

Children's Lessons for Life Groups

All-In-One lessons for kids ages 4-12

from

All-In-One Sunday School, Volumes 2 & 3

Lesson 7



God Guides

7

LESSON AIM

To help kids learn that ★ Jesus is with us in tough times.

Teacher Tip

This lesson works well with an intergenerational class. You may wish to invite whole families to join you for this session.



OBJECTIVES

Kids will

- ✓ play a game involving safety zones,
- ✓ learn how Jesus took care of the disciples' fears,
- ✓ identify times when they're afraid, and
- ✓ trust God to help them deal with their fears.

YOU'LL NEED

- masking tape or rope
- a roll of dimes
- a cuddly stuffed animal
- photocopies of the "Jesus Is My Safety Zone" handout (p. 130)
- pencils

BIBLE BASIS

Matthew 8:23-27

The Sea of Galilee was notorious for its sudden storms. The disciples, though some of them were experienced fishermen who had literally spent a lifetime on that body of water, were terrified when their little craft began to toss helplessly on the crashing waves in the middle of the night. They were amazed—and frustrated—that Jesus lay calmly sleeping in the front of the boat. Wasn't he aware of their peril? Didn't he care?

Jesus used the opportunity to demonstrate he is truly master of the wind and the waves. Jesus is master of the storms that buffet our lives, as well. Sometimes we may be tempted to wonder, as the disciples did, if he knows what's happening

in our lives or if he cares. What we learn from this story is Jesus may not always make the storms disappear immediately, but he will walk with us through them.

Matthew 28:20

Jesus is the friend who sticks closer than a brother. Though kids may legitimately long for the reassuring physical presence of a trusted adult, Jesus' promise to be with those who trust in him is powerful indeed.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS

"What's there to be afraid of?" I can remember my father asking that question when I was just a wee tot and the night-frights kept me from falling asleep. What's there to be afraid of? Plenty! Shadowy corners, familiar objects that loomed huge and strange in the dark, unknown things under the bed and behind the closet door, and the something that might pop up to get you if you got up to go to the bathroom. You may smile at that list, but children's fears are very real to them, and wise adults will take those fears seriously.

Kids of this generation have a lot more to handle than that standard list of fears. One of kids' biggest anxieties is being separated from parents. Divorce rates give credibility to that fear. On top of that, the television imports all kinds of fears right into living rooms—everything from war to psychopathic killers.

Now more than ever, kids of all ages need the assurance that God can be a personal, comforting, protecting presence in their lives.

The Lesson

Teacher Tip

Adjust the rules of this game to work for your group. You can make the boundaries of the game as large or as small as space permits. If too many people succeed in getting to the corners and back, let two or three people be "It." To even the odds for younger kids, let three of them be It at the same time.



ATTENTION GRABBER

Safety Zone

Set up the play area for this game by establishing four corners and a center circle as safety zones. Mark off the center circle with masking tape or rope; make it large enough so everyone can stand in it comfortably. Mark off a small triangle at each corner. Kids who are inside the circle and the corner triangles will be safe. Choose one person to be "It."

If you have adults in your class today, have them form the safety zones. Assign one adult to each corner and have the rest outline the center circle.

Say: You can score a point and win a dime each time you run from the circle to one of the corners and back to the circle without being tagged. The circle and the corners are safety zones—you can't be tagged there. But only one person at a time can be in each corner. If you get tagged, you're frozen until another player tags you to unfreeze you.

Stand in the center circle to hand out dimes as players score. Also be prepared to act as referee to determine whether or not kids make it to the safety zones before they're tagged.

Have a new person be It each time five people have scored.

Stop the game before interest lags. Bring kids together and help them focus on what you're about to say by leading them in some deep breaths.

Ask:

◆ **How did it feel to leave the safety zone?** (Scary; exciting.)

◆ **How did it feel to score and win a dime?** (It felt good; I wanted to win more.)

◆ **Which did you want to do more—stay safe or score?**

Explain. (I wanted to score; I was afraid to try, I just wanted to stay safe.)

◆ **This game had safety zones where nothing bad could happen to you; do you have safety zones in real life? What are they?** (Home and church are my safety zones; my safety zone is when I'm with my parents or good friends because I know they won't let anything bad happen to me.)

◆ **How does it feel to go outside those safety zones?** (Really scary; it doesn't really bother me; I like to be out on my own.)

◆ **Why do you think people sometimes leave their safety zones even if they don't want to?** (Sometimes people have to move to a new place; sometimes parents divorce and we lose part of our safety zone; accidents and sickness sometimes pull us away from our safety zones.)

Say: It's wonderful to have places where we feel safe and people who we feel safe with. But we can't always stay in our safety zones. And even in our safety zones scary things can sometimes happen. That's when it's nice to know Jesus is at our side. ★ Jesus is with us in tough times.

BIBLE STUDY

Calming the Storm (Matthew 8:23-27)

Say: Today we're going to listen to a really scary story about what happened to Jesus' disciples. And you're going to help me tell it.

Practice each of these cues and responses with the class:

◆ Whenever I say "boat," everyone say "creeeak" and pretend you're pulling hard on the oars.

◆ Whenever I say "disciples," all the boys (and men) count to 12 really fast.

◆ Whenever I say "wind," the girls (and women) cup their hands around their mouths and blow.

◆ Whenever I say "waves," put your hands side by side and make waves in front of you.

◆ Whenever I say "Jesus," point to upward and say, "Christ, the Lord."

As you tell the "Jesus Calms the Sea" story on the next page, be sure to put an emphasis on each of the underlined words; then pause for kids to respond.

Say: **Here we go! Everybody stick together so you don't get too scared.**

Read the story. After you finish, have kids give themselves a round of applause for helping you tell the story. Then ask:

◆ **What happened that made the disciples feel unsafe?** (Their boat got in a bad storm; they were afraid of drowning.)

◆ **What did they do to get help?** (They woke Jesus up.)

◆ **What did Jesus do to make things okay again?** (He told the wind and the waves to be still.)

◆ **How could he do that?** (He's God's son—he can do anything.)

◆ **Can Jesus help us the way he helped the disciples in the storm? Why or why not?** (Yes, Jesus can still do anything; no, he doesn't work that way now.)

◆ **Can Jesus help us even though we can't see him or touch him? Why or why not?** (Yes, he's always with us; no, sometimes we don't ask him.)

Teacher Tip

Rehearse the cues in scrambled order several times before you begin reading "Jesus Calms the Sea."



LIFE APPLICATION

Teacher Tip

If you have a very large inter-generational class, you may wish to form two or three groups. Encourage people in each group to share how God helped them through scary situations.



Someone to Hang On To

Ask:

◆ **Can anybody tell how Jesus helped you in a scary situation?** Give kids a chance to share. It would be helpful to share a story from your own experience too. If you have other adults in the class, they might also tell a story, too.

After people have shared, bring out a cuddly stuffed animal. Pass it around and have everyone hug it. In a larger class pass two or three stuffed animals at once. Ask:

◆ **Why do you think people like to have stuffed animals around?** (They're cute; they feel good to hold.)

◆ **How do you feel when you hug an animal like this?** (It feels warm; cuddly; good.)

◆ **Do you ever hug a stuffed animal when you're scared or sad?** (Sometimes.)

◆ **How is the feeling you get from hugging a stuffed animal like how it feels to trust Jesus when you're scared or sad?** (Jesus comforts me; I remember he loves me.)

◆ **How is trusting Jesus different from hugging a stuffed animal?** (Jesus is really alive and has power to help me.)

COMMITMENT

Facing Our Fears

Say: **Just before Jesus went back to heaven, he made a promise to his followers. Let's look at that promise.**

Give each person a copy of the "Jesus Is My Safety Zone" handout and a pencil. Point out the Bible verse at the bottom.

Say: **This is the promise I'm talking about. Let's read it together.**

Say: **This is what I really want you to remember from today's class. Jesus promises he will always be with us. And having Jesus with us is even better than having a teddy bear or an older brother, or even parents, because Jesus is the Son of God, and he has power to help us! ★ Jesus is with us in tough times.**

Have kids (and adults) use the space on the handout to draw or write about a scary situation they sometimes face. Allow two or three minutes for drawing and writing, and then ask volunteers each to tell about the scary situations they put on their handout. Kids may be surprised to learn adults have fears, too, and even though they're grown up, they also trust in Jesus to help them in scary situations.

Ask:

◆ **How does it feel to see Jesus with his arms around you in**

Teacher Tip

Younger children will be able to "read" the verse after the class repeats it a couple of times.



JESUS CALMS THE SEA

The disciples were just exhausted. All day crowds and crowds of people had been following Jesus, listening as he taught and watching as he healed the sick. Now the sun was beginning to set over the Sea of Galilee. Seeing how tired his disciples were, Jesus said, "Let's get in a boat and go over to the other side of the lake." It would be good for all of them to get away from the crowds for a while.

The disciples rowed away from the shore while Jesus went to the front of the boat and lay down on a cushion. The waves lapped gently against the side of the boat, lulling Jesus into a peaceful sleep.

But suddenly a wind began to blow dark clouds across the sky. The waves weren't so gentle anymore. The little boat began to pitch and rock. The disciples began to get a little worried. But Jesus still lay sleeping in the front of the boat.

Then the wind grew stronger still. The spray from the waves got the disciples all wet. This was getting to be a bad storm! But Jesus still lay sleeping in the front of the boat.

By the time the fishing boat reached the center of the lake, the wind had turned into a angry gale that whipped the waves so high they washed right over the boat. The disciples were terrified. They thought they might drown. But Jesus still lay sleeping in the front of the boat.

Finally, someone went and shook Jesus. "Master," he cried, "don't you care if we drown?" Jesus looked around. He listened to the howling wind. He felt the cold, stinging spray as waves crashed over the little boat. He saw the fear in the faces of his disciples. Then Jesus stood, stretched out his arms to the wind and the waves, and commanded: "Peace! Be still!"

And all at once the wind died down and the waves became completely calm. Then he asked the disciples: "Why are you so afraid? Where is your faith?"

Jesus showed his power over the wind and the waves that day on the Sea of Galilee. Just as he cared for his disciples in that little storm-tossed boat, he will care for you.

your scary situation? (It feels good.)

Say: The next time you're afraid, I hope you'll remember

★ Jesus is with us in tough times.

CLOSING

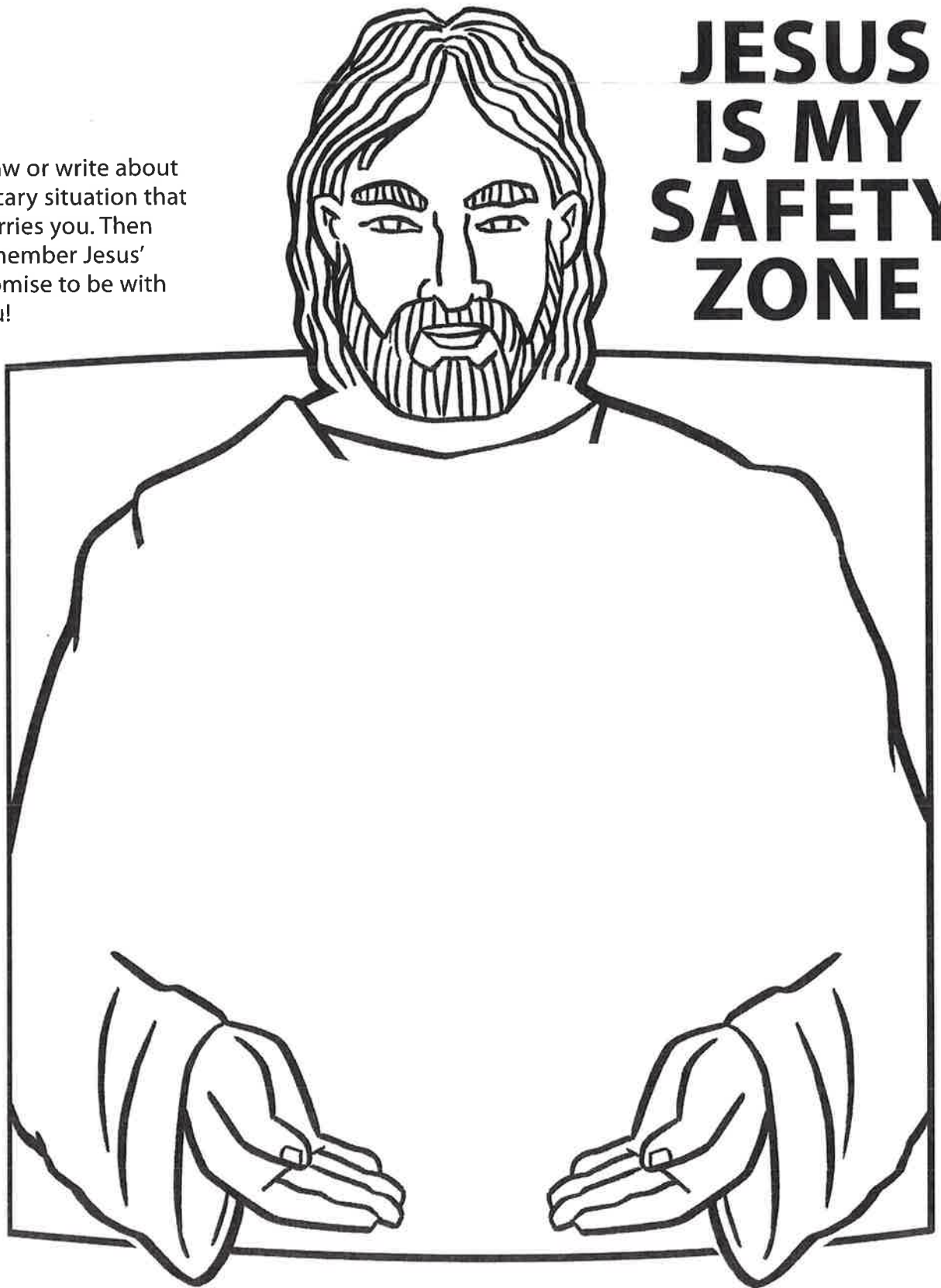
Always There

Gather everyone in the Safety Zone circle. If you have adults in the class, have them make an outer circle with the kids inside.

Close with a prayer similar to this one: **Jesus, thank you for being our safety zone. Help us to remember the next time we're really scared that you are with us. Amen.**

JESUS IS MY SAFETY ZONE

Draw or write about a scary situation that worries you. Then remember Jesus' promise to be with you!



“Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have taught you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age” Matthew 28:20.

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