



Bible beaches

By Vickie Heydon-Matterface

Jesus enjoyed spending time on the beach - there's something about the fresh air and the sunshine that makes us feel happy and relaxed 😊

Activity time

Try these activities. If you can't get exactly these materials, just see what you can find around the house instead!

[This video](#) tells the story and features activity 1.

1 Jesus walks on the water



You will need: dry erase (whiteboard) marker; a glass filled with water; a small jug; food colouring (optional)

Draw a stickperson on the bottom of your glass with the marker pen. Wait a few moments for it to dry and then gently pour on some water. Your person will lift off the glass and literally float on the top of the water. You can try blowing gently to make him move and dance!

Talk about how, in our story today, two people walk on the surface of water. What else could you draw or add in to help bring this story to life?

2 Floating tea party

You will need: a paddling pool (or large bowl); a plastic tray; an old teapot; some plastic cups and plates

Never leave children unsupervised in a paddling pool. Place a tray on the water, fill the teapot with water from the pool/bowl and serve each person a 'drink'. Can the plates balance on the water too? How many cups can you stack on top?

Talk about how Jesus loved to relax with his friends on the beach and share food and drink with them. Think about why it makes us feel good when we serve someone else. Try guessing whether different objects will sink or float and talk about what it must have been like to see Jesus and Peter walking on the water. None of the disciples guessed that they would float!

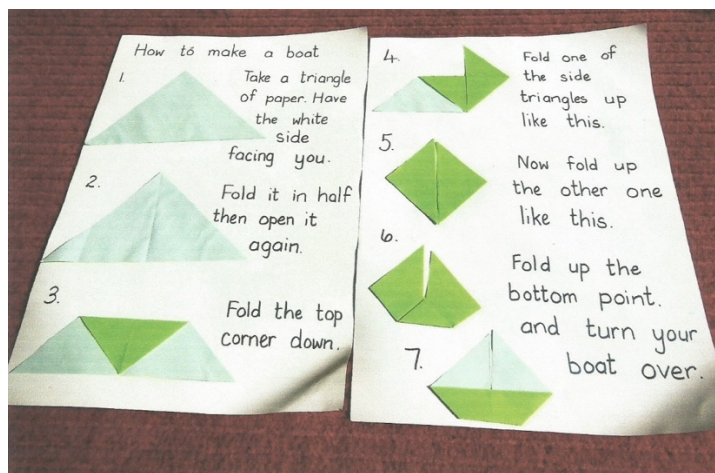
3 Bottle beach

You will need: an empty plastic bottle (any size); water; food colouring (optional); shells; plastic figures (or make your own from plasticine or use twigs or small stones)

Half-fill the bottle with water (adding food colouring if you have it) and add in other things to do with Bible beaches such as: shells, twig or plasticine figures, sand (or whatever else you have that comes to mind). Remember when Peter started to step out and the wind blew – you can tilt the bottle to create your own weather conditions.

Talk about how everything always settles still once it has been left alone for a while. Just as the wind blew and Peter had doubts, Jesus brought some sense of safety and calm to the situation and it became peaceful once again.

4 Easy origami boat folding



You will need: paper

Origami is the ancient Japanese art of paper folding dating back as far as 905-1025AD and it has been passed down from generation to generation ever since. Cut your paper into a square, around 12 cm by 12 cm. Cut it in half so that you have two triangles. Now follow the instructions on the step-by-step guide above.

Talk about whether you could teach this to somebody else – what about an older family member?

You can also take a look at the [Messy Church Bible Beaches Pinterest board](#), which has further crafts and ideas to try at home.

Celebration

Jesus loved to spend time on the beach with his friends, and from stories in the Bible we know that he felt relaxed and socialised with his friends there. When he wasn't cooking fresh fish for them, he was teaching parables, feeding the 5,000 ([Matthew 14:13-21](#)) and finding ways to encourage and equip them for their future work. Jesus was such a good teacher that people came from far and wide to hear what he had to say. They wanted to hear more and more of his stories and moved around the coastline as he sailed across the bay ([Matthew 14:13](#)). Not only was the beach like a big outdoor picnic area, but it was a huge classroom too and a place to find rest and relaxation. It felt good to be there!

Close your eyes and imagine that you are sitting on a beach. Feel the sand under your feet and the sun on your face. Breathe in deeply and out slowly. Imagine you can hear the seagulls in the distance and the soft lap of the water on the beach. Keep your eyes closed and imagine this story in pictures.

In our story today (from [Matthew 14:22-33](#)), the disciples had set off in a boat. They had been busy fishing all day and were now relaxing at night-time. They looked out across the ocean and saw Jesus in the distance. As he got closer, they could see that he was walking on top of the water. They were scared, but as he got closer, he said, 'Don't be afraid, it is me, Jesus!' Peter spoke next and said, 'If it is you, Lord, let me come out to you on the water.' 'Come on, then,' Jesus said.

Peter stepped out of the boat and started to walk towards Jesus. Just then the wind started to blow hard. Peter got scared and started to sink down in the water. 'Help me! Jesus, save me!' Jesus reached his hand out to Peter and pulled him out. 'You didn't believe enough, you looked down and started to doubt'. That was the moment that Peter had started to sink. How he must have longed for the safety of the shore. Jesus pulled him to safety, and they both got into the boat and sailed back to the beach.

Now open your eyes again. Here are two questions to think about:

- What do you think Peter should have done instead, when he heard that wind blowing?
- What ways can we be more faithful to Jesus in our everyday lives?

I think that Peter had been happy following Jesus and was willing to go that little bit further and trust in him completely when he stepped out of the boat. Maybe that's a bit like how we feel when we are in a new situation. We start out confidently and with good intentions, but then we sometimes drift or lose sight of what our end goal is.

We long for the safety and comfort of the shore when we are in deep water, but if we are faithful followers and keep our eyes on Jesus, we will know that we are never alone and that we always have someone we can trust when we need it the most.

Song

If you have access to the internet, there is a song about Jesus as a lighthouse who guides people safely to the shore: [My Lighthouse](#) by the Rend Collective (video has lyrics).

A version for younger children in the family (and all of those who love doing actions) can be found [here](#).

Prayer



As well as relaxing his body on the beach, Jesus spent time in meditation and prayer to make sure that his mind was healthy too.

Draw the things that you want to say 'thank you' to God for on a sheet of paper, as well as your hopes and dreams and anything else that comes to mind. Think of those people who need extra love and prayers at the moment and offer their names to God.

Finish with the [Lord's Prayer](#) and the [Messy Grace](#).

Mealtime



Create an edible beach. Make some green or blue jelly so that it looks like the sea. When it has set, chop it up. Crumble some biscuits into the bottom of a glass dish until it looks like a layer of sand. Now spoon in the chopped-up jelly. Add in some Jelly Baby swimmers, and maybe some carrot cut in the shape of fish.

Other beach snacks include: ice cream, frozen fruit juice lollipops and colourful fruity mocktails.

It's BBQ time – Jesus would have enjoyed cooking fish on the beach, so you could also try that. If you're not brave enough – remember the loaf and fishes story and have a fish finger sandwich. *Always make sure you get an adult to take the lead when cooking outside.*