

## Lesson 9: Peace - Jesus Calms the Storm

Welcome back to our Via Transformativa Peace unit! Here are the links to the peace lessons we've posted so far.

For the next few weeks, we'll focus on a few peace-related Jesus stories. Our first one is the story of Jesus calming the storm. We always teach them a few things about the Bible or about Jesus when we introduce these lessons. Here are a few points you can make about Jesus. See what they know, and then add a bit to their knowledge base

- ❖ Jesus was a real person who lived about 2,000 years ago
- ❖ He was raised Jewish, which is a different religion. That's why Jesus is sometimes referred to as a "rabbi," which is the Hebrew word for "teacher."
- ❖ Jesus was known for telling stories and healing people. His stories often centered on messages of peace and love.
- ❖ Many years after Jesus died, his teachings formed the basis of a new religion called Christianity. That's the religious tradition of Jubilee!
- ❖ The symbol for Christianity is a cross because Jesus died on a cross.

### Story - Jesus Calms the Storm

The story of Jesus calming the storm shows up in three of the four Gospels. You can access the story (which is quite short and easy-to-understand) through any number of on-line Bibles. We often use the New Revised Standard Version. The links below will take you directly to those passages, but feel free to use your own family Bible or to explore other free, on-line translations.

[Matthew 8:23-27](#)

[Mark 4: 35-41](#)

[Luke 8:22-25](#)

If you prefer a video version of the story, try [this one](#), which stays pretty close to the Biblical text.

### Thought Questions

This is a really great story to discuss with kids. They often have interesting ideas about what they think is going on in this story, and they rarely all agree. We begin with basic questions about the story and how it might relate to their own lives. Then, we move on to broader questions. In all cases, we just let the kids share and/or play around with ideas. We almost never focus on “right” or “wrong” answers. Here are some of the thought questions we use.

- ❖ Were you ever afraid of storms when you were little - or maybe even now? Do you have friends, younger siblings, or pets who are afraid of storms?
- ❖ In this story, when the disciples were afraid, they woke up Jesus, and he helped them. Who helps you when you are afraid?
- ❖ Do you think God can help you when you're afraid? Have you ever asked God to help you with something?
- ❖ What do you think about this story? Do you think Jesus calmed the storm and controlled the weather in some way? Do you think he simply made the disciples less afraid? Or do you think something else was going on? [Certainly, many tribal people have tried to control the weather with dances or by appealing to the gods. On the other hand, our scientific knowledge might suggest that Jesus was influencing the disciples' perceptions more than the weather itself. So, who knows.]
- ❖ If you think the weather can be controlled, do you think anyone can control the weather, or does it have to be someone special like God/Jesus or a god/goddess?

### Calming the Storm in Other Traditions

With the slightly older kids, we sometimes share passages from other sacred texts that are related to that day's Bible lesson. For example, the idea that God can be a calming force shows up in various verses in the Qur'an, the sacred text of the Islamic tradition. Here is one such passage.

#### ***Qur'an 10:22 (Sahih International translation)***

It is He who enables you to travel on land and sea until, when you are in ships and they sail with them by a good wind and they rejoice therein, there comes a storm wind and the waves come upon them from everywhere and they assume that they are surrounded, supplicating Allah, sincere to Him in religion, "If You should save us from this, we will surely be among the thankful."

In Buddhism, less emphasis is placed on an external God. Instead, calmness comes from within and can be achieved through spiritual practices like meditation. This poem was recited by an early Buddhist monk named Bhuta Thera. We usually read the 1<sup>st</sup> three stanzas with the slightly older kids, but the complete poem can be found [here](#).

When the thundering storm cloud roars out in the mist,  
And torrents of rain fill the paths of the birds,  
Nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates.  
— No greater contentment than this can be found.

When along the rivers the tumbling flowers bloom  
In winding wreaths adorned with verdant color,  
Seated on the bank, glad-minded, he meditates.  
— No greater contentment than this can be found.

When in the depths of night, in a lonely forest,  
The rain-deva drizzles and the fanged beasts cry,  
Nestled in a mountain cave, the monk meditates.  
— No greater contentment than this can be found.

### **Craft - Boats, Boats, and More Boats!**

For this story, our crafts almost always focus on boats. There are lots of different kinds of boats you can make with supplies you probably already have at home.



One of the easiest boats to make uses a kitchen sponge as the base. Use the entire sponge or cut it into an interesting shape. (Younger kids might be help with this step.)

Then, add some sort of stick. It could be a real stick, a popsicle stick, a toothpick, or a small wooden skewer.

Finally, make some sort of sail. This one was made using duct tape, but you can also make a sail out of fabric, felt, or paper. Cut a couple of slits in it and attach it to whatever you used for your mast.

Then, see if it really floats!!

There's also a pretty simple origami boat you can make using a single sheet of paper. Click [here](#) for the video instructions.