

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Background on the Gospel Reading

First Reading 1 Kings 19:9a,11-13a
The Lord appears to Elijah in a whisper.

Responsorial Psalm Psalms 85:9-14
The Lord is the source of salvation.

Second Reading Romans 9:1-5
Paul speaks of the blessings that have come to the Israelites.

Gospel Reading Matthew 14:22-33
Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God.

Today's Gospel directly **follows last week's account of Jesus feeding a crowd of more than 5,000 people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. For the sake of the crowds, Jesus had postponed his time of solitude.** Now, at last, Jesus finds some time for quiet and prayer. **He sends his disciples ahead of him by boat**, dismisses the crowds, and then withdraws to the mountain to pray.

The disciples do not fare well. **They struggle to weather the wind and waves, making little progress in their journey.** We are reminded of a previous story in Chapter 8 of Matthew's Gospel, when Jesus calms the seas. This time, however, Jesus does not calm the seas, and the *disciples do not express fear until they see Jesus walking toward them on the water. In this story it is not the storm that is feared but the sight of Jesus before them, whom they mistake for a ghost.*

Clues like these suggest that this story is about the disciples' growing understanding of the identity of Jesus.

In continuity with last week's Gospel about the feeding of the multitude, today's Gospel is **also about what the disciples' faith in Jesus will enable them to do.**

In last week's Gospel, when the disciples see the crowds, they ask Jesus to send the crowds away. **Jesus turns the situation around, telling the disciples to feed the crowd** with the provisions that they have. Both of these Gospels tell us much about ministry.



Jesus calls to the disciples and calms their fears. He is not a ghost. **The impulsive Peter seeks proof** that the person is indeed Jesus. He asks Jesus to call him out onto the water, and Jesus grants this request. **Peter's fear and doubt overtake him, however, once he is walking on the water.** Jesus reaches out to Peter and saves him. When Jesus and Peter enter the boat, Matthew reports that the wind ceases, and the disciples confess that Jesus is the Son of God.

Faith in Jesus will enable the disciples to do the work that Jesus has done. Peter walks on water. The five loaves and two fish feed a multitude of people. The disciples can and will participate in the work of the kingdom of heaven. When Peter fears and doubts the person of Jesus, however, he falters. Peter's example teaches us that true Christian ministry emerges from the faith that Jesus is the Messiah, God's only Son.

Doctrinal Content:

<i>Profession of Faith</i>	<i>Sacraments / Liturgy</i>	<i>Christian Life</i>
To be a Christian, one must believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. (#454)	The Creed / The Eucharist / Offertory	We must carry out Jesus' work / continue His ministry in leading people to the Kingdom

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Making the Connection (Grades 1, 2, and 3)

Gospel Reading Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God.

Young children want to be like the adults in their lives. We encourage Christian vocations when we show children how they, too, can participate in the mission of the Church.

Materials Needed - None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Say: *Today's Gospel tells us about a time when Jesus' disciples recognized Jesus as God's own Son. As we listen to this Gospel, let's imagine that we are there. To help us do this, I will need you to act out this Gospel story.*
2. Invite volunteers to be Jesus, Peter, and the disciples. If the entire group would like to participate, then allow everyone to be disciples.
3. As you read aloud today's Gospel, help the group to act out their roles. Read Matthew 14:22-33.
4. ***Why did the disciples become afraid in this story?*** (They thought they were seeing a ghost.)
What did Peter want to do? (He wanted to walk on the water as Jesus did.)
What happened when Peter tried to walk on the water? (He grew afraid and started to sink.)
What did Jesus do? (Jesus helped Peter when he grew afraid.)
What did the disciples learn about Jesus in this story? (They learned that Jesus is the Son of God.)
5. **Jesus teaches us an amazing thing in this story.**
Peter wants to be like Jesus; he wants to walk on the water.
And Jesus says, "Yes!"
Jesus wants us to share in the amazing and wonderful work that he can do. This is what the members of the Church are called to do today. But to do this work, we have to trust that Jesus will always be helping us to do it. If we forget this, then we can't do Jesus' work well. Like Peter, we may sink. But even if we forget and grow fearful, Jesus will still help us, just as he helped Peter.
6. Conclude together in prayer by praying the Morning Offering or the Lord's Prayer.



Encourage the group to be mindful of the ways in which Jesus works through them.

Morning Offering

My God, I offer you my prayers,
works, joys and sufferings of this day
in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.
I offer them for all the intentions of your Son's Sacred Heart,
for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin,
and the reunion of Christians.
Amen.

Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time, Cycle A

Making the Connection (Grades 3, 4, and 5)

Gospel Reading Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God.

Young people are still growing in their understanding of Jesus and where faith in Jesus will lead them. Through Peter's encounter with Jesus, we can teach them about how Christian ministry must always be rooted in faith in Jesus.

Materials Needed

- None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. Ask the group to identify some of the main aspects of Jesus' ministry. Make a list together. (Healing the sick, feeding the hungry, etc.)
2. ***Are there things on this list that you wish you could do? What things?*** (Accept all reasonable answers.)
3. ***Last week we heard how Jesus used the disciples' five loaves of bread and two fish to feed thousands of people. In today's Gospel, Jesus performs another extraordinary act; he walks on water. Peter then asks Jesus if he too can walk on water. Let's listen carefully to this story and see what we can learn from this encounter between Peter and Jesus.***
4. Invite one or more volunteers to read aloud today's Gospel, Matthew 14:22-33.
5. ***What did Peter want to do?*** (He wanted to walk on water as Jesus did.)
What was Jesus' response? (He said yes.)
What happened? (Peter was able to walk on the water, but then he started to sink because he grew fearful.)
What did Jesus do when this happened? (He saved him.)
What did the disciples learn about Jesus through this? (They came to believe that Jesus was the Son of God.)
6. Say: ***Jesus invited his disciples to participate in the work that he was doing. He invites us to do the same. He wants us to do extraordinary things for others. In order for us to be able to do this, we must have faith and trust that Jesus will do his work through us. Even if we become fearful and doubtful like Peter, Jesus will still save us.***
7. Conclude in prayer together that God will continue to work through people to bring about the kingdom of heaven. Pray together the Morning Offering or the Lord's Prayer.



Morning Offering

My God, I offer you my prayers,
works, joys and sufferings of this day
in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.
I offer them for all the intentions of your Son's Sacred Heart,
for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin,
and the reunion of Christians.
Amen.

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Making the Connection 7,8 & 9

It is natural for students at this age to experience doubts regarding the presence and power of God when they are faced with difficult challenges. This Sunday's Gospel provides an opportunity to discuss doubt and faith.

Gospel Reading Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God

Materials Needed None

Preparation for Sunday Scripture Readings

1. **Have you ever heard the phrase “too good to be true”? What do you think it means?**
(Accept all reasonable answers.)
2. **Many of us have purchased a product based on advertising only to discover that the ad's promises were “too good to be true.”** Invite volunteers to share experiences when this has happened to them.
3. **God made a promise long ago to his Chosen People that he would always be with them and would always love them. This promise seems too good to be true. Yet, God fulfilled that promise by sending his only Son, Jesus. Jesus, in turn, sent the Holy Spirit to be with us at all times. Even so, we sometimes doubt God's promise. In this Sunday's Gospel, we hear that Peter experienced doubt too.**
4. Have a volunteer read aloud this Sunday's Gospel, Matthew 14:22-23
5. **At what point during the Gospel might Peter have thought “This is too good to be true.”?** (when he started to sink)
6. **What did Jesus do when Peter started to sink?** (He reached out to take Peter's hand.)
What does this tell you about Jesus? (That Jesus is there to help us when we are troubled)
7. Say: **In the coming week, pay attention to the times when you feel like you are sinking—when problems begin to overwhelm you. Remember that Jesus is there with you, reaching out his hand to lift you up. This time it isn't too good to be true. Jesus keeps his promise.**
8. Conclude by singing, playing a recording, or praying aloud the lyrics of the **song Be With Me** (Marty Haugen, GIA Publications).



Be With Me Lyrics:

Refrain: Be with me, Lord, when I am in trouble.
Be with me, Lord, I pray.

You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord Most High,
who abide in the shadow of our God,
say to the Lord, "My refuge and fortress,
the God in whom I trust."

No evil shall befall you, no pain come near,
for his angels stand close by your side,
guarding you always and bearing you gently,
watching over your life.

Those who cling to the Lord live secure in his love;
lifted high those who trust in his name.
Call on the Lord, he will never forsake you.
He will bring you salvation and joy.

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Family Connection

Gospel Reading

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus walks on water, and the disciples acknowledge him as the Son of God.

The mission of the Church is to continue the work of Jesus. The family, the domestic church, participates in this mission too.

Talk about how your family participates in the mission of the Church.

Discuss ways in which you seek to reach out to your neighbors and people in need through acts of kindness, mercy, and justice.

Then read together today's Gospel, Matthew 14:22-33.

Talk about how Peter wanted to be like Jesus, to walk on water like Jesus did.

Note that Peter was successful for a time, but then he doubted Jesus, and he began to sink into the water.

Talk about how your family's acts of mercy and justice are rooted in your faith in Jesus.

Pray together that Jesus will continue to work through your family to prepare the kingdom of heaven.

Pray together the Morning Offering or the Lord's Prayer.

Morning Offering

My God, I offer you my prayers,
works, joys and sufferings of this day
in union with the holy sacrifice of the Mass throughout the world.
I offer them for all the intentions of your Son's Sacred Heart,
for the salvation of souls, reparation for sin,
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Amen.