

Yesterday. Today. Forever.

Module: Living Out Your Faith: The Life of Peter

Lesson 2: Stepping Out of the Boat

Objectives:

- Students will identify how feelings of doubt and unworthiness can interfere with God's work in our lives.
- Students will learn the value of encouragement.
- Students will become aware that they have extreme worth in God's eyes.

Materials Needed

- ☐ 1 Bible per student
- ☐ 1 self-adhesive name tag per student
- ☐ 1 pen per student
- ☐ optional: small prizes for “Minds On”

Minds On

Play two truths and a lie. Have each student come up with two truths and one lie about themselves to tell to each other. They should tell them all as if they were all true and it is up to the group to determine which one is a lie (For instance: I (author Jeff Baker) usually say something like “I was almost eaten by a lion at age 2, I have two spleens, and my middle name is Matthew” The first two sound ridiculous but are true, my middle name is Michael). You may choose to award a small prize to those who’s lie fooled everyone. (In bigger groups you may have to break up into smaller groups to play this game).

Action

Present the following questions (either verbally or projected onto a screen). Have students think of their answer. Then students will pair up with another person and share their answers. Each person should be prepared to share their partner’s answer to the larger group.

What's the coolest thing you've ever done?

What’s the coolest thing you've ever tried to do (or: what WOULD have been the coolest thing you've ever done IF you had succeeded?)

Why do you think you did or didn't succeed?

Prompt: Some of us have done some pretty cool things. In two truths and a lie we got to hear some of them. But what happens when we try something cool and then doubt ourselves?

Choose between 3 to 16 people and assign them a role (in order of priority: narrator, actor for Jesus, actor for Peter, voice of Jesus, voice of Peter, actors for the other 10 disciples) to re-enact Matthew 14:22-33. The actors will perform the actions of the narrator (and voices if applicable).

After the re-enactment, ask (in rapid succession):

What happened in this story?

What are the significant or important parts?

Why does Peter doubt?

Who does Peter doubt?

Do you think he's doubting Jesus or himself more? Why?

Put yourself in Peter's shoes, how would you feel at different moments during the experience?

When you first see Jesus?

When you think about stepping out?

When you first touch the water?

When you put your weight on it and start walking?

When you start sinking?

When Jesus pulls you back up?

What do you think YOU can learn from this story?

What could WE learn as a group or church?

Prompt: In the verse directly before this story Jesus feeds 5000 people with 5 loaves and 2 fish and they had food left over; Jesus is currently walking on the water, and Peter calls out to Jesus to save him. In light of this, who do you think Peter is actually doubting? Why? (answer: He's doubting himself because he doesn't believe he can be like Jesus his rabbi.)

Prompt: Have you ever felt like you were unworthy? Either to be near God or be like God? Unworthy of friendship? Unworthy of your parents love? (Give students a moment to think about those questions.) We are going to do an exercise to counteract some of the feelings of unworthiness the world has put on us and to help us see that we have value to God and to other people.

Hand out name tags to the students and ask them to write a label for themselves about something they feel about themselves or something they doubt about themselves.

Leader's note: Due to the potentially sensitive nature of this exercise, students do not have to reveal their answer to anyone else. This is not a time to make jokes about themselves or each other, and the insecurities or things that are written down are not to be used against each other in any way.

Once they have their labels written, invite them to come up to the front and stick them to a wall. It is not important for people to see who has written what, but rather for the students to see the doubts and fears that are present within the group. Invite students to read the posted answers silently for one minute.

Afterwards, ask students to brainstorm ways of counteracting each written answer (e.g. with Bible passages or practical strategies they may have done themselves). When a doubt has been addressed, rip down and throw away. Continue till all the doubts have been addressed.

Leader's note: If you think your group is not emotionally ready for this level of vulnerability, or that it is not emotionally safe for them to share on this level, simply form a circle and ask each person to say or write down one encouragement to the person on their right-hand side.

Consolidate and Debrief

Ask: When Peter starts sinking what does Jesus say to him?

Prompt: Peter doubts himself and starts sinking, Jesus grabs him and says “Why did you doubt?” Jesus is saying, “I made you and trained you to be like me! You can do this! Why do you doubt?”

Ask students to write down the one suggested strategy to counteract the doubt they posted earlier. Encourage them to keep that either as a pic on their phone or written on a paper to keep in their wallet.

Prompt: Whatever you doubt, whether it's yourself or God, the bible says that we can ask God for things like faith and wisdom and confidence. Know that your value and your worth aren't determined by the things that you can or can't do, it's determined by what Jesus did for you! Jesus died and rose again to free you from the guilt of sin and he has chosen you, gifted you, and ordained you. Even if you don't have confidence in yourself or in God, Jesus has confidence in you.