

## Teen Devotion

Year A – Proper 14

Define Christian



**One truth shared:** When experiencing moments of doubt, you can trust the truth of Jesus' words of never-failing love and promises.

*But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."*

*"Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."*

*"Come," he said.*

*Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"*

*Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"*

**Matthew 14:27-31**

### Someone Worth Trusting

Come on, Peter! Really?! What is your problem?!

There Jesus was, standing on the water. This was so abnormal that the disciples first thought it was a ghost. But Jesus calmed them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid!" Phew! It's Jesus!

Peter, as usual, was quick to speak (and speak boldly). He asked if he could walk on the water with Jesus, to which the Lord replied, "Sure, come on down!" So Peter gets down out of the boat, probably quite carefully and slowly, and miraculously, he's walking on the water too! You gotta be kidding me! This is awesome!

But then he looked elsewhere. He saw the wind and the waves and likely had a more logical moment, "Wait . . . how is this possible? Humans don't walk on water. What if the waves are too strong? What if this doesn't last? What if I sink? What if . . ."

Peter! Really?! What is your problem?! You are literally living a miracle. You are literally face to face with Jesus with his promise to walk on water still ringing in your ears! How could you doubt?!

But Peter isn't alone, is he? You might not have walked on water before, but surely those questions have plagued your mind:

*"What if I drown in my homework? . . . What if I don't pass this test? . . . What if my dad loses his job? . . . What if I don't get accepted into college? . . . What if grandma's cancer doesn't get better? . . . What if . . ."*

From the very beginning in the Garden of Eden, Satan has been tempting people in the same way. He first sparked doubt in Adam and Eve by asking, "Did God really say?" Suddenly doubts flooded their minds, wondering if God was holding back on them or if there was something better they were missing. So they ate the fruit because they doubted God's love and God's words.

Satan did the same with Peter. Peter doubted Jesus' words that clearly told him to come and walk on the water, and he doubted Jesus' love that he would keep him safe. And Satan still does the same today. He wants nothing more than for you to doubt Jesus' words to you and love for you today.

Dear teen, look at the blood-stained cross. Look at the empty tomb. They are all the proof you would ever need. God's love for you is boundless and endless. God's promises never fail. God's words are always true. Trust the God who so loved the world that he sent his Son for you. Jesus reached out his hand to grab Peter when he was sinking in doubt, and he does the same for you. Listen to your Savior and trust him always as he says, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

**Prayer:** Jesus, so often doubts fill my mind. I can hardly help it. My sinful heart is so broken and it's so hard to trust. But I know that you've never failed me. I know that your words are always true. I know that you love me. Give me a confident and courageous faith that always trusts, even when I'm sinking. Amen.

## Foundation Teen Facilitators Guide

### Year A – Proper 14

#### Define Christian

**One truth shared:** When experiencing moments of doubt, you can trust the truth of Jesus' words of never-failing love and promises.

### Someone Worth Trusting

***Starting the Discussion:** This first section is intended to be light and easy, to engage and get the conversation going. Have a little fun with these questions.*

Have you ever (or someone you know) ever had a scary, life-threatening situation like Peter thought he was having when he was sinking?

***Connecting:** This section serves as a bridge between the opening conversation and the body of the study/discussion. It should get the group thinking about the topic/text even before they've looked at it.*

Explain this statement: Sometimes our human feelings get in the way of us believing the facts of what God says and promises.

***Digging In:** Here we want to dig into some texts or the text for the day and see what Scripture says. The questions are meant to be open ended to give a beginning of a scriptural conversation. These are a guide for a spiritual and scriptural conversation.*

- Describe the feelings you imagine Peter having in this story—from the beginning of the story to the end.
- What are some situations in your life that have made it very difficult to trust God's love and God's words?
- Why does Satan try so hard to plague us with doubt? What's the big deal about doubt?
- Identify the many ways Jesus shows love for the disciples and for Peter in this story.

***Conclusion:** Here we want to wrap up the discussion, perhaps circling back to the "connecting question" above.*

What lessons do we learn from Jesus and about Jesus along with Peter and the disciples today?