

Lord, storms rage around us that cause us to be afraid. Protect and be our guide always that we might trust that you hold us and your whole creation in the palm of your hand. Calm our fears and bring us peace. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

There is another side to water, particularly when we consider the sea. While the sea could be life-giving (fishing, etc.), it also was a source of chaos and fear.

Day 1 Read Job 41:1-34; Read Psalm 104:24-26

We are not reading the entire story of Job but the crux of the story is that Job, a servant of God lost everything he had (health, family, wealth, etc.) and he demanded an audience with God to explain why this happened to him. After many chapters and after Job's no-good friends fail to provide any real answers, God finally speaks to him "out of the whirlwind" and essentially says to Job, "Who do you think you are that you could possibly understand?" One of the images God uses in making this point to Job is to point to "Leviathan" one of the great mythical creatures of the deep.

1a. In Job 41:1-11 describe what Leviathan is like. What does God say about it?

b. What does Leviathan look like? Of what is it made up?

c. From all of this, who do you think can defeat Leviathan? So, if Leviathan lives in the sea, what kind of danger lives in the sea?

2. Despite all we have read about Leviathan who dwells in the sea. How is Leviathan pictured in Psalm 104:24-26? What does this say about God?

Day 2 Read Jonah 1:1-16

3a. Jonah doesn't want to go to Ninevah as God has directed him. What does God cause to come upon Jonah?

b. Where is Jonah during the storm? What do the sailors try to do during the storm?

c. Jonah eventually tells the soldiers to throw him overboard. Why do you think he might have said this (there might be more than one reason)?

4. After being saved from the storm, how do the pagan sailors feel about Jonah's God now?

Day 3 Read Matthew 14:22-33

5. Peter steps out of the boat and walks on water. What causes Peter to sink (not just what happened physically, but what happened spiritually)?
6. Unfortunately, the ONLY lesson most people take from this story is that if Peter had only trusted and had faith in Jesus and kept his eyes on Jesus, he would not have begun to sink. This, however, ignores the truth that try as you might, you will not walk on water . . . only God can do that!!
 - a. Instead consider these things: Jesus commissioned the disciples to get into “the boat” (a first century image of the Church); Jesus commissioned the disciples to go on without Jesus present; the storm/waves battered the boat but Peter only got in trouble once he left the boat. Can you come up with an alternate understanding that serves us better through the ages?
 - b. Okay, I gave you my interpretation . . . what’s your favorite interpretation of this story?

Day 4 Read Matthew 8:23-27

7. Jesus and the disciples get into the boat to cross to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and a storm comes upon them.
 - a. How do the disciples react to the storm?
 - b. How does Jesus react to the storm?
8. Think back to the first day of this lesson with Psalm 104 and Job. How do those scriptures inform how the disciples and Jesus each respond differently to the threat?

Day 5 Read John 21:1-8

9. This is a resurrection appearance story.
 - a. This scene seems very familiar to us. Why do the disciples only recognize Jesus after their nets are filled with the miraculous catch of fish?
 - b. While this is not necessarily a story of the sea creating fear, there were likely some emotions going on for the disciples. What might they have been feeling out on the water that day before the miraculous catch?
10. Jesus filling nets continues the theme of this lesson. What is that theme?

Day 6

11. We are really not fisher-people these days . . . maybe you like fishing, maybe you don’t. Maybe you get on a boat, maybe you don’t. These stories about the sea can speak to you and me regardless. What is the message of all these stories to 21st Century people like us?