

STORMS AT SEA

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Paper, pens, pencil crayons, markers, etc.
- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: CARTOONS O’ FEAR

Break the group into small teams of 2-3. Each team is tasked with creating a three-panel cartoon. In the first panel, ask the teens to draw out a fear-inducing scenario. (Tell them to be creative!) In the second panel they imagine what “the voice of fear” might say to the characters in the scenario. In the third panel, they should imagine what the voice of Jesus might say to the characters – in response or contrast to the second panel. They can use verses from scripture if they wish. *As an example, the cartoon might depict someone reviewing texts that were sent to friends which had no reply and asking “Why haven’t my friends responded?” The second panel might show a malicious voice saying “No one likes you”, and the third panel might show Jesus saying something like, “Put the phone down. Be patient. Know that I love you”.* Allow time for your teams to complete their cartoons, and then provide a few minutes for them to present to one another.

IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH A GROUP OF THREE OR LESS, HAVE EACH TEEN PREPARE A CARTOON INDEPENDENTLY BEFORE SHOWING IT TO THE REST. IF YOU’RE WORKING WITH MORE THAN FIVE OR SIX TEAMS, ALLOW THEM TO POST THEIR FINISHED WORK TOGETHER FOR EVERYONE TO PERUSE AS TIME ALLOWS.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order of service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: ANXIETY CENTRAL

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What really makes you anxious?
- What is the most fear-filled situation that you’ve ever been in? What did you do?
- 2 Corinthians 10:5 says “take every thought captive to obey Christ”. How do you think this verse relates to our fears and anxieties?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *We all have anxieties. They range from the inconvenience of dreading spiders or parallel parking, to deeper anxieties regarding abandonment, rejection, and grief. If anything of a serious nature arises, take a moment to pray specifically for those situations.*

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- *This is a good chance to share a story of your own. Perhaps you were being bullied and found the courage to fight back or to call for help. Perhaps you were dreading bringing a bad report card home to your parents, but did so anyway. Or perhaps you've been chased by a mean neighbourhood dog and thereafter took a different route to school. Whatever the situation, even if you're not proud of how it ended, the fact that you're participating in this discussion today does at least show that you survived it!*
- *Many of our deepest personal fears can affect how we think about the world around us and how we choose to respond to situations that arise. Sometimes our fears can tell us lies, such as "No one likes you" and "You'll never succeed". It is in those moments when the "voice of fear" seems loudest, that we most need to stop those lies in their tracks with the truth of scripture – that we are loved and that with God all things are possible (John 3:16, Matthew 19:26).*

THE LESSON: MARK 4

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

(IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES TO HELP RESPOND TO QUESTIONS THAT MAY BE RAISED DURING THIS UNIT, WE RECOMMEND "DISCOVERING THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER: A HANDS-ON APPROACH, VOLUME 3: SPECIAL OCCASIONS" BY SUE CARELESS.)

Psalm 27:1 says, "The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Like the psalmist, we may *know* that God is in control, but in life we encounter many "storms" that still manage to create a response of fear and anxiety in us. It can be hard to remember that our Creator is in charge when faced with such storms. But the scriptures tell us to fix our eyes on Jesus – especially when we are at our most distracted, disoriented and dismayed.

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The disciples had been following Jesus long enough to see some amazing things. They'd seen him heal people and cast out unclean spirits. *Where did this power come from?* They'd heard him teach with authority about the kingdom of God. *How could he know such things?* But they had not yet fully grasped who he was.

Now was the time for them to witness something new that would leave them marvelling. But this time, the lesson was to take place on the sea. The disciples were afraid of deep waters, where they knew that storms could arise suddenly and pose great danger to a small boat. Check out what happened.

Refer to Mark 4:35-41.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- How is the storm described?
- What was the disciples' response to the storm?
- What was Jesus' response to the storm?
- What was Jesus revealing to his disciples?
- What can we learn from this today?

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A few notes and reflections for reference:

- The storm seems to have been very sudden in coming up. It is described as a “great windstorm”, powerful enough that the waves were breaking into and filling the boat (v37).
- The disciples were terrified. They thought they were going to die. They did not understand how Jesus could be sleeping in the middle of what seemed to them worse than a nightmare. They asked him “Do you not care?” as though he might be indifferent to the situation they were in (v38).
- Jesus was completely unperturbed by the storm. He was at peace because he was in control of the situation. This was a lesson for his disciples. He was woken by them in their panic. The text tells us that he “rebuked the wind” and told the sea to “be still” (v39). And the storm answered to him.
- Jesus was revealing to his disciples that he was God. He was in control, not only of bringing healing and truth, but also of creation itself. “This meant that they had no reason ever again to be afraid, for their Lord was in constant control of every situation” (Warren Wiersbe, Commentary). The disciples’ question in verse 41 was the right one. Rephrased, it tells us this: Jesus is the one whom even the wind and the sea obey.
- Like the disciples, we constantly encounter situations that fill us with fear and anxiety. In those moments, we can turn to our Lord, knowing that he is in control and knowing that he cares.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer).)

Are you facing a “storm” in your life?

Bring the situation to God, and close your time with the following prayer:

Thou, O Lord, that stillest the raging of the sea: hear us, and save us, that we perish not. O blessed Saviour, that didst save thy disciples ready to perish in a storm: hear us, and save us, we beseech thee.

(PRAYER IN RESPECT OF A STORM, BCP P. 635)

Has God brought you safely through a “storm”?

Spend some time in thanksgiving, and close your time with the following prayer:

O gracious God and heavenly Father, we bless and glorify thy holy Name, for thy merciful deliverance from the recent peril [of the sea or of the enemy]; and we humbly beseech thee to give us grace so to rejoice in thy saving power, that we may serve thee in holiness and righteousness all our days; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (THANKSGIVING FOR DELIVERANCE FROM A STORM OR FROM THE ENEMY, BCP P. 636)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

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AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH ONE OF THE THEMED PRAYERS FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

MARK 4: **THE STORM ANSWERS TO HIM**

³⁵On that day, when evening had come, Jesus said to his disciples, “Let us go across to the other side.” ³⁶And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him.

³⁷And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling.

³⁸But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, “Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?”

³⁹And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. ⁴⁰He said to them, “Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?” ⁴¹And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, “Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”