

The Gospel Project for Adults, Summer 2017
Interactive Teaching Tips for Adults, Session 9

Introduction: *Point to an idiom.*

Show this quick video clip of a lizard that can “walk on water” (1 minute, 25 seconds):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=45yabrnryXk>

Ask, “What do we mean when we say that we have someone in our lives who ‘walked on water’? Who has been that type of person for you?”

Explain that though the phrase “walk on water” may be used flippantly today because of broad awareness of the story, it is nonetheless wise to consider this familiar passage with new faith and fresh eyes.

Point 1: *Emphasize solitude as a discipline.*

Ask, “What are some phrases in Matthew 14:22-23 that indicate Jesus wanted or needed to be alone?” After discussing their answers, ask the following questions: “Why is solitude a worthwhile pursuit? How many of you practice the discipline of solitude?”

You may want to read aloud some of the Donald S. Whitney article “The Gospel and the Discipline of Solitude”:

<http://www.lifeway.com/Article/spiritual-disciplines-gospel-solitude-donald-whitney>

Say something like this: “Especially in times of stress, grief, and emotional strain, we need time alone with God.” Encourage learners to follow Jesus’ example of spending time alone in prayer and study.

Point 2: *Ask why we are afraid.*

Display the following translations of the last phrases of Matthew 14:27 on a marker board or handout:

- “Be encouraged! It’s me. Don’t be afraid.” (CEB)
- “Don’t worry! I am Jesus. Don’t be afraid.” (CEV)
- “It’s all right! It’s I myself, don’t be afraid!” (PHILLIPS)
- “Take hope. It is I. Do not be afraid!” (NLV)
- “Be still. It is I. You have nothing to fear.” (VOICE)
- “Take courage! I Am! Stop being afraid!” (AMPC)

Using these translations, consider Jesus’s meaning to His disciples. Ask, “Did the disciples have a valid reason to worry? What was Jesus’ reason for them *not* to worry?” Point out that the disciples’ concern about the storm was indeed valid, but Jesus’ presence took away the need to fear.

Ask questions like the following: “Why should Jesus’ ability to calm an actual storm in nature give us confidence for His ability to control the ‘storms of our lives’? What causes you terror or fear? Would Jesus likewise say ‘Don’t be afraid’ to you?”

Conclusion: *Stress worship as an appropriate way to counter fear.*

Say something like this: “We need not fear because of who Jesus is: God in the flesh. He is all-powerful and all-knowing.”

Challenge learners to recommit to private worship this week in order to keep their eyes of faith on Jesus instead of their fears. As a group, agree to begin every day this week by doing something that will help each of you to have a better focus on God. Such might involve listening to or singing one God-centered song, reading and reflecting on a passage of Scripture, or praying for a greater sense of God’s presence.

Consider watching the video “That’s My King” and encourage learners to watch it each morning (3 minutes, 18 seconds):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yzqTFNfeDnE>

Teaching Tip of the Week

Do not minimize the fears of learners. Though many people have irrational fears, most fears are founded in things that threaten their wellbeing or confidence. Instead, encourage learners to focus on Jesus in the face of their fears.