



FREE LESSON · SHARE FREELY

A CHARACTER LESSON · AGES 8 TO 12

Asleep in the Boat

A storm hit the boat, and the water kept coming in. Jesus was asleep. His friends woke him with a hard question: “Don’t you even care that we are all about to drown?”



COURAGE · THE ROOT

A QUICK NOTE TO PARENTS

Before you read together

Children are afraid of all sorts of things: the dark, a test, a thunderstorm, a sick grandparent, something they overheard on the news. Fear is not the only hard part. Underneath it, a child can start to believe something quieter: *If I'm scared, God doesn't care.* Or: *If I trusted God more, I wouldn't be scared at all.*

This lesson takes one short story, Jesus asleep in a boat during a storm (Mark 4:35 to 41). The people closest to Jesus were afraid too. They woke him and said so, loudly. He did not send them away. He spoke to the wind and the waves, and everything went still.

This is the Root lesson of the **Courage** month on the trail: the old story underneath the virtue. The courage here is the everyday kind. For a child, courage can start very small: saying out loud what scares you, and bringing it to God.

WHAT IT TEACHES

The lie: "If I'm scared, God doesn't care." The truth: "He is in the boat with you, and he cares even while you are afraid." Three words to keep: **Name it. Bring it. Trust him.**

HOW TO USE IT

Read the story aloud. Pause after the disciples' question to Jesus and ask: *have you ever felt like that?* Then read on to the end. About fifteen minutes with the questions. In that time, the story and three questions give your child a way to say what they are afraid of, and to hear that God is with them in it.

A NOTE ON THE SOURCE

This lesson retells Mark 4:35 to 41 in plain words and quotes The Living Bible (TLB). Words in quotation marks are the Bible's words. Everything else is our retelling, and we have kept to what the text says. Mark tells of wind and waves. He does not mention rain or lightning, and he does not say how long the storm lasted. Matthew (8:23 to 27) and Luke (8:22 to 25) tell the same event with some differences. This lesson follows Mark.

THIS IS A CONVERSATION, NOT A TREATMENT

Many children have fears and worries from time to time. If your child's worry is constant, or keeps them from school, home or play, talk with their doctor.

HERE IS A STORY WORTH KEEPING. READ IT SLOWLY.

A storm on the lake

That day Jesus had been teaching a huge crowd beside a lake. He sat in a boat to teach, while the people listened from the beach.

“As evening fell, Jesus said to his disciples, ‘Let’s cross to the other side of the lake.’” (Mark 4:35, TLB) So they left the crowds behind and set out, with Jesus in the boat. Other boats went along too.

But soon a terrible storm came up. High waves began breaking into the boat. Water kept coming in until the boat was nearly full and about to sink.

And Jesus? “Jesus was asleep at the back of the boat with his head on a cushion.” (Mark 4:38, TLB)

“Frantically they wakened him, shouting, ‘Teacher, don’t you even care that we are all about to drown?’” (Mark 4:38, TLB)

(Pause here. Ask: have you ever felt like that?)

Jesus did not tell them to calm down first. “Then he rebuked the wind and said to the sea, ‘Quiet down!’ And the wind fell, and there was a great calm!” (Mark 4:39, TLB)

The wind stopped and the water went still. Then Jesus spoke to his friends. “And he asked them, ‘Why were you so fearful? Don’t you even yet have confidence in me?’” (Mark 4:40, TLB)

“And they were filled with awe and said among themselves, ‘Who is this man, that even the winds and seas obey him?’” (Mark 4:41, TLB)

The boat did not sink. They reached the other side of the lake (Mark 5:1).

The storm was real. The fear was real. And Jesus was in the boat the whole time.

WHAT THE STORY IS REALLY ABOUT

Don't you care?

The disciples asked the question a scared child often feels, even if they never say it out loud: *Does God even care?* When we are frightened and God seems quiet, it is easy to believe a lie: **If I'm scared, God doesn't care.**

Now look at what Jesus did. His friends woke him, frightened and shouting. He got up and calmed the storm while they were still afraid. In Mark's account, he spoke to the wind first and asked his question after. He did not wait for them to stop being scared before he helped. The only thing Mark says he rebuked was the wind.

BEING AFRAID IS NOT FAILING

"Why were you so fearful?" can sound like a scolding. Read it again. Jesus asks it after the sea is calm, while everyone is safe. Mark does not tell us his tone of voice. He does not ask why they woke him. He asks about trust: "Don't you even yet have confidence in me?" The disciples brought their fear to the right person. Jesus wanted them to trust him more. Fear and trust can live in the same heart. One psalm says, "But when I am afraid, I will put my confidence in you." (Psalm 56:3, TLB)

HE CARES

One of the letters in the Bible puts it simply: "Let him have all your worries and cares, for he is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you." (1 Peter 5:7, TLB)

THREE WORDS TO KEEP

The disciples said their fear out loud. They brought it to Jesus. And he asked them to trust him. **Name it. Bring it. Trust him.** A child can do all three this week.

Here is the truth the story shows: **He is in the boat with you, and he cares even while you are afraid.** "In the boat" is a picture. Jesus told his followers, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20, TLB)

TALK IT OVER

Three questions, no wrong answers

1. The disciples woke Jesus and said, “*Don’t you even care that we are all about to drown?*” Have you ever felt like God was asleep, or did not care, when you were scared? What was happening? (Parents: there is no wrong answer here. Just listen.)

2. Jesus calmed the storm first, and asked his question after. Why do you think he helped them while they were still afraid? What does that tell you about how he feels when you are scared?

3. What is one thing you are afraid of right now, big or small? What would it look like to name it, bring it to God, and trust him with it this week?

ONE THING TO TRY THIS WEEK: NAME IT, BRING IT

At bedtime, ask your child, “Is there anything in your boat tonight?” Let them name one worry, and name one of your own. Then pray together in your own words. If it helps, start here: “Jesus, I’m scared about _____. Thank you that you are with me and you care. Help me trust you. Amen.”

COPYWORK

Copy the line below in your best handwriting. Words worth keeping.

“When I am afraid, I will put my confidence in you.”

PSALM 56:3 (TLB)

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WHERE THE TRAIL GOES NEXT

From the boat to the field

Jesus' friends were not the only frightened people in his story. On the night he was born, an angel appeared to shepherds in a field, and they were badly frightened. The first words the angel said were "Don't be afraid!" (Luke 2:10, TLB) That story is **The Manger**, the Christmas lesson on the trail.

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