

MEET THE WALK ON WATER

CURRICULUM TEAM

Rachel Wierenga is the Content and Curriculum Manager at GEMS. She has a bachelor's degree in integrated ministry studies from the Moody Bible Institute and is working toward her master of divinity degree at Denver Seminary. She has many years of kids' ministry experience and is passionate about teaching girls that they are known, seen, and loved by God.

Rachel has lived in Indiana, Illinois, Connecticut, and Colorado, but now loves calling Grand Rapids, Michigan, her home. She enjoys getting coffee with friends, writing music and leading worship with her husband, running marathons, and delighting in God's goodness in ordinary, everyday moments.

Lenae Bulthuis served as the GEMS Curriculum/ Content Director for twenty years. Now, she shepherds, nurtures, and encourages girls and women as a speaker, a curriculum and devotional writer for various publications, and an eighth-grade GEMS leader in her local GEMS Club. She and her husband, Mike, live in West Central Minnesota, where she loves spending time with her precious amily. She is often seen with a coffee mug, look, or pickleball racket in hand. Karyn Dekker is a Midwest native whose GEMS story began at age seven, when she became a Busy Bee. Over the years, she has served GEMS in various capacities: Discovery Level Counselor, Club Coordinator, Leadership Trainer, and GEMS Executive Board Member. She is a nurse by education, a business owner through marriage, and a disciple maker by grace. She is passionate about helping girls of all ages develop a living, dynamic relationship with Jesus Christ.

Karyn lives in South Florida with her husband, an entrepreneur-turned-turner. They enjoy spending time with their actific children. On an, given day, you can find Karyn going for a long wall drinking a large cup of coffee, or practicing her newest skill: baking sourdough bread.

Dana Deerens has been involved in her local SEMS Club for eleven years, serving as Craft Counselor and Club Coordinator. She has a passion for girls and strives to convey the love of Jesus to them whenever she can. Dana and her husband live in Jenison, Michigan, where she is a stay-at-home mom and home educator to their three children. She enjoys vegetable gardening and home canning. She is a hobbyist photographer and admitted craftaholic. You never know what project she will have going on; it could be sewing, painting, tiling the kitchen, building a chicken coop, or even rendering tallow to make soap! Her favorite way to relax is sitting around the campfire with family.

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sincerely say that some of your greatest friends are your GEMS friends.

Let's start by sharing three things about ourselves.

"THREE THINGS ABOUT ME"

ASK each girl to share these three things about herself. Share about yourself, too.

- 1. What's your full name?
- What kind of day are you having? (She should respond with a thumbs up, thumbs down, or sideways thumb. Ask follow-up questions. Discover what happened to make them feel this way.)
- 3. What do you like to do in your spare time?

SAY Girls, thank you for sharing. I love getting to know each one of you more.

WALK ON WATER SURVEY

SAY I'm going to hand out a survey. This is another way to help us get to know you better. This survey is meant to be anonymous, so please do not write your name. Also, be honest about your answers to the questions. Circle what is true for you today.

- Distribute the surveys and writing utensils and collect them when the cirk are finished.
- 3. Give the surveys to your Club Coordinator, who will report the results by following the instructions on page 14

WHY TAKE THE WALK ON WATER SURVEY?

GEMS Club Leaders are encouraged to have their GEMS girls take a survey on the first and last week of club. The Walk on Water survey is an important tool to help each club measure what girls learn at GEMS. You can share the results with your church and community to show the amazing difference GEMS makes in girls' lives.



"BEST PLACE TO BE"

SAY Please number your paper from one to five, and keep your answers private. I'm going to ask five questions about the best place to be. Write what comes to mind first. Are you ready?

ASK Where's the best place to be . . .

- 1. At a concert
- 2. In the lunchroom
- 3. In a fierce storm
- 4. In your home
- 5. When you're afraid

LEADER NOTE: Replacifule five questions and listen in the girls' conswers. Discover the similarities and differences in their responses. This activity is a fun way to get to know one another better and ties into the Bible Study.

S. Y It's o fun to learn more about each of you. When er you think the best place to be sometimes, or _______, or ________, (list the best places girls snared), the most significant thing about that place is that God is always with you.

You'll learn that truth from God's Word, the Bible, and more in this year's theme, Water on Water: Stepping Out to Trust Our Faithful God.

"Faith" means "to trust." To step out in faith means to trust God. Together, we will meet ordinary people in the Bible, like you and me, who did extraordinary things, even in terrifying situations, because they put their trust in God. They stepped out in faith, confident and courageous, trusting who God is and that He was with them no matter what.

What if you could become confident and courageous every day because you trusted God and knew He was with you? Sounds fantastic, right? Honestly, there are places we don't want to go. I don't love going to the dentist or trying new things in front of people. When I was your age, I was anxious about grades, fitting in, and worried that I'd never figure out what I should do with my life. (You can make these examples more personal.)

ASK Please give me a thumbs-up if you have some places you don't love to go or are experiencing things that make you anxious, sad, or worried. (Give girls the opportunity to share if they'd like, but don't push. They may not want to vocalize their thoughts in front of the others.)

SAY If so, you're in the right place. This year, we'll learn who God is, starting with our Theme Verse, Deuteronomy 7:9. Then you'll learn how to be a girl of faith who does hard and amazing things because you trust God and know He is with you.

ASK Are you ready to become a confident, courageous girl who steps out in faith? (*Listen to responses.*) Same here. Let's get to know God better by memorizing our Theme Verse, Deuteronomy 7:9.



MEMORY VERSE

[Time: 2 minutes]

Memorize Deuteronomy 7:9, the *Water on Water* Theme Verse, by using the "Word Card Scramble" activity.

"Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments" (Deuteronomy 7:9).

"WORD CAPD SCRA MPILE" INSTRUCTIONS:

- IN ADVANCE. while one word of the verse on individual index cards, plus the address, Deuteronomy 7:0
- 2. Direct girls to Deuteronomy 7:9 in their Bibles. They can highlight this verse with Bible highlighters if they have their own Bibles. Ask one girl to read the verse while the others place the verse cards in order.
- 3. ASK What does this verse teach us about God? 1. He is the LORD. There is only one God! 2. He is faithful. We can trust Him. 3. He keeps His covenant with those who love Him and keep His commandments. God is a promise maker and promise keeper.
- 4. Scramble the cards and have the girls work together to place the words in order. Then have them read the verse aloud together.



LEADER NOTE: If possible, have girls bring their personal Bibles to GEMS Club or provide a Bible for each girl. Only distribute the Walk on Water Grades 6–8 Journals when cued to do so below. Begin with just your Bibles.

BIBLE READING: MARK 4:35-41

SAY Please turn in your Bibles to Mark 4:35–41. (Wait for all girls to find the passage.)

ASK What is the heading above this passage in your Bible? (Listen)

SAY Yes. Before ve read about Jesus calming the storm, here's what happened before they got in the boat.

God's Son, Jesus, had spent the day by the lake teaching crowds of people who God is and what it me and to follow Him. His closest followers, known as Jesus's disciples, were with Him. By the end of the day, when Jesus and His disciples were climbing into their boat, they were likely tired and hungry.

Can you relate? You're tired and hangry after an exhausting day at school or a stressful week. You just want to wear comfy clothes, eat pizza or tacos, and be done? But things don't always work out the way we want or expect, do they? There's a boat full of people in this story who agree.

LEADER NOTE: If you do not have ample time to read this passage twice or work through both sets of questions, read it once and use the second set of questions. Teach in step with the Spirit. Girls will learn far more by soaking in a single Truth about God than skimming through each question.

Before we read this passage, I want you to engage your imagination. Picture yourself in the disciples' boat or in one of the nearby boats, experiencing this story as it unfolds.

ASK yourself, "What can I see or hear? What expressions do I picture on the faces of Jesus and His disciples?"

(Read Mark 4:35–41 aloud or have one volunteer read it. Girls can listen better when they are not concerned about when it is their turn to read the next verse.)

LEADER NOTE: You can help make this Bible story come alive for your girls. Rather than reading the Bible one-dimensionally and offering a quick interpretation or quickly moving on to another passage, go deep. Your tween and teen girls have the capacity to engage in the story. You're teaching them how to read and study the Bible as they meet ordinary people stepping out in faith and putting their trust in God.

Explore the depths of this passage by listening well and answering their questions with more questions.

- ASK What did you see and hear in this story? (Listen to personal responses. They may have seen lightning, huge waves rocking and filling their boat, and water swirling everywhere. They may have heard the wind and thunder but had difficulty hearing one another because the storm was so loud.)
- 2. **ASK** What expressions did you picture on the faces of the disciples and Jesus? What would you have done it you were in the boat? The disciples were terrified and panicked. They may have been biting their lips, wide eved with fright, or maybe shutting their eyes, wishing it yould all stop. The storm may have surprised them, especially if the lake was calm when they left the shore. But Jesus was calm. He slept through the storm and was firm, commanding the wind and waves to be quiet! (Listen to personal responses about what the girls may have done.)
- 3. **ASK** What do you think the disciples were feeling or wondering? What would you have been feeling or wondering? The disciples were frightened and wondered if they were going to die. During the storm, they may have been angry or confused because Jesus was sleeping instead of helping. They may have felt hurt or betrayed because it looked like Jesus didn't care that they were going to drown. After Jesus calmed the storm, they were still afraid. "Who is Jesus?" "How did

He do that?" "Only God can command the sea to be quiet!" (Listen to personal responses about what girls may have felt or wondered.)

SAY Great discussion. Let's read Mark 4:35–41 one more time.

(Assign one girl to be the narrator who will read most of the passage, one girl to read Jesus's words, and the rest of the group to read the disciples' question together in verse 38.)

SAY Picture yourself in the story again. This time, ask yourself, "Is there anything surprising or confusing about this story?" Pay special attention to what you learn about Jesus.

(Read Mark 4:35-41 together.)

LEADER NOTE: Remember, you don't need to know the answers to all heir questions. Search Scripture along de the girls, and know it's oka to say, "I'm not sure, but let's both keep searching God word for answers to sweek. You can also talk to a trusted GE AS Leader or posor to gain clarity.

- 1. SK is there anything surprising or confusing about this story? (Listen to their personal responses. Girls may find it surprising that professional fishermen were scared or might wonder how Jesus could sleep through such a fierce storm. They may even question why He allowed the storm since Jesus is God.)
- 2. ASK What did you learn about Jesus from this story? (Take personal responses. Let them explore this together. They can learn at least three key truths about Jesus in this story that are listed in the Walk on Water Grades 6–8 Journals, but let girls first think through the answer independently.)

SAY Sometimes storms occur in nature—thunderstorms, hurricanes, floods, and snowstorms.

ASK Have you ever experienced a storm like that? (Have girls share their stories.)

SAY Sometimes storms occur in life. A storm can be a big fight at home or with a friend, getting a bad grade, not making the team, an accident, or a sickness. Whether you call your storm big trouble or the worst day ever, we all experience storms.

Whether you're in a storm, coming out of a storm, or heading into your next storm, understanding who Jesus is and choosing to trust Him will help you.

DISTRIBUTE WALK ON WATER GRADES 6-8 JOURNALS

LEADER NOTE: The following text contains what is included in the girl's journal, plus additional teaching and questions to transition to each section in the journal and help girls understand and apply God's Truth.

SAY Please turn to page 2 in your journal. (Ask one volunteer to read the opening paragraphs.)

Opening paragraphs: They never saw it coming. When the disciples stepped into their boat with Jesus, they thought they were rowing across the lake. It turns out they were heading straight into a storm.

Storms happen not just on the water to fishermen but to girls like you in real life. The good news is that you never weather a storm alone. God is always with you even in the most terrifying situations, you can trust Him. When you know who God is and that He's always with you you can be a girl who steps out in faith, confident and courageous wherever you.

(Ask another volunteer) read the paragraph under "It's Stormy!")

"IT'S STORMY!"

What storms do girls your age experience today? What tough stuff is unique to girls like you? Work in groups of two or three to list the storms that come to mind. Three examples are below to get you started.

Anxiety Bullying

Comparisons

(Give girls two minutes to see how many storms they can list. Then ask the girls to share their answers with the group. Invite them to circle the top three storms that cause them the most fear.)

SAY The storms you circled are significant and can come in waves. Sometimes the waves are

small and you don't think about them much. Other times, the storm stirs, and you wonder if you will survive. Maybe you've tried to wish them away, run from them, or skip school to avoid them. There's a better way when we look up and trust Jesus.

(Ask a volunteer to read the paragraph under "Look Up!" Work through the three questions together.)

"LOOK UP!"

Where you focus changes everything. Instead of looking at your storm, look up! Lock eyes with Jesus and trust Him to bring you through. From Mark 4:35–41, discover three key truths about Jesus, the One we can trust in every storm.

- 1. Jesus is with ou. Read Mark 4:36. Where was Jesus in the storm? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus with your storms. Jesus was in the poat. He is with us. We can trust Him to weather the storm with us. We're rever alone. When you're laving a rough and challenging day, maybe you want to give yourself a little stueze and remember Jesus is near and will stick close, no matter what.
- 2. Jesus is strong and powerful. Read Mark 4:39. What is Jesus stronger than? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus with the things that are bigger than you can handle? Jesus is stronger and more powerful than the wind and waves. When He says, "Shhhhhh!" nature listens. We can trust Jesus with storms that are bigger than we can handle because they are never bigger than He can handle. Jesus is always stronger and more powerful than any trouble, heartache, or challenge.

SAY This verse is key to stepping out in faith in our storms; let's memorize it together!

"[Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mark 4:39).

- a. Direct girls to Mark 4:39 on page 4 in their Walk on Water Grades 6–8 Journals.
- b. Divide the group into three smaller groups. Have each group memorize part of the verse:

- Group 1 (what Jesus did): "[Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves..."
- → Group 2 (what Jesus said): ". . . 'Quiet! Be still!'"
- Group 3 (the miracle): "... Then the wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mark 4:39).
- c. Repeat until all girls can say the entire verse from memory.
- 3. Jesus quiets us. Read Mark 4:41. How did the disciples respond to Jesus's miracle? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus? After the storm, the disciples were terrified because they better understood that Jesus was God. This is a different terror than when they thought they were going to drown. It's an awe and fear of God because they experienced His power and strength. He saved them! When we understand who Jesus is, we will have a greater trust in Him. We can tell our storms and our hearts to "Shhhhhh!" because we trust Jesus and know that we will be okay.

(Ask a volunteer to read the "Step Out" paragraphs on page 3 in the journal. Give them time to make an "I will" commitment. Invite girls to share.)

"STEP OUT"

Trusting Jesus is a choice. No one can do it for you. When storms come, take a complete stop and a deep breath. (Go ahead. Do it now!) As you exhale, say, "Shhhhhhh!" and remind yourself who Jesus is. Jesus is with you, Jesus is strong and powerful, and Jesus can quiet you. He can tell the waves of your fear and anxiety, "Quiet! Be still!"

Step out in faith. What will you do the next time you're scared, worried, or experiencing something bigger than you can handle?

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MEMORY VERSES

SAY Turn to page 4 in your journal. Let's say our Deuteronomy 7:9 Theme Verse together. Underline or highlight everything you can learn about God in this verse.

THEME VERSE: "Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments" (Deuteronomy 7:9).

SAY Before we say our Mark 4:39 memory verse together, write "Shhhhhhhhhh!" next to the verse.

BIBLE MEMORY VERS 5: "[Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm" (Mark 4:39).

SAY Let's read the three key truths from today's Bible Study together. If you learned even more, write your thoughts in your journal. (Invite girls to share their thoughts.)

KEY TRUTHS

- 1. Jesus is with you.
- 2. Jesus is strong and powerful.
- 3. Jesus quiets you.
- 4. Add your own thoughts about what you learned: _____

SAY If we're going to trust God, we need to get to know Him. At GEMS, you'll learn about God as we sing, read the Bible, pray, and have conversations while playing games or one of the many activities we have planned for this year. You can also learn about God when you read your Bible at home. If you don't have a Bible, let me know.

As you get to know God little by little, you'll start to trust Him more and more. You'll be a girl who steps out in faith, confident and courageous, knowing God is with you no matter what.

(If time allows, read the Key Verses at club or have the girls look them up and highlight them in their Bibles at home. There is one key verse for every day of the week ahead. Continually challenge girls to read their Bibles to get to know Jesus more.)

KEY VERSES

- 1. God is with us—Isaiah 41:10
- 2. God is strong—Isaiah 12:2
- 3. God is powerful—Colossians 1:16-17
- 4. God quiets storms. Shhhhhh!—Mark 4:39
- 5. God quiets us. Shhhhhh!—Psalm 46:10
- 6. God is trustworthy—Deuteronomy 7:9
- 7. God is God; we need not fear—Isaiah 41:13–14



LEADER NOTE: Direct the girls to the things you discussed together before praying. Share things you can praise Jesus for, pray about storms girls may be experiencing, or pray for His help to step out in faith and live their "I will" commitments.

Encourage girls to write prayer requests in their Walk on Water Grades 6–8 Journals.

(Invite the girls to pray, pray your own prover, or use the one below by having each girl take turns praying by filling in the name of the girl on her right. Co ground the circle until every girl and leader has been prayed for personally.)

PRAY

355 3,75
Dear God, thank You for
Thank You that You are bigger than any
storm may experience
and can calm storms and quiet her. Help
to step out in faith and
trust You more. In Jesus's name, amen.



After Bible Study, choose one of the following activities to engage your girls in creativity, connection, or caring for themselves. By

learning new skills, engaging in relationships, and having fun, they will grow into girls of faith, inside and out.

LESSON ONE CRAFT: THEME VERSE BANNER

[Time: 20-30 minutes]



LEADER NOTE: For a video tutorial, view the "L1-Theme Verse Banner" video.

SUPPLIES

- One Theme Verse Banner Printable per girl (printed with laser jet or copy machine—inkjet-printed papers will smear when colored with markers or paint)
- Two jumbo popsicle sticks (6 in x 0.7 in [15.24 cm x 1.78 cm]) per girl
- Two pieces of masking tape (roughly 5 in [12.7 cm] long) per girl
- One piece of string, twine, or yarn (22 in [55.88 cm] long) per girl
- Coloring utensils (markers, crayons, watercolor paints, etc.)
- Scissors
- Optional: one blank piece of paper (4.25 in wide x 8.75 in tall [10.8 cm wide x 22.23 cm tall]) per girl; glue sticks

LEADER NOTE: If you do not have *Walk on Water* Online Resources, consider using a blank piece of paper (4.25 in wide x 8.75 in tall [10.8 cm wide x 22.23 cm tall]) per girl for her to decorate with a nautical theme (e.g., drawing a lake, sailboat, or lighthouse). Girls may need help writing out Deuteronomy 7:9 on their banners. You can do this in advance for them or print out the verse (or print out stickers) and let the girls glue or stick the verse on their banner.

INSTRUCTIONS:

- Cut out the printables. Cut the paper on the gray cut line near the bottom. Cut the paper in half evenly from top to bottom. Your end design should be approximately 4.25 inches wide x 8.75 inches tall (10.8 cm wide x 22.23 cm tall).
- 2. **Square off the popsicle sticks.** Using scissors, carefully cut the rounded ends off the popsicle sticks. This will make your popsicle stick into a rectangular shape.
- Attach the popsicle sticks. Place one popsicle stick on the table. With the printable face down, center the short end of the paper over the wood. Overlap the wood by half.
- 4. Tape together. Use masking tape to secure the paper to the back of the popular stick. Repeat the process for the second popsicle stick.
- 5. **Tie a string for hanging.** Sing about 6 inches (15.24 cm) on one end of the string, wrap the string around one end of the popsicle stick three times. Secure the string with a knot and trim the excess. Attach the other end of the string to the other popsicle stick in the same way.
- 6. **Decorate the banner.** Add color to the banner with markers, crayons, colored pencils, or watercolor paint.
- Hang your creation. Hang your banner in your classroom, locker, bedroom, or refrigerator to help you remember the Walk on Water Theme Verse, Deuteronomy 7:9.

LEADER NOTE: As the girls work on the craft, ask the Craft & Chat questions.

CRAFT & CHAT QUESTIONS

- Do you like storms, or do you find them scary?
- 2. Describe the prettiest sunset you have ever seen.
- 3. How does knowing God is with you even in life's "storms" (or the hard times you go through) give you hope and peace?

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

Is there someone in your faith community who has weathered a storm? Maybe they've survived a natural disaster or an accident, experienced freedom from addiction, or kept trusting Jesus when everything felt like it was against them. There are faith heroes in your community who will inspire and encourage your ciris.

For the remainder of your club night, connect your girls with a guest speaker. Invite your guest to your club or go to their home. Ask the guest to share his or her story and encourage girls to ask questions. Conclude by praying for your quest and the girls and taking a group picture to mark this time together. Afterward, ask the girls how their guest's story encouraged them to step out in faith.

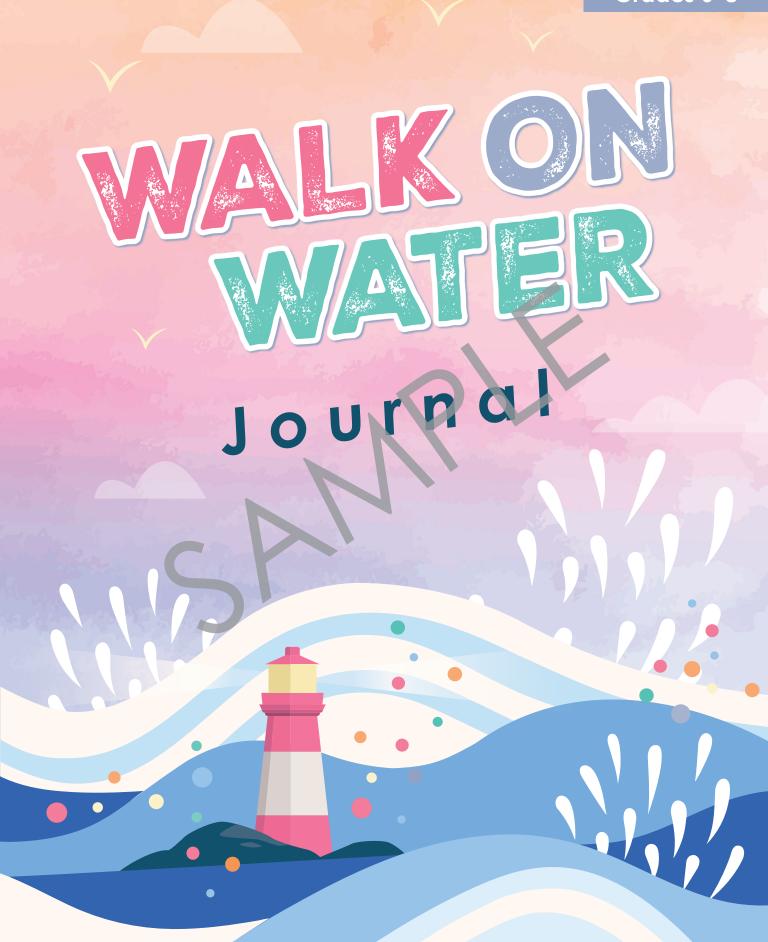
CARE FOR SELF

Get moving! We stay strong spiritually by training ourselves to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Reading our Bibles, praying, and spending time with girls of faith are important ways to strengthen our faith. Staying strong physically matters, too, so get your girls moving!

For the remainder of your club night, play pickleball, take a walk, or engage in another physical activity your girls enjoy. Perhaps you can invite someone from your faith community who is passionate about physical fitness to lead strength training and exercises. Have fun as you encourage your girls to care for their bodies, His temple.



Use this space to reflect on your club gathering. What went well? What could be improved? Where did you see God working? PRAYER REQUESTS





THIS JOURNAL BELONGS TO:

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DATE:		

LESSON 1	

STEP OUT IN FAITH

MARK 4:35-41

They never saw it coming. When the disciples stepped into their boat with Jesus, they thought they were rowing across the lake. It turns out they were heading straight into a storm.

Storms happen not just on the water to fishermen but to girls like you in real life. The good news is that you never weather a storm alone. God is always with you; even in the most terrifying situations, you can trust Him. When you know who God is and that He's always with you, you can be a girl who steps out in faith, confident and courageous wherever you go.

IT'S STORMY!

What storms do girls your age experience today? What tough stuff is unique to girls like you? Work in groups of two or three to list the storms that come to mind. Three examples are below to get you started.

Anxiety	Bullying	Comparisons

When finished, circle the top three that feel like the biggest storms for you.



Where you focus changes everything. Instead of looking at your storm, look up! Lock eyes with Jesus, and trust Him to bring you through. From Mark 4:35-41, discover three key truths about Jesus, the One we can trust in every storm.

- 1. **Jesus is with you.** Read Mark 4:36. Where was Jesus in the storm? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus with your storms?
- 2. **Jesus is strong and powerful.** Read Mark 4:39. What is Jesus stronger than? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus with the things that are bigger than you can handle?
- 3. **Jesus quiets us.** Read Mark 4:41. How did the disciples respond to Jesus' miracle? What does this teach you about trusting Jesus?



Trusting Jesus is a choice. No one can do it for you. When storms come, take a complete stop and a deep breath. (Go ahead. Do it now!) As you exhale, say, "Shhhhhhhh!" and remind yourself who Jesus is. Jesus is with you, Jesus is strong and powerful, and Jesus can quiet you. He can tell the waves of your fear and anxiety, "Quiet! Be still!"

Step out in faith. What will you do the next time you're scared, worried, or experiencing something bigger than you can handle?

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THEME VERSE:

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God; he is the faithful God, keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love him and keep his commandments.

(DEUTERONOMY 7:9)

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE:

[Jesus] got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves,
"Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it
was completely calm. (MARK 4:39)

KEY TRUTHS

1. Jesus is with you

- 2. Jesus is strong and powerful.
- 3. Jesus quiets you.
- 4. Add your own thoughts about what you learned:



1. God is with us—Isaiah 41:10

- 2. God is strong—Isaiah 12:2
- 3. God is powerful—Colossians 1:16-17
- 4. God quiets storms. Shhhhhh!—Mark 4:39
- 5. God quiets us. Shhhhhh!—Psalm 46:10
- 6. God is trustworthy—Deuteronomy 7:9
- 7. God is God, we need not fear—Isaiah 41:13-14



