



AT THE BEACH

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

When we keep our eyes on Jesus, he can use us to do amazing things.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn the importance of keeping Jesus first.

KEY PASSAGE:

Matthew 14:22-33, Peter Walks on Water.

INTRO

Back in the 1960s, a new sport became a huge craze down at the beach. The sport was so popular, it influenced an entire generation. Bands like the Beach Boys and Jan and Dean became famous for singing about that sport. Actors Frankie Avalon and Annette Funicello became huge stars appearing in movies about the sport.

These names may mean nothing to you guys. That was a long time ago. But I bet you all know the sport - surfing!

Surfing gives riders the feeling like they are walking on water. It lets them defy gravity by catching a ride on top of the waves instead of inside them. It's a challenging sport, but for those who master it, it's quite a rush.

When surfers wade out into the water, they pick a spot on land to use as their anchor spot. They keep that spot in view so they can gauge how far out they are and how far they've drifted. That spot helps them keep their bearings, but it also helps them stay on their boards and keep their balance.

Keeping our eyes focused on what's important, in sports and in life, is not always easy. It can be especially hard when we are trying to focus on Christ. But as Peter found out in today's scripture, taking our eyes off of Jesus can lead to trouble.

READ MATTHEW 14:22-33

LARGE GROUP LESSON

MAIN POINT

A lot of people look at this passage and only see Peter falling in the water. They look at this story not as a success, but a failure. They forget that Peter didn't fail right away. Not at all! Peter did something no other person besides Jesus has ever done. He walked on water.

Peter had a lot of faith. It took great courage to get out of that boat and set foot on the water. He also had his eyes on Jesus, and that's the main reason he succeeded. When he looked at the waves and took his eyes off of Jesus, he ran into trouble. But Jesus was quick to reach out and catch him.

Peter's story isn't one of failure. It's a success story that should encourage us all. God can use us to do great things if we focus on Jesus and refuse to take our eyes off of him.

DRIVE IT HOME

The Bible is full of stories of men who focused on God and fulfilled his will. There's Noah, who ignored the ridicule of his neighbors and built an ark to save his family. There's Abraham, who left his home to move to a faraway land where God promised to make his family a mighty nation. There's Peter, who not only walked on water, but became one of the leaders in Christ's church!

God has also used people throughout history to do amazing things. Three hundred years ago, God used a man named William Wilberforce to end slavery in Great Britain. God is still performing miracles today as well. God can use you to do a miracle at home, in school, anywhere you go. Before he can do that, he needs us to focus on him. Like Peter, we need to keep our eyes on Jesus. We need to live our lives like Jesus did. We need to put Jesus first so that God can use us to change lives and change the world.

We also need to remember that if we do stumble, Jesus will catch us. He will not let us sink beneath the waves. He will help us rise back up out of the water so we can continue to serve him. Peter didn't drown in the water that day. Jesus rescued him, and he went on to become a great hero of the faith.

Peter helped to form Jesus' church. William Wilberforce ended slavery in England. Martin Luther King, Jr., helped in the fight to end racial discrimination in America. What will God do with your life if you give him your full, undivided attention?

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Help us to focus on your son so that you can use us to bring glory to your name.

In Jesus' name, Amen