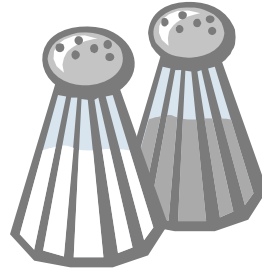


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E-Curriculum

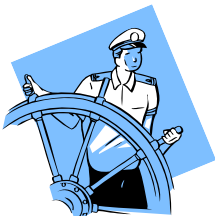


by Mark DeVries

“WALKING ON WATER”

John 6:16-24

- I. To the Classes (First Timers, Attendance, Announcements)
- II. Engaging the Brain
 - A. On Site: The Boat
 1. Have class today on a boat.
 2. If you can't get to a boat, consider bringing a row boat to class and place it at the front (or the middle) of the room.
 3. Other Ambiance Options:
 - a. Teach from the boat.
 - b. Have the sounds of waves breaking on the ocean in the background throughout the class.
 4. Play “Pick Your Place in the Boat”
 - a. If the boat is large enough, ask everyone in the group to get into the boat.
 - b. If the group is too large (or the boat is too small), invite ten students to do this.
 - c. Ask the students to find a spot to sit in the boat.



5. Process Questions

- ➔ **Who in our group would you most want to have driving the boat?**
- ➔ **Any ideas about what we'll be talking about today based on these clues?**

B. Random Boating Games

1. If your group loves to have a game of some kind every week, you might try a few of these “boating games” (or make up a few of your own).
2. Boating Game #1: Boat Stuff
 - a. Draw an **outline of a boat on the floor** (or create the outline with tape).
 - b. Make sure that the boat outline is too small for everyone in the group to fit in.
 - c. Explain to the group that they have 2 minutes to get their entire group in their boat (the only rule is that no part of anyone’s body can touch any part of the floor outside the boat’s outline).
3. Boating Game #2: Will It Float?
 - a. Bring a **large bucket of water and 5-10 small objects** to class today (e.g., a pencil, an eraser, a wad of paper, a nail, etc.).
 - b. For each object, have the group decide whether they think the object will float or sink.
 - c. If your group enjoys being in teams, you can have each team decide which of the items will float and sink.
 - d. With as much mock ceremony as possible, place each object in the water, until you have determined which are floaters and which are sinkers.

C. Video Opening: Gilligan’s Island

1. Ask if anyone has ever heard of the sit-com, *Gilligan’s Island*.
2. Depending on the nut factor of your group, invite them to sing along (or if you can’t find the clip and you do have a nutty group, ask a few of them to lead the group in singing the song)
3. Show the **clip of the introduction to the show** (“Just sit right back...”).
4. Process Questions



- ➔ **What do you remember about that show?**
- ➔ **If you were to ask that group, would they say that being out in the ocean on a boat was a good thing or a bad thing?**
- ➔ **If these guys are ever rescued, what do you think is the possibility that they will ever go out on an ocean cruise again?**
- ➔ **Would you?**

D. Logging In

1. Explain to the group how “logging in” works.
 - a. Each person says a little something to prime the pump and get everyone feeling comfortable about talking.
 - b. Usually the log-in question, like today’s, has no right or wrong answer. Instead it’s just a chance for each person to say which option they like the best.
2. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
3. Ask the group to “log in” this morning by answering this question:

If you could take any kind of transportation you wanted, and you didn’t care how long it took to get where you were going, what kind would you choose and why?

E. Tales From the Port Side

1. If you have a story of something funny or fascinating that happened to you while you were on a boat, tell the story.
2. Invite the group to tell some of their own boat stories.
3. Process Questions



- ➔ **What’s the most dangerous thing you can do in a boat?**
- ➔ **What’s the most dangerous thing you can do in a boat when it is storming?**
- ➔ **Have any of you ever been seasick? Care to share the details?**
- ➔ **What boat stories can you remember from the Bible?**

III. Igniting the Heart

A. Forced Choice

1. Explain to the group how a forced choice works.
 - a. Everyone begins by standing in the center of the room.
 - b. The group will be given a series of choices.
 - c. Each person needs to move to the side of the room representing the idea he or she most agrees with.
2. Invite the group to ask questions to clarify the instructions.
3. Present the following choices to the group, allowing one or two folks from each side to explain why they chose the side they did:
 - a. Choice #1:

God wants us to take risks (side one).

God wants us to be careful (side two).
 - b. Choice #2:

God wants us to pay attention to what is going on around us.

God wants us to pay attention to him.

c. Choice #3:

God wants to comfort us.

God wants to challenge us.

4. Send everyone back to their seats.
5. Process Questions

- ➔ **Which do you think the folks in our group have the most trouble with—taking risks for God or being too cautious in our faith?**
- ➔ **Which is easier for you—to pay attention to God or to pay attention to what is going on around you?**
- ➔ **Which is harder for you—experiencing God’s comfort or hearing God’s challenges?**

B. Comparison Shopping: The Texts

1. Introductory Questions

- a. How many ‘gospels’ are there in the New Testament? (4)
- b. What are they? (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John)
- c. If a story is found in all four gospels, what kinds of things might that tell you?
- d. If a story is found in only one, what would that tell you?
- e. Any idea what the word “synoptic” might mean? (Give the group some clues: syn—like in “synonym, means the same or together, and optic has something to do with the eyes or seeing)
- f. The synoptic gospels, the ones that “see with the same eye,” are Matthew, Mark and Luke. Many of the stories in those gospels are word for word, while John’s gospel is distinctly different from the other three. Suppose the same story was found in both John and a couple of the synoptics, what would that tell you?



2. Explain that the story of Jesus walking on water occurs in Matthew, Mark and John, and each tells the story in a little different way.
3. Explain that today the group is going to take a look at all three versions and find out what they say in common and what they say differently.
4. Appoint three or four expert observers, who will try to find as many things as they can that are different about the stories and write those things down. With the younger grades, you might want to play up this role by giving this group graduation caps or really thick glasses or some prop to set them apart as looking very intelligent.
5. Read through the story of Jesus walking on the water in John 6:16-24.
6. Read through the story of Jesus walking on the water in Mark 6:47-51. Allow the expert observers time to make their notes.
7. Read through the story of Jesus walking on the water in Matthew 14:22-33. Allow time for the expert observers to make their notes.
8. Process Questions

- Before we go to the experts, what were the most obvious differences you saw?
- Why do you think there would be three different versions of the same story?
- Do you think Jesus walked on water more than one time?
- Do you think one is more accurate than the other?
- Some people read this story as something that didn't really happen but just tells something true about following Jesus. What do you think about that idea?
- What would you say to someone who was considering following Christ but who "couldn't swallow" all the wild miracle stories in the Bible?

9. A Word from the Experts

- a. Invite the experts to share their findings.
- b. Invite the class to ask the experts any questions they have about these texts?
- c. If the students can't come up with many questions, ask a few of these:

- 1) Do you think each of the authors had a different message to get across? What were those messages?
- 2) Do you have a favorite version of the story?
- 3) Which one do you think has the clearest message for our group today?
- 4) And what would that message be?
- 5) What do you think Jesus thought about the guys who stayed in the boat and didn't come to him on the water?

10. Thanks the experts and send them back to their seats (with a random gift for their good work—a box of cereal, a toy boat, a captain's hat, etc.).

C. Taking the Step

1. Video Clip #1: Indiana Jones



- a. Show the clip from the scene in *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* when Indy takes the step into what looks like thin air.
- b. Process Questions
 - How does this clip tie in with the story for today?
 - Would you have done what Indy did?
 - What happens to folks who are not willing to take a risk in their faith?

2. Video Clip #2: Footloose

- a. Show the clip from the movie *Footloose* where the girl balances between two cars and "plays chicken" with an 18-wheeler.
- b. Process Questions

- ➔ **What is the difference between the risk taken in this scene and the risk that Peter took?**
- ➔ **Do you think God would ever call you to do something like this girl did?**
- ➔ **Do you think there is a difference between taking risks for God and being reckless for God?**
- ➔ **Does God ever call us to be reckless?**

D. Finding Your Own Leap

1. Brainstorming

- a. Invite the group to brainstorm a list of actions that Christians their age do that would require a risk of faith.
- b. Another way to ask the question might be “What one thing could you attempt for God that you know would not work unless God helped you?”
- c. If the group has trouble getting started with this exercise, offer a few examples, like

- 1) Befriending the person at school that nobody likes.
- 2) Taking time to pray each day, even though there seems like there will be no time to do everything that has to be done that day.

- d. Allow the group 2 minutes to brainstorm their lists.

2. Process Questions

- ➔ **Which item on our brainstormed list would be the easiest for you to accomplish?**
- ➔ **Which would be the hardest?**

IV. Taking It Home

A. Checking Out

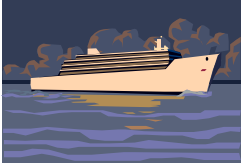
1. Similar to “logging in,” this exercise allows the group members to identify “where they are” in response to the text.
2. Go around the group asking each person to identify where he or she would place himself or herself in Matthew’s version of the story.
3. Offer the following options, but make it clear that they can give an answer that isn’t on this list (let each person define for himself or herself what each of these positions represents):

Not in the boat yet
 In the boat
 Thinking about stepping out
 On the water
 Sinking
 Refocusing

Being pulled up by Jesus

4. Visual Option

- a. You could draw a boat on the water on a board in the front of the room and give each person a sticker to indicate where he or she might be in the walking on water story.
- b. Using the above list of options, indicate to the group the appropriate place for each sticker:



Not in the boat yet—to the right of the boat
In the boat—In the middle of the boat
Thinking about stepping out—near the edge of the boat
On the water—to the left of the boat
Sinking—under the waterline to the left of the boat
Refocusing—1/2 in the water; 1/2 out of the water
Being pulled up by Jesus—In the water, just beside the boat

- c. Give the group time for everyone to place his or her sticker on the boat picture in the front of the room.
- d. Process Questions
 - ➔ **As you look at where we put our stickers, what do you see about our group?**
 - ➔ **Whom do you know who would be willing to take a risk of some kind for their faith?**
 - ➔ **Some people say that faith without risk is no faith at all. What do you think?**

B. Just Do It

1. Distribute 3x5 cards and pencils.
 - a. Invite the group members to write the one step of faith they would like to take this week.
 - b. Have them indicate on a scale of one to ten how difficult that step will be for them.
 - c. Ask the group members not to write their names on their cards.
2. Collect the cards to be used for the closing prayer.



C. Close the group in prayer, praying over each card, help us to be willing to step out of the boat by doing things like....(filling in the blank with the items that the group members had written on their cards).