEMORY VERSE

“Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, ‘Truly You are the Son of God.’” —*Matthew 14:33*

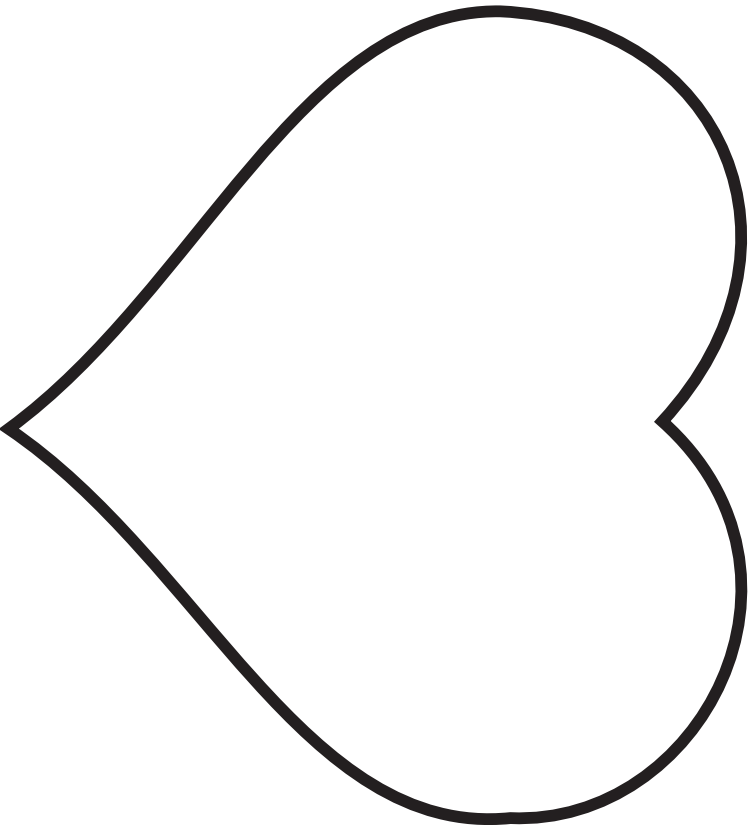
What Is Your Response to Jesus' Miracles?

Jesus walked on the water to demonstrate His power before His disciples.

They worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God" (Matt. 14:33).

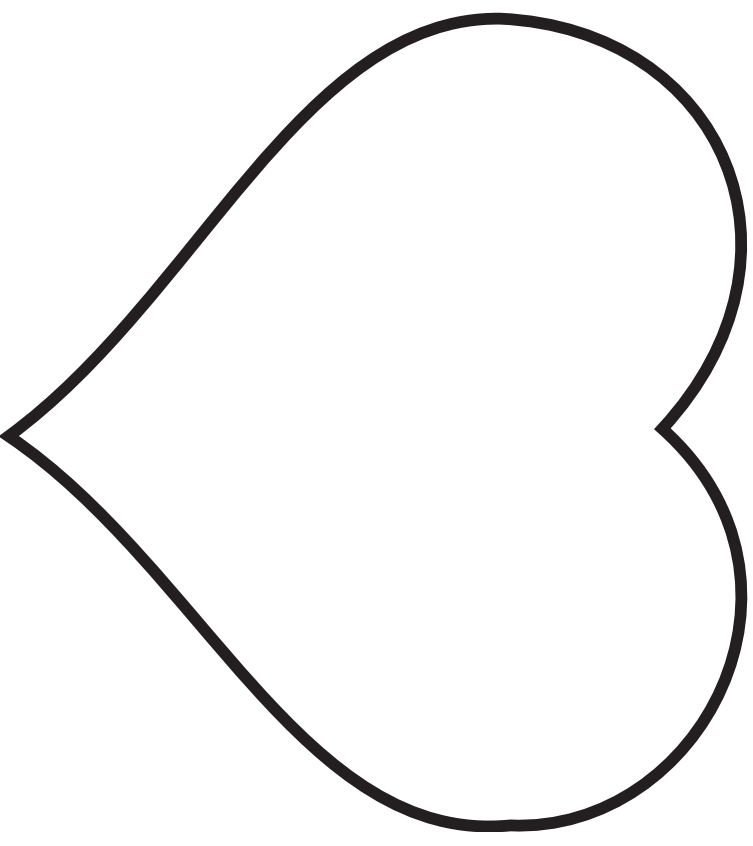
How will you respond?

Hard Heart



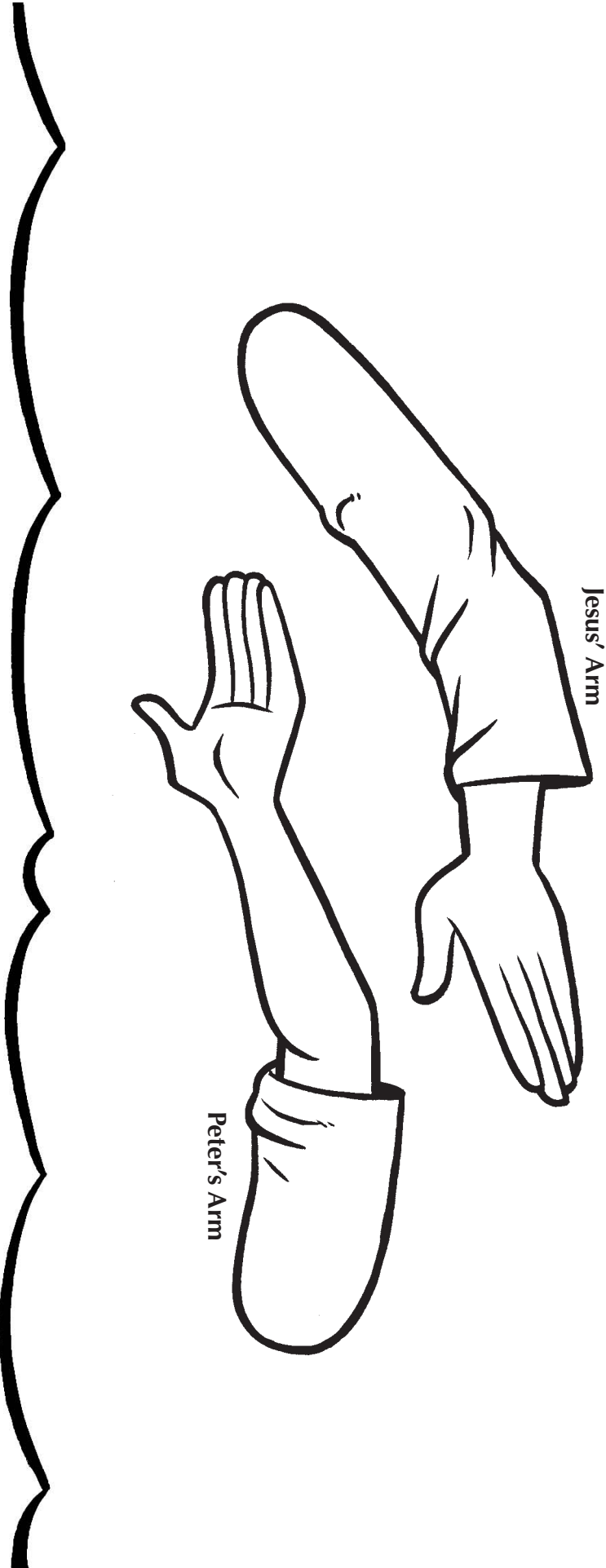
Are you amazed by the awesome
demonstrations of Jesus' power?
Are they just stories to you?

Soft Heart



Will you humble yourself
before the powerful Lord and Savior,
Jesus Christ?

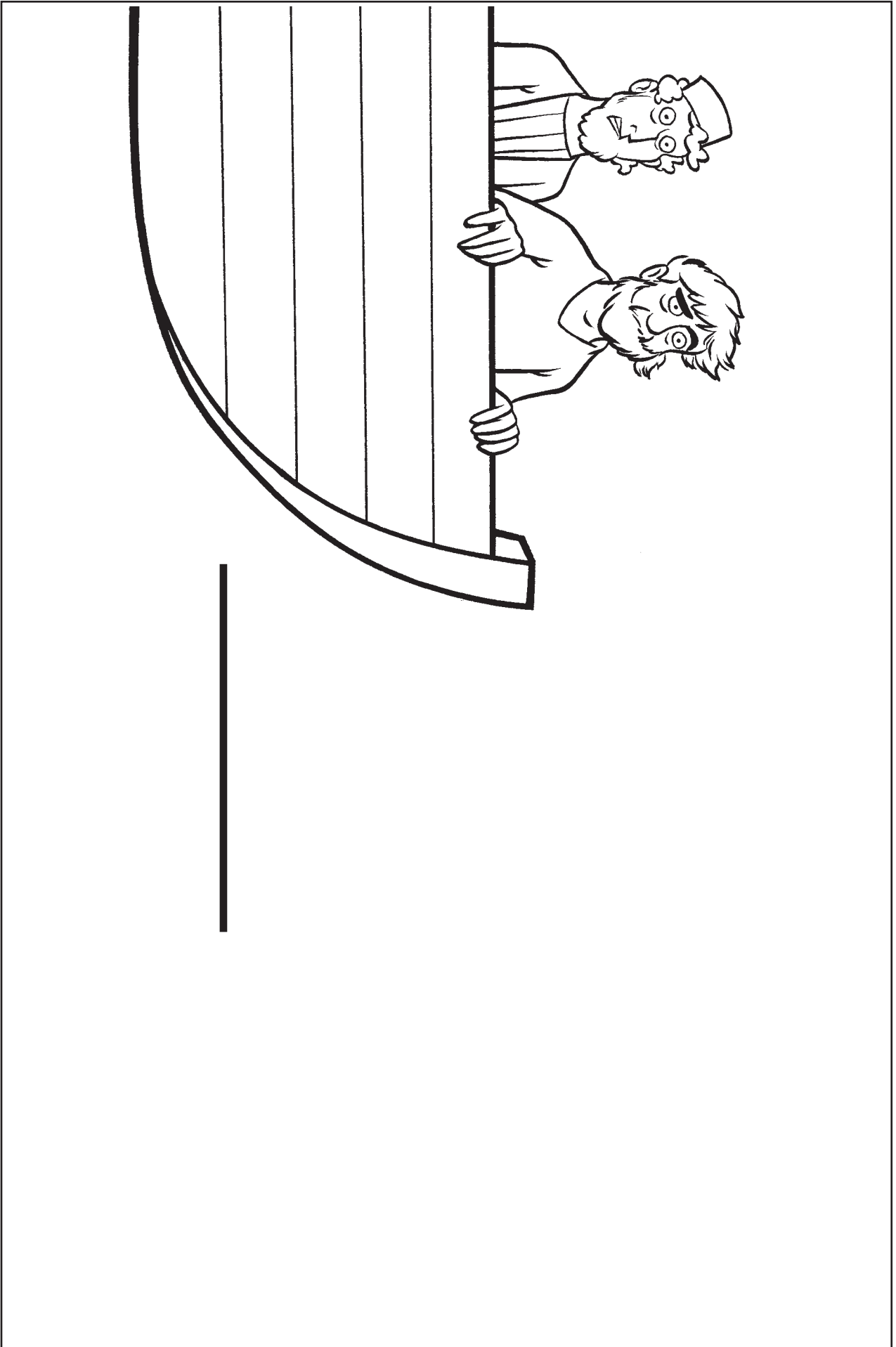
Jesus Stretches Out a Hand



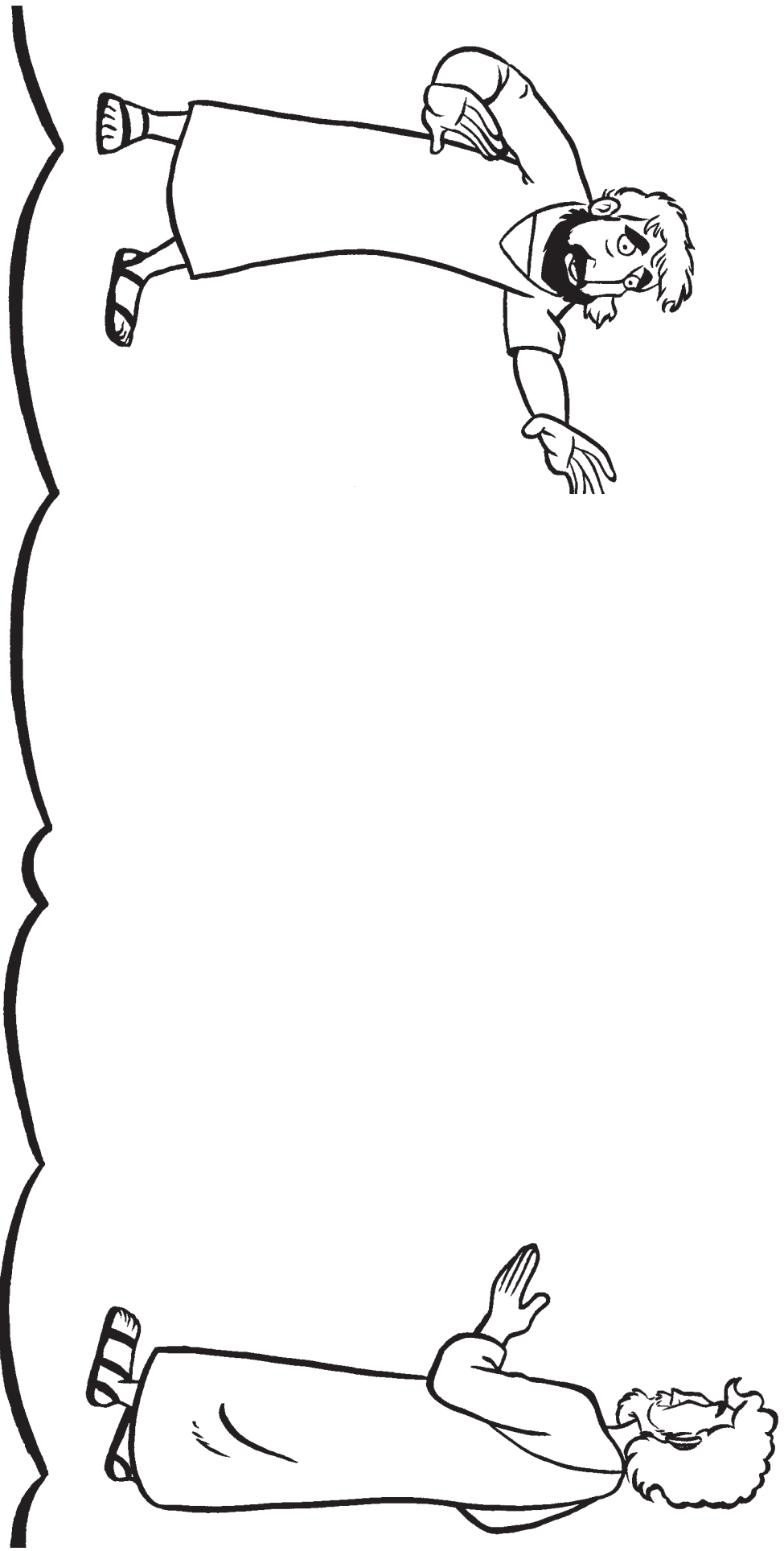
Jesus Stretches Out a Hand

“And when Peter had come out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord, save me!’ And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, ‘O you of little faith, why did you doubt?’”
—Matthew 14:30–31

Peter's Faith Is Tested

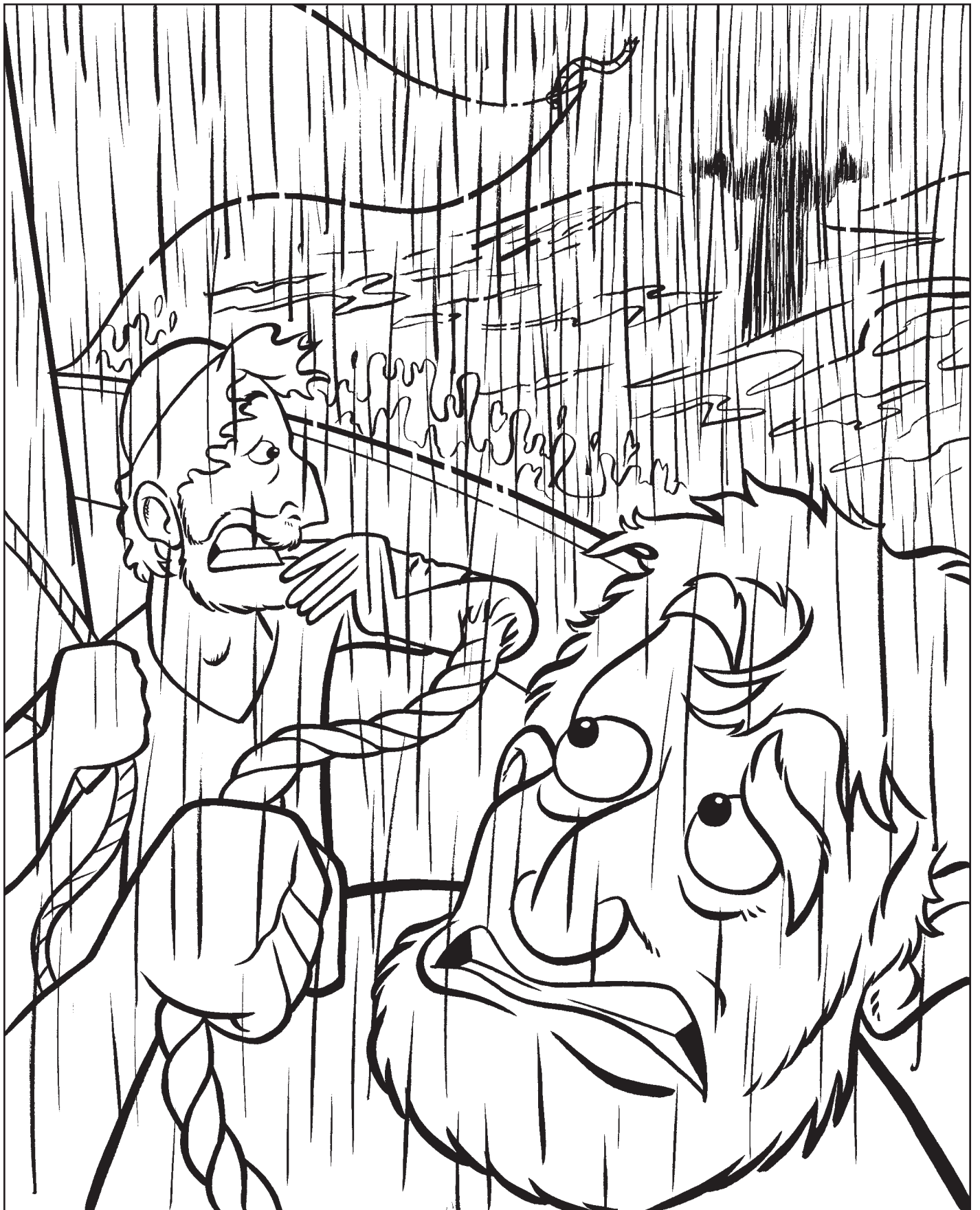


Peter's Faith Is Tested



"And when Peter had come out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, 'Lord, save me!' And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, 'O you of little faith, why did you doubt?'"

—Matthew 14:30–31



“Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, ‘It is a ghost!’ And they cried out for fear.” —Matthew 14:25–26



“...And when Peter had come out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, ‘Lord save me!’” —Matthew 14:29–30

