

Calvary Assembly Life Group: “NEXT” Week of Oct 7-12

Focus

God has designs and plans for us that are beyond our wildest dreams. To step into the next thing he has for us, we have to lay down **fear** and step into **faith**. Peter may have fallen when he took his eyes off of Jesus, but he was the only disciple to step out of the boat, and the only to ever walk on water. Stepping into radical faith opens doors in our lives that nothing else can.

Prep

Your Life Group will look at a powerful story in Matthew in which Peter the disciple took a step of faith and walked on water towards Jesus. This is a compelling example of moving from fear to faith; even though Peter stumbled on the way, he still got out of the boat. Our church is in the middle of our NEXT campaign for the next two weeks. We are stepping into uncharted territory, so that we can be a part of the advance of God’s kingdom in our community. Tonight is a great opportunity to reflect as a group on what our next steps are as individuals and as a church body.

Video

Show the video that was prepared for this lesson. It is less than four minutes and will help to set up the conversation for your group.

Scripture

Matthew 14:22-33

Jesus Walks on the Water

22 Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. **23** After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, **24** and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

25 Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. **26** When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear.

27 But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.”

29 “Come,” he said.

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

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

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. **33** Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, “Truly you are the Son of God.”

Reflection Time

We recommend providing 4 to 5 minutes for the group to silently reflect on the passage you just read together.

- Just before the reflection time, encourage your group to use the time to identify questions that come to their minds.
- What thoughts do you have about characters in the story?
- What do you think could have been some of the motives for decisions made?
- What did you notice about how the story played out?
- What do you think this passage is saying to you?

Questions for Discussion

Question: Do you generally view risks as positive or dangerous?

Said differently: Do you consider yourself prone to take risks or risk-averse?

Question: When was the last time you took a risk on something? What motivated you to push past your discomfort into action?

Observation: Fear has the ability to distort our perception of reality, especially in regards to how we view God. The disciples had spent years with Jesus, but because they saw him doing something that they hadn’t seen before (walking on water), they became afraid and believed he was a ghost. Even after hearing his voice, they still didn’t fully trust him.

Question: In what ways do you feel like a fearful mindset can influence our decision-making?

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Question: Have you ever felt like a fearful mindset held you back from taking an important step into a really good thing?

Question: Which character in this story do you resonate with more- Peter, or one of the disciples who stayed in the boat?

Question: Why do you think Peter was the only disciple who attempted to walk out to Jesus? What barriers did he have to break through in order to get to that place of faith?

Observation: Peter was the one disciple who took a risk, but he didn’t go from a place of fear to faith in one step. Before he calls out to Jesus, he has to listen to his voice through the storm say “take courage.” After that, he tests Jesus by telling him to call him out on the water. Finally, he takes his first steps out of the boat. Our faith journey looks a lot like Peter’s. The path to the big leap of faith is paved by little surrenders and steps.

Question: What is the next area in your personal life that God is calling you to step out in faith in? What is the next small step you might take to get there?

Observation: We are in the middle of our NEXT campaign as a church for the next two weeks. We are opening our imaginations, our resources, our time, and our faith to step into the next season of seeing the kingdom of God advance in our community

Question: What do you think are some faith steps God might be calling us to take as a church? What hope do you have for our church’s future? **LEADERS:** Try to keep this conversation focused on hopeful vision as opposed to complaining about problems in the church. The heart of this question is to build a sense of ownership in our congregation about our spiritual growth as a church family.

Question: Why do you think Peter fell back into the water, even though he had already taken a leap of faith?

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Observation: The passage says that Peter fell into the water not when he saw the waves, but when he saw the *wind*. Wind is a force that we usually feel on our skin, but Peter observed it with his eyes. When we step out in faith, our sight to see spiritual realities actually grows. With this comes new challenges to our faith and focus on Jesus.

Question: What do you think are some of the challenges of staying focused and bold once we have made a decision to move from fear to faith?

Prayer

Use this time as an opportunity to pray for individuals who are looking to make a faith step, as well as our church as we grow and seek God’s direction for our future.