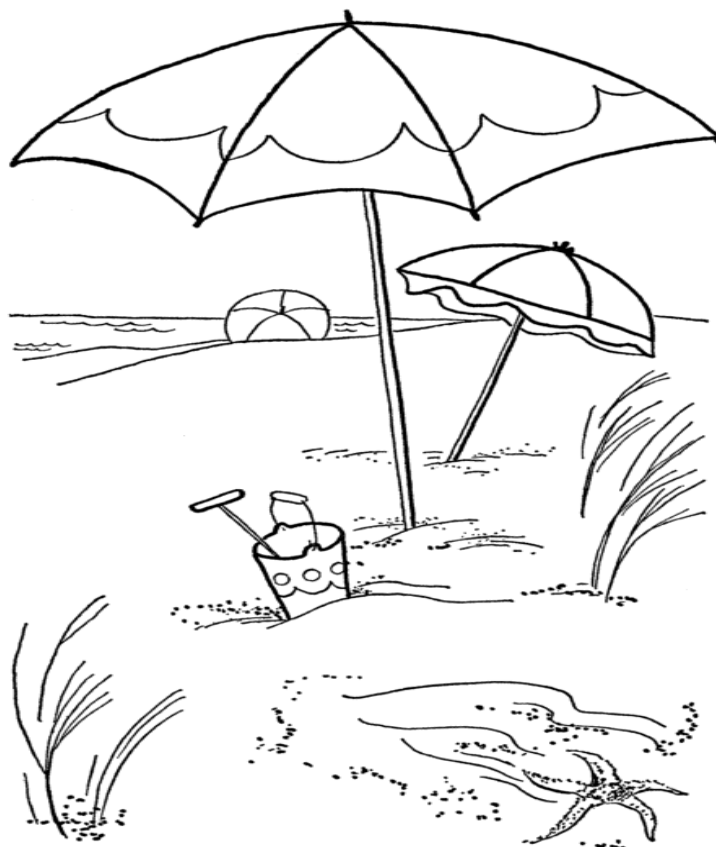




BACKPACKERS

2014

A Christian Adventure for Young People



Beside the Seaside

Teaching Material

Name:

Scriptures quoted from the International Children's Bible New Century Version (Anglicanised Edition)
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BACKPACKERS 2014: BESIDE THE SEASIDE!

Introduction to this year's theme:

Welcome to the teaching material for Backpackers 2014. Our theme for this year is: **Beside the Seaside**, exploring some of the events that took places on or by the Sea of Galilee which provide clues about the identity and authority of Jesus.

Each day we will have a specific theme and related Bible passage which will be explored in a variety of ways throughout the day as we spend time all together and in groups. The "all together" time will introduce the big theme for the day and begin to unpack it. The group times are opportunities to get to know your children, to develop the main theme further and apply it in fun and creative ways.

The following table gives the key Bible passage we will be exploring each day, the title for that day, and the big idea that we want each child to take away with them:

Day	Bible Passage	Title	Big Idea
Day 1	Mark 1:14-20	<i>Seaside Stroll</i>	Jesus calls four fishermen and shows his authority over people
Day 2	Mark 4:1-10 (20)	<i>Seaside Story</i>	Jesus tells the story of the sower and shows his authority to teach
Day 3	Mark 5:21-24, 35-43	<i>Seaside Rescue</i>	Jesus raises Jairus' daughter and shows his authority over death
Day 4	Mark 4:35-41	<i>Seaside Sensation</i>	Jesus calms a storm and shows his authority over nature

Our memory verse for the week from Paul's letter to the Colossians reminds us that Jesus is the image of God himself. His authority to teach and his authority over people, sickness, death and nature should make us ask: "Who is this man?" The answer, of course, is that only God has this kind of power and authority, and Jesus shows us what God is like because he is God on earth.

"Christ is the image of the invisible God."

Colossians 1v15

The teaching materials were put together with the help of David Heath-Whyte, Daryl Kingston, Andrew Patterson, Heather Pugsley and others. If you have any questions about the materials please get in touch with Andrew Patterson (andrew.patterson@tiscali.co.uk, Tel: 01494 785809)

The teaching structure of each day:

Broadly this fits previous years and includes the following elements:

<i>Name of element</i>	<i>Length of time</i>	<i>Ingredients</i>
Open Door/Way In	15 minutes	Welcome and registration of group members. Short activities involving minimal supervision for children as they arrive.
All Together Time (1)	35 minutes	All together time. Our up-front team will introduce the theme for the day. Includes songs, notices and prayer.
Group Teaching Time (1)	50 minutes	Time in groups to look together at the passage for the day and develop an understanding of it. Also to include toilet break and snack.
All Together Time (2)*	25 minutes	Slot together after lunch where we bed down some of the ideas that were introduced in the first time together.
Group Teaching Time (2)	35 (25)+ minutes	The slot where we can think a little more about the day's theme and it's application in our groups.
All Together Time (3)	35 (45) minutes	Third slot all together. A session with songs and quiz/games that reinforce the day's big theme. May also include some "show and tell."
Group Prayer Time	10 minutes	Rounding up and praying in our groups before children are collected.

* Deep Blues will have their own programme during this slot.

+ Times in brackets are timings for Friday only.

Group Leader's Preparation:

The main Bible passage for each day is provided for you in a modern, child-friendly version. (At the end of this booklet you can find an even simpler version of each passage that might be more appropriate for the youngest children).^{*} One of your most important jobs as a leader is to spend time looking carefully at the passage and getting to grips with it before each day. The “**Big Idea**” will be a helpful guide to ensure that you and your group don't stray too far from the main point! For each passage you will find some background notes to help you understand the story and its significance.

We will be exploring the same Bible passages in our groups that the “up-front” team will use in the “all-together” sessions, so there is potential for repetition and overlap, which will help the “Big Idea” to stick!

One suggestion is to spend a part of your first group teaching time looking at the day's passage together. To help you do this there are skeleton ‘**Bible Time**’ materials provided for each day (also found at the end of this booklet (pp.34-46). These will need to be adapted and adjusted for your own particular group so that they help your children engage with the Bible and unlock the main theme(s) of each passage. This slot would also be a useful time to address questions that have arisen from the up-front time, and the more familiar we are with the stories, the more able we should be to respond helpfully to them.

In terms of the day as a whole, in previous years some have found it helpful to use the first group time to focus on the key teaching points from the main Bible passage and first up-front session, and to use the afternoon to focus more on “response” and “application – as well to “bed in” the memory verse.

Alongside the group Bible times – you will need to plan some group activities and games that will, in some way, reinforce or develop the key teaching points from the morning teaching session. You will need to look at the resources suggested for each day and determine which might be useful and appropriate for your group. The ideas have been coded according to group colour, but this is only a rough guide. There are more resources than you can use, so please be selective!

You may also want to have some sort of activity for your children to work on as they start to arrive at the start of the day. This will give you time to personally welcome new arrivals, integrate them with other group members, take registers, etc. Suggestions and ideas for this slot are included in this resource (including icebreaker games).

Do ensure that you allocate enough time to pray in your groups; as leaders we want to model the importance of prayer, not least as an expression of our complete dependence on God. So it would be good to pray briefly as you come to look at the Bible together. The final slot in the day is specifically for prayer, and a great opportunity to “pray in” some of the things we've been learning during the day. There are a few suggestions that might help you pray creatively. Don't spend so much time decorating, colouring etc. in that final session that you don't leave time for praying! The last session may also be a good time to ensure (in creative ways!) that your group has learnt the memory verse.

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- For older groups, make sure that you have some Backpacker Bibles available for use in your groups. It is important that the children see that the stories they are exploring are from the Bible, even if you are using one of the simpler versions of the day's story.

And finally... One of the most important ways of preparing for Backpackers as a leader is to pray ourselves. Do commit the whole week to God, praying especially for the up-front teaching team, and for all those with responsibilities for the smooth running of the week. Pray also for the children in your group and specifically for your leadership. It is vital that the children learn both from what is taught and from the example of those who teach and lead them!

Resources for Days 1-4:

For each day you will find the following:

- ⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** This statement summarises what we want the children to grasp each day. It is provided to give us all a common teaching point to aim for. How deeply you explore this aim will vary according to the age, personality and background of the children in your group.
- ⊕ **Today’s passage:** The passage for each day is printed in full from the International Children's Bible. Unless you are teaching the youngest children, to avoid confusion please use this version in your teaching preparation. A simpler version of the passage can be found at the end of this teaching resource if required. [Do note that the New Century Version (NCV) available on-line from www.biblegateway.com is NOT the same as NCV International Children's Bible]. You can get an electronic copy of these notes, and also the Bible passage, from the Backpackers' web site: <http://www.backpackers-online.org.uk/>.
- ⊕ **Bible notes and background:** Following the passages are some notes for you to use to help you ‘get to grips’ with the Bible before you plan your times with the children. You will also find some useful background detail as you explore the Bible passage with your group.
- ⊕ **Group Time Ideas:** These are suggestions and ideas that you might use in your group times. Some ideas have a corresponding resource sheet that you can find at the end of this section. They are broadly categorized according to the age group they are likely to suit. Don't be constrained by these suggestions, but also bear in mind that with toilet breaks and snacks you will probably need 2-3 ideas. *Do not try to do everything!*
- ⊕ **Group Time Resources:** These are the activity resource sheets that correspond to some of the ideas found under “Group Time Ideas.”

Day 1: Seaside Stroll

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus calls four fishermen and shows his authority over people.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** Mark 1:14-20



¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵ Jesus said, “The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News.

¹⁶ When Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and Simon’s brother, Andrew. They were fishermen and were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come and follow me. I will make you fishermen for men.” ¹⁸ So Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, preparing their nets to catch fish. ²⁰ Their father Zebedee and the men who worked for him were in the boat with the brothers. When Jesus saw the brothers, he called them to come with him. They left their father and followed Jesus.

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

a. The Seaside Scene:

This story happens at the very start of Jesus’ public ministry – straight after his baptism when God the Father has shown Jesus to be his loved son (Mark 1:11), and after Jesus has declared that the Kingdom of God is near, calling people to repent and believe (1:15). So what will God’s Son look like in action? The next chapters in Mark are there to show us. Here, as Jesus goes on his seaside stroll along the shores of the Sea of Galilee, he calls his first disciples to follow him. The setting would have been a very common one – fisherman fishing or preparing nets. In many ways that day would have been like every other on the beach by the lake – except on that day Jesus called these men to follow him.

b. Jesus’ authority:

Jesus shows his divine authority to call people to follow him. These fishermen certainly knew something of Jesus’ ministry already as, from the other gospels, we know that he has been healing and teaching around Galilee. However, when Jesus calls, they follow. There is no question that Jesus has the right to call these men to leave their work and families.

If this were the last we heard of Jesus, we would be left with the impression of a very charismatic man with great authority. On its own this would not necessarily be a sign that Jesus was “the image of the invisible God.” But when God speaks things happen, and when this charisma and authority is combined with what we see of Jesus over the next few days, they add up to a picture of what God on earth is like.

c. The response:

Jesus calls and the fishermen follow – at once (v.18 , 20). These men were not people who had nothing better to do. They were working men, involved in their family businesses. They also had responsibilities. Simon was married, with a sick mother-in-law at home (v.29-30). James and John left their father to carry on the family business without the help of his two adult sons. They still left everything and followed Jesus to learn how to “catch people” instead of fish. They realised in some small way that Jesus had a right to take priority over all other concerns. It took them a long time to fully understand who Jesus really was, but they immediately recognised his right to call them - and their duty to follow.

d. What about us?

As the Mark's gospel continues, we see that it is only people who have the choice to reject Jesus' authority. Illnesses, waves, demons – even death - obey Jesus' words. People have the choice. We do – so do the children in our groups. We need to present Jesus accurately to them, but it is up to them whether they choose to follow...

⊕ Group Time Ideas (Mark 1:14-20):

- **'Big Idea':** *Jesus calls four fishermen and shows his authority over people.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.01	Seaside Scrapbook Cover to decorate/colour as cover for their folders in which they will keep resources collected and created through the week. (You may want to copy the sheet on to coloured paper that reflects the colour of your group. Avoid the darker versions of a colour or it will make colouring and decoration harder). Cut-out pictures of beach scenes, stickers, sand etc could be stuck on for decoration.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.02	Seaside scene: For the creative, over the week you might decide to build up a "seaside scene" that includes elements from each of the four Bible stories. Today you could create a backdrop on a large piece of paper or card. Using collage materials, tissue paper etc – make a large lake area (enough for boats to fit). You will need to include a large beach area for the stories that take place beside the sea.	Y	Y,R,G
1.03	Follow my leader: Play "follow my leader" when moving between activities. Whatever action the leader does, the line behind has to follow. Jesus called the first disciples to follow him – and they did (that is the sort of authority Jesus had!)	N	Y,R
1.04	Beach ball name game: Use a beach ball to help learn names. Once you have asked all the children their names, get them all to stand in a circle. The children must throw the ball someone and say their name as they do so. If the ball goes to the wrong person or they get the name wrong they must take a step back from the circle (or alternatively get on one knee, two knees, one arm, two arms etc)	N	Y,R,G
1.05	Site Tour. Take your group on a short tour of the site (pointing out the important places – toilets, first aid, fire point etc). You could do this as a treasure hunt – place seaside pictures at each stop – or letters that spell out a "seaside-y" word.	N	Y,R,G,B
1.06	Memory Verse Code Cracker. It would be good to introduce the memory verse before it is mentioned in the up front sessions. Use the key to crack the code. "Christ" means "God's Chosen King" – and will feed into discussion later about the kingdom that Jesus announces.	Y	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.07	'Bible Time' . See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.08	Fishing Story: (see resource sheet). Cut out the story pieces and stick onto fish-shaped pieces of card. Clip/sellotape a paper clip to each fish. Put the fish in a bowl or bucket. Make a magnetic fishing rod from a chopstick, piece of string and a magnet. The children throw a dice to catch fish. As soon as someone throws a "6" the "fisher" must hand over the rod even if they have not yet caught a fish. Only one fish can be caught per turn. Continue until all the fish are caught. Get the children to put the pieces in the right order, stick onto paper and read out. Could be played with 2 teams and two sets of the story fish. You can also add verse numbers to the story text if you want to make it easier for the younger children.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.09	Fishing Story 2: Variation of above game. Divide group into 2 teams. Children have to act out, draw or model with plasticine various simple words from the story. When their team guesses the word they receive a story piece and another word to act/draw/model. The first team to get all the clues, story pieces and put them in the correct order wins.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.10	Seaside Stroll: Spot the Difference. Simple picture comparison with 10 differences to look for.	Y	Y,R
1.11	Beside the Seaside: Spot the Difference. Similar to the above and can be used for any of the 4 days.	Y	Y,R
1.12	Colouring Sheet. A sheet to colour that reminds the children of the 'Big Idea' for the day and has Mark 1:17-18	Y	Y,R
1.13	Word Search. Word search puzzle with 15 words to find that relate to the Bible story from Mark 1	Y	R,G,B
1.14	Who is in charge? Images of people with authority. Encourage the children to identify the person and think about the authority they exercise and why it is important. How does Jesus show his authority? What do you think happens when we recognise it?	Y	Y,R,G
1.15	Who is in charge - match? Similar to above. This time you need to match the person in charge with those he/she is in charge of. Again it can help to explore the issue of "authority" and lead to a discussion about the authority of Jesus over us.	Y	Y,R,G

1.16	Seaside Name Badges: Cut simple fish shapes out on card. Decorate with a seaside theme and stick the children's name stickers on. Encourage the children to wear their name badges all week! You could explain the significance of the symbol (for more information visit http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ichthys).	Y	Y,R,G
1.17	My Trip to the Seaside: As soon as you mention the seaside the younger children will want to tell you all about their trip. This is an opportunity to get to know the children better and to get their holiday stories out of the way all together! Start a conversation about trips to the seaside – where, who with, what did they do...?	N	Y,R
1.18	Footsteps in the sand: Each child draws around his/her feet (without shoes would be more “beachy”) on coloured paper. Write their names on and decorate. Stick onto a larger piece of card or wallpaper – ideally sand coloured or with glue and sprinkled with sand. Call it “Seaside Stroll” and use to decorate your group area. “Seaside stroll” and the “following footsteps” sum up the day's theme perfectly.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.19	Eye-witness Interview: Split your group into pairs. One pair will represent “hearers” (those who saw Jesus and heard his message in verses 14-15), another pair represent Simon and Andrew, another pair James and John. Double up pairs so that each person is in a pair. Read the first section of the story on the sheet and interview the “hearer” pair/s. Read the next section and interview the Simons and Andrews. Read the final section and interview the James and John pair(s). Encourage them to use the text to think about what is going on, what they did and how they felt.	Y	R,G,B
1.20	Mini Drama/Act it Out: I do like to be beside the seaside... Short drama script based on the day's Bible passage. Include props, a pretend camera, microphone etc to make it more interesting. A chance to explore what is happening, the reaction and feelings of those Jesus calls etc. Can be adapted for a range of ages.	Y	Y,R,G
1.21	Picture prompts. Use appropriate pictures from Bibles or from the internet etc that help to open up the story. Asking them to observe what is happening, how individuals in the pictures are thinking and feeling etc might be a helpful way of exploring the story and its message.	N	Y,R
1.22	Seaside Stroll: Called! An opportunity to think about our lives and priorities and the future in the light of the story. As Jesus calls us – how might we feel about being called to something unexpected that wasn't part of our plan?	Y	R,G,B
1.23	Flw me ;-) Jesus was asking Andrew, Simon, James and John to do something really huge and important, but his message was short and succinct. Invite the children to create a text message (max. 120 characters) that would encourage others to follow Jesus.	N	G,B

1.24	Fish Maze. Find your route through the fish.	Y	Y,R,G
1.25	Jesus has authority: A resource to add to over the week. There are four picture frames in which to draw a picture/image that captures something of each day's story. What is Jesus demonstrating his authority over? Get the children to add the sheet to their folders and return to it on days 2-4.	Y	Y,R,G
1.26	Questions Questions: At the start of the week, encourage the children to write down any questions about Jesus that they think of and put them into a designated collection box. Find a time during the day (or before the end of the week) to answer those questions. If you need help with answering them, get help from other leaders and Encouragers. Make sure that the children don't go home at the end of the week with unanswered questions about Jesus.	N	Y,R,G,B

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.27	My Seaside Stroll: variation on classic game "I went to the market and I bought..." Each child has to think of something they might see if they walked along the beach (a boat, sandcastle, ice cream...etc). As you go round the group each child has to remember what all the other children have seen before adding their own item.	N	Y,R
1.28	Stepping Stones Relay Race. Divide children into pairs and give them a pair of large feet made from card. One child is a "footman" and one the "stepper" who must walk on the card feet to avoid getting their feet wet in the sea. (The footman moves the feet in front of the stepper). The goal is to reach the end of the course first (and win a small prize?)	N	Y,R,G,B
1.29	Kim's Game. Select 12 or more items (that relate to the seaside or beach). Place them on a tray. Give the children 1 minute to memorize them. Older children can write down as many items as possible. With younger ones you could remove 1 or 2 items and see if they can identify the missing one(s).	N	Y,R,G,B
1.30	Who's in charge? One member of the group goes out of the group and becomes the "guesser". The remaining children pick a leader. All the children have to then copy the movements and actions of the leader. The guesser returns and has to pick out who is the leader of the group.	N	Y,R,G
1.31	Living mirrors. In pairs players agree who will be "a mirror" and who will be the "reflection." The latter must copy every movement made by their partner. Feet must stay still at all times. Call out a series of actions e.g. 'brush your hair' or "eat spaghetti". After a few goes swap roles.	N	Y,R,G,B

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.32	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please, (Alternative ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Sorry'. You may want the prayer time to focus on saying sorry for the ways we fail to listen or to follow Jesus. The prayer template for each day (see Prayer Banner) could be used to write children's prayers on.	N	Y,R,G,B
1.33	Prayer Banner. You could create a prayer banner (from an old sheet or large piece of card). You might divide it into four sections, one for each day. On each day create a template (or use one provided) that could be given to each child on which they could write a short prayer. E.g. for day one the template might be a footprint. Encourage the children to pray their prayer out before fixing it to the banner.	Y	Y,R,G,B
1.34	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

First Day Getting-to-know-you ideas:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
1.35	One step forward. All stand in a line. Leader calls out questions like: 'Who had cornflakes for breakfast?' Those who did, take a step forward until they reach the finish line. You might also include questions about whether they've been to Backpackers before or whether they belong to a church etc	N	Y,R,G,B
1.36	Into line. Get the group to form a single line <i>without talking</i> where the line is in alphabetical order of first name or in birthday order etc. (requires some creative non-verbal communication!). For older groups you could impose a time limit.	N	R,G,B
1.37	Likes and dislikes name game Ask the children to sit in a circle. Name a category, such as colours, foods, television programmes and so on. Invite one child to start, by saying their name, then one thing they like in that category and one thing they don't like. The child on their left then does the same. Go round the circle a few times changing the category each time. For example, round one might go 'I'm John and I like yellow but I don't like pink.'	N	Y,R,G,B

1.38	Yes and No. Ask for a volunteer to be interviewed. They must answer the questions without saying 'yes' or 'no', hesitating or repeating themselves (for example saying 'maybe' over and over again). See if they can last for a minute. The interview could go something like this: 'What's your name? Are you sure about that? What's your favourite sport – I bet it's belly dancing? What's your favourite food – I bet it's liver? Sprouts? Chips? Are you married? Would you like to be married? Do you go to school? Are you the head? A teacher? The caretaker? and so on.	N	Y,R,G
1.39	Fish and chips. The game is similar to 'Yes and no'. Ask for a volunteer to be interviewed. This time they are only allowed to say 'Fish and chips'. The interview could go something like this. 'What's your name?' Reply 'Fish and chips.' 'What did you have for breakfast...dinner...tea...? What shampoo do you use? What football team do you support? What do I look like? To all of these questions they have to reply 'Fish and chips' without smiling or laughing.	N	Y,R,G
1.40	Friends. This game is similar to the TV programme 'Mr and Mrs'. Choose two children who are friends, and ask one child to leave the room while you ask his or her friend three questions. The questions could be 'What is your friend's least favourite subject at school? What is your friend's favourite pop group?' and so on. Then invite the other child back into the room, ask him or her the same questions and see how well the two friends know each other.	N	R,G,B
1.41	Categories. Ask two children to sit down facing each other. Give them a category, such as something they would find in the kitchen, brands of chocolate bars and so on. The children take it in turns to name something in that category, and the first child to run out of ideas or repeat something is out. Choose a new player to take on the champion.	N	R,G,B
1.42	Disciples (aka fishes) Name children round circle (Simon, Andrew, James, John). Call the name Simon, all Simons have to stand up, run round circle and back to own place, and so on.	N	Y,R,G,B
1.43	Body dice - (variation on Twister). Divide the group into two teams. You will need 2 large dice - one normal, the second with different body parts labelled on each face (hand, foot, elbow etc). Both dice are rolled and number and body part called out (e.g. 1 - elbow). Then roll again (e.g. 4 - foot). Number 1 has to connect elbow with number 4's foot. The winning team is the one that obeys the instructions for the longest.	Y	Y,R,G,B

Day 2: Seaside Story

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus tells the parable of the sower and shows his authority to teach.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** Mark 4:1-10 (13-20)



¹ Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. A great crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore close to the water.

² Jesus used many stories to teach them. He said, ³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. ⁴ While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁵ Some seed fell on rocky ground where there wasn’t much soil. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. ⁶ But when the sun rose, the plants withered. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. ⁷ Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not make grain. ⁸ Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground the seed began to grow. It grew and made a crop of grain. Some plants made 30 times more grain, some 60 times more grain, and some 100 times more grain.” ⁹ Then Jesus said, “You people who hear me, listen!”

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone, the 12 disciples and others around him asked Jesus about the stories.

*¹³ Then Jesus said to the followers. “Do you understand this story? If you don’t, then how will you understand any story? ¹⁴ The farmer is like person who plants God’s teaching in people. ¹⁵ Sometimes the teaching falls on the road. This is like some people. They hear the teaching of God. But Satan quickly comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. ¹⁶ Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy. ¹⁷ But they don’t allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They keep it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching, they quickly give up. ¹⁸ Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching. ¹⁹ But then other things come into their lives: worries, the love of money, and wanting all kinds of other things. These things stop the teaching from growing. So that teaching does not produce fruit in their lives. ²⁰ Others are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit – sometimes 30 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 100 times more].

* If you are in a group with younger children you may want to read just verses 1-10. As you teach the story do bear in mind the explanation Jesus gives in verses 13 onwards.

⊕ Bible notes and background:

a. The Seaside Scene:

Jesus became more and more popular because of his amazing healings and teaching, and was followed by crowds wherever he went. In chapter 3 (v.7-9) Jesus had already been forced to retreat from the beach into a boat so that he would not be crushed. The same happens in today's story, but this time he uses the boat so that he can carry on teaching the crowds on the shore. He teaches in parables – stories that reveal God's message – and today's parable is a parable about a sower. It is quite possible that Jesus could see such a sower on a hillside beside the lake, and used this character to teach his listeners.

b. Jesus' authority:

Jesus shows his divine authority to teach. Throughout the gospels people are constantly amazed at Jesus' teaching and wisdom (see 6:2). In his explanation of the parable, Jesus is explicit that his message is God's message (v.11, v14). The crowds are clearly drawn to Jesus and his teaching, but Jesus makes clear that hearing is not enough. Jesus is not just a great storyteller, he has God's authority to proclaim God's good news - news that demands a response.

c. The response:

The parable of the sower is all about the different responses of people to Jesus and his message. Following the calling of the first disciples, we might expect everyone to follow Jesus with similar enthusiasm, particularly as we see his popularity grow and grow. However, with God-given insight, Jesus uses this parable to teach his followers that this will not be the case. Yes, many will hear Jesus, but many will not follow. The fault is not in the message – the seed – but in people's hearts – the soil. As he predicts the mixed response that he will receive, Jesus enhances his authority and shows his understanding of the human heart.

d. What about us?

This parable immediately asks the question: "Which soil am I?" Everyone at Backpackers is hearing God's message, but what will we do with it? Will we and the children recognise Jesus' authority to teach us and call us? Will we be good soil – or will we hear but never really follow him?

As the evidence from Mark mounts showing that Jesus is "the image of the invisible God" we must consider our own response to him.

⊕ **Group Time Ideas: Mark 4:1-10, 13-20:**

- **'Big Idea':** *Jesus tells the parable of the sower and shows his authority to teach.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.01	Choose from one of the "getting-to-know-you" activities/games from day 1.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.02	Children can continue to decorate folders if they were given on the first day.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.03	Have fun transferring seeds (or beans etc) from one bowl to another using tweezers, tongs or chopsticks.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.04	Have a selection of seeds and see if the children can identify them. You might provide a list of answers for them to choose from. For smaller children have 4 cups of soil types – good soil, stony soil, sand, soil etc – and ask which cup the seeds would grow best in.	N	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.05	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also an accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.06	Seaside sounds quiz: On the Backpackers' Website you can download mp3 files of 8 beach sounds (waves, walking along beach, ice cream van, seagulls, donkey braying, rescue helicopter, row boat, beach tennis). Play the sounds (on Ipad, Ipod etc) and see if the children can identify them. Some are easy, others more tricky (you can give clues to the youngest groups if necessary). Having identified them, can the children imitate the sounds? Make that point that just as we had to listen carefully to the sounds for the quiz – Jesus wants us to listen carefully to his stories and to do something about them.	N	Y,R,G,B

2.07	Parable Visual: As you recount the story you could bring seeds and four pots/jam jars/trays etc. The latter could contain clay (to represent the path), gravel (to represent the rocky soil), grass (to represent the weedy soil) and potting mix (good soil). Give some seeds out to each child and conclude this time by asking which soil would be where they would plant their seed.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.08	Tell the story. Tell the story using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G
2.09	Colouring Picture: Two pictures to colour. The first shows Jesus teaching and contains the verse Mark 1:22. The second is of the Parable of the Sower and provides opportunities to talk about the different soils featured in the parable.	Y x2	Y,R
2.10	Growing seeds: When the children are familiar with the story, divide them into 2 groups. The first are the seeds, the second the birds, rocks or weeds. Read the story as the children act out the parts. 1. Seed on path – "seeds" stay curled up in balls while the "birds" peck at them. 2. Seed on rocky soil: "rocks" lies on floor in "rocky" positions, while "seeds" uncurl, stand up quickly and fall down in the heat. 3. Seed on thorny soil" "seed" uncurls and grows, then "thorns" uncurl and grow and pull the "seeds" down. 4. Seed on good soil: all the children as "seeds" slowly uncurl, grow and stand with their arms up.	N	Y,R
2.11	Parable Puzzle: Can you match up the types of soil that Jesus talks about with the different kinds of people? And opportunity to revisit the story. You might conclude by exploring the kinds of things that stop us from listening to Jesus and listening to him.	Y	Y,R,G
2.12	Mini Drama/Act it Out: I do like to be beside the seaside... Short drama script based on the day's Bible passage. Include props, a pretend camera, microphone etc to make it more interesting. A chance to explore what is happening in the story in more depth.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.13	Seaside Code: Code with code breaker which gives children a set of instructions. Application: Jesus takes a bit of "figuring out" and we may find that not everything is clear at first. Jesus gives us this parable to show us how we should respond to him. His disciples don't understand at first but they keep listening asking and learning!	Y	Y,R,G
2.14	Who me? An opportunity to match up the different types of soil in the pictures with the ways we can think.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.15	Word Search. Word search puzzle with 15 words to find that relate to the Bible story from Mark 4	Y	Y,R,G,B

2.16	Seaside Rap: Get someone to read out the rap (some props could be used). Get the children to do some actions.	Y	R,G,B
2.17	Sower Maze: Figure out the route from seed to the ear of wheat. Think in your groups about the way that the seed of the Good News becomes fruitful in our own lives.	Y	Y,R,G
2.18	Seaside Story Secret Message Challenge. Find the message and complete the solitaire challenge (using seeds or coins)	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.19	Seaside Story Seed Packets: Simple craft idea that reminds children about what it means to be good soil. Provides and opportunity for them to think about how we trust and listen to Jesus and what kind of fruit our lives might produce. The craft also encourages children to think about how others, including our friends might hear the words of Jesus too.	Y	Y,R,G
2.20	Listening games: Play games that challenge the children to listen carefully e.g. Chinese Whispers.	N	Y,R
2.21	Who has the tambourine? Listening game where children sit in a circle, one child in the middle is blindfolded. Children in the ring pass a tambourine behind their backs very quietly. The child in the middle has to guess where the tambourine is.	N	Y,R
2.22	Knock down argument: Get the group to think of some of the things that get in the way of listening to Jesus, and some of the excuses we might give for not following Him. Think about their appeal and why they don't really stand up. Write some of the ideas on lego blocks or building bricks and then knock them down with balls or bean bags.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.23	Scenarios activity: Divide the group into 4 and give each a section of the story. Tell each group they need to invent a character and a scenario to fit each section e.g. "Hard Henry" who won't listen, Shallow Suzie who succumbs to peer pressure etc.	N	G,B
2.24	Textured collage: Make a picture to illustrate the story using sandpaper, egg boxes, foil, real seeds etc. Divide the group into 2/3s to complete a section each. Get them to retell their section of the story.	N	Y,R
2.25	News Article. Get the children to write/outline their own version of the story as a newspaper article. Think of creative headlines that help you to think about the story and its meaning.	N	G,B
2.26	Jesus has authority: Add a new picture/image to the next picture frame. Talk about the picture of Jesus that is emerging.	Y (see day 1)	Y,R,G
2.27	Sower bookmark: Simple bookmarks to be coloured. You could decorate with real seeds/sand etc and then cover in sticky plastic covering.	Y	Y,R,G

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.28	Card Collect Race. Parts of the story are written out on strips of card. Children are in 2 teams. They race to a pile and bring a card back. When all pieces are collected, the team has to put them in order. One person from the winning team retells the story.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.29	Memory verse. Write each word (or a couple of words) of the memory verse onto a outline of a seed (see seed template resource). You need 2 sets. Divide your group into two. Scatter the seeds around a given area. Children take it in turns to run and pick up a seed. If they bring a repeat the next person must put it back. Winners are first to complete the memory verse.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.30	Planting seeds relay: Divide the group into 2 teams. Each team has a bowl of 'seeds' (could be marbles, large beads etc) and a container of soil at the other end of the course. Children take turns to take a seed, run to the soil and plant it, before running to their team to release the next runner.	N	Y,R
2.31	Crackerjack Quiz: Divide you group into 2 teams and nominate on from each team to be "collector". Ask questions on the day's story. When a correct answer is given the collector is given a bulky object to hold/balance (book, ball etc). Their team can help them balance items most effectively. The more correct answers a team gives the more difficult it will be for them to balance all the items. Play until one of the items is dropped or can't be balanced. Point out how hard it can be to focus on Jesus when so many things take up our time and call for our attention.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.32	Board game quiz: Divide group into two teams and ask questions about the day's story. When a correct answer is given the child giving it throws a seed onto a board divided up into squares (see second sheet which can be printed and enlarged to A3). Some squares are good soil and get points, other squares are stony soil, weedy soil, path and get no points. After several rounds add up the points to find the winning team.	Y	Y,R,G

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
2.33	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: S orry, T hanks, O thers, P lease, (Alternative ACTS: A doration, C onfession, T hanksgiving, S upplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Thanks'. You could, for example, thank God for sending Jesus	N	Y,R,G,B
2.34	Stones and seeds. Place a bowl of soil, sand or grit in the centre of your group. Give each child a small stone in one hand and some seeds in the other. Ask everyone to think of things that shut God out of our lives. Children should place their stone in the bowl. They can pray aloud or just think as they place the stone. Ask them to think of the things that help us grow in faith, and encourage them to pray for those things as they place their seeds in the bowl.	N	Y,R,G,B
2.35	Seed Template: Give each child a seed template on which to write a prayer. It might be good to pray that we might be those who hear Jesus and respond to him.	Y	Y,R,G,B
2.36	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

Day 3: Seaside Rescue

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus raises Jairus’ daughter and shows his authority over death.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** Mark 5:21-24, 35-43



²¹ Jesus went in the boat back to the other side of the lake. There, a large crowd gathered around him. ²² A ruler from the synagogue named Jairus came to that place. Jairus saw Jesus and bowed before him. ²³ The ruler begged Jesus again and again. He said, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her. Then she will be healed and will live. ²⁴ So Jesus went with the ruler.

³⁵ Some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. The men said, “Your daughter is dead. There is now no need to bother the teacher.”

³⁶ But Jesus paid no attention to what the men said. He said to the synagogue ruler, “Don’t be afraid, only believe.”

³⁷ Jesus let only Peter, James and John, the brother of James, go with him to Jairus’ house. ³⁸ They came to the house of the synagogue ruler, and Jesus found many people there crying loudly. There was much confusion. ³⁹ Jesus entered the house and said to the people, “Why are you crying and making so much noise? This child is not dead. She is only asleep.” ⁴⁰ But they only laughed at Jesus. He told the people to leave. Then he went into the room where the child was. He took the child’s father and mother and his three followers into the room with him. ⁴¹ Then he took hold of the girl’s hand and said to her, “Talitha, koum!” (This means, “Little girl, I tell you to stand up!”) ⁴² The girl stood right up and began walking. (She was 12 years old). The father and mother and the followers were amazed. ⁴³ Jesus gave the father and mother strict orders not to tell people about this. Then he told them to give the girl some food.

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

a. The Seaside Scene:

It now seems that everyone has heard of Jesus. Once again a large crowd gathers as soon as he steps off the boat. His miracles have made him famous, and Jairus, the father of a dangerously ill 12-year-old girl, comes to Jesus for help. He is delayed on the way so that, by the time he arrives at Jairus’ house, the girl has died. Jesus is not phased by the situation and with a couple of words raises the girl to life and full health. Jesus transforms a seaside tragedy to joy and amazement.

b. Jesus' authority:

The charisma to call people to follow and an extraordinary ability to teach God's truth are impressive and point to Jesus' identity as God on earth. His ability to raise a dead child to life is something that only God has. It goes far beyond his other healing miracles which show his authority over sickness. This miracle shows his authority over life and death. On another occasion when he showed the same authority he raised Lazarus (John 11), he said that this new life was available for all who trusted in him - life that starts now and lasts beyond death. His own resurrection showed his supreme power over death and his authority to give eternal life to his followers. Here Jesus really does show himself to be the "image of the invisible God."

c. The response:

Jairus comes to Jesus in desperation. He knows that only Jesus can help his very sick daughter. He may be desperate, but he also seems to have real faith and understanding of who Jesus is. When others mock and doubt that Jesus can raise his daughter, Jairus stays with Jesus and is one of the few allowed to witness the miracle. The evidence that Jairus has seen so far has convinced him that Jesus is a man who can be trusted. The others know Jesus as a miracle worker but can't take the next step of seeing him as the one who has the power over life and death. Jairus' daughter, who is dead, immediately responds to Jesus' words – he has the words to bring new life.

d. What about us?

Have we seen enough of Jesus to see that he can be trusted – even with matters of life and death – or do we limit him to help with little problems? Here Jesus shows he has the ultimate authority to give new life. We will be risen from death like the girl in this story, but in Jesus' hands we can have new life and forever.

Note for day 3:

Sadly, even some of the younger children will know what it means that someone has died because even at this early stage they have already experienced someone, or something, dying. However, not all will be in this situation, so it is necessary to give some sort of explanation in introducing this lesson. However this must be done with sensitivity.

So how to explain death? Saying that when people are dead they are 'not alive' is not really very helpful. So we need to contrast the two in terms of what children know.

"When people are alive, they do things. They talk, they walk, they eat, they breathe—they do lots of different things. And we enjoy them being alive. We enjoy being able to talk to them, and hug them, and play with them.

"But when people die, they stop doing all those things. They can't talk to us, they can't hug us, and they can't play with us anymore. And that is very sad; it's sad that we can't be with them anymore. And it's not like being sick; when people die, they don't get better.

"Today we're going to read a true story in the Bible about a girl who dies. That sounds like it's going to be a very sad story, doesn't it? But you know what! This story has a wonderful ending!"

Group Time Ideas: Mark 5:21-24; 35-43:

- **'Big Idea':** *Jesus raises Jairus' daughter and shows his authority over death.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.01	Get to know you game – choose from the selection at the end of day one.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.02	Medical Kim's Game. Select 12 or more items (that are medical related – plasters, bandages, toy stethoscope etc). Place them on a tray. Give the children 1 minute to memorize them. Older children can write down as many items as possible. With younger ones you could remove 1 or 2 items and see if they can identify the missing one(s).	N	Y,R,G
3.03	Dead or Alive: Children enjoy taking each other's pulse. Show them youngest how to do this. Place the children in order according to who has the fastest and the slowest. Think of other ways you might tell someone is dead or alive!	N	Y,R,G,B

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.04	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.05	Tell the story. Tell the story using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G
3.06	Tell the story (2): Tell the story using actions and exaggerated facial expressions. The children could help decide which actions to use for "begging," "amazed" etc.	N	Y,R,G
3.07	Seaside Rescue: Two colouring pages with the concluding verses of the story included. Use the pictures to revisit the story.	Yx2	Y,R
3.08	Seaside Rescue: Read out the story of the rescue of 12-year-old Chy by a lifeboat crew. Give each child or small group of children a piece of plain paper and get them to draw one part of the story with captions, speech bubbles etc. e.g. girl on surfboard, girl trapped in cave, lifeboat to the rescue, girl thanking lifeboat man... Stick the finished pictures in order on a large piece of paper/card.	Y	R,G,B

3.09	Mini Drama/Act it Out: I do like to be beside the seaside... Short drama script based on the day's Bible passage. Include props, a pretend camera, microphone etc to make it more interesting. A chance to explore what is happening in the story in more depth.	Y	R,G,B
3.10	Seaside Rescue Word Search. Find the 15 words that are linked to today's Bible story.	Y	R,G,B
3.11	Biscuit Faces: Decorate biscuits (check for allergies) with icing and small sweets to make happy and sad faces. Use them in telling the story.	N	Y,R
3.12	Seaside Dangers: Children need to spot at least 12 seaside dangers in the picture. Opens up a discussion about rescue. Point: When disaster strikes big time we need someone to help us – and only Jesus could help in today's story.	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.13	Seaside danger – look out! Similar to above for younger children. 6 dangers to spot. Also can be coloured in. Point: When disaster strikes big time we need someone to help us – and only Jesus could help in today's story.	Y	Y,R
3.14	Seaside Safety: Get the children to make flags and signs using cocktail sticks. Some signs need colouring. Encourage them to guess their meaning. Think of various scenarios and get the children to choose the right sign for the situation. Explain that these flags are put up by the life guards to keep people safe. If they ignore them they might need rescuing by lifeboats or lifeguards. Point: sometimes at the seaside people need help. Today Jesus helped someone beyond help!	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.15	Jesus has authority: Add a new picture/image to the next picture frame. Talk about the picture of Jesus that is emerging.	Y (see day 1)	Y,R,G
3.16	Seaside Rescue Team Acrostic: Divide group into teams to make words related to today's story. Explanation of point scoring is on the sheet.	Y	R,G,B
3.17	Morse Code Cracker: Can you use Morse Code to crack the message from Jesus? Make sure the children learn "SOS"!	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.18	Seaside Rescue Maze. Find the way for Jesus to get to the dead girl.	Y	Y,R,G

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.19	Stepping stones. Divide group into 2 teams. Each person has 2 pieces of newspaper to use as stepping stones. Mark out an area that has to be crossed. The first person puts both feet on 1 piece of paper and places the other piece in front of them. They then stand on that piece with both feet, bend down to pick up the first piece and put that in front. This is repeated until that person reaches the other side.	N	Y,R,G,B

3.20	Cranium. Leader has a list of words – ideally connected to the day's story. The group is divided into two teams. One by one each member of the team runs to the leader to receive the word clue. The children have to act out (charades), draw or model with plasticine the word they've been given. N.B. They are <i>not allowed to speak</i> . When the team thinks it has identified the word the next member runs to the leader with the answer. If correct they receive the next word. Team wins that guesses all their words.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.21	Impossible. Divide the group into two teams. Give each team a bowl of popcorn or some sort of sweets (check for allergies). Give the teams time to confer among themselves. When the leader says "go" the first time has five seconds to say something Jesus did that would have seemed impossible to those around him. If they can say it in the 5 seconds then all team members get to eat a bite of popcorn. If they can't, then the other team gets to eat a bite of their popcorn. Teams take turns until all the popcorn is gone.	N	Y,R,G

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
3.22	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please , (Alternative ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Others'. Don't only feel you can pray for those we know – you may want to include people in other parts of the world in tough places. In the light of today's theme, it would be good to pray that those facing tough situations would discover that Jesus saves and they can trust him.	N	Y,R,G,B
3.23	Prayer Banner. Give each child a Rescue Ring template on which to write a prayer. You might want to encourage the children to thank God for his rescuing power when we are helpless or afraid.	Y	Y,R,G,B
3.24	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

Day 4: Seaside Sensation

⊕ **Main teaching point – ‘Big Idea’:** *Jesus calms a storm and shows his authority over nature.*

⊕ **Today’s passage:** Mark 4:35-41



³⁵ That evening, Jesus said to his followers, “Come with me across the lake.” ³⁶ He and the followers left the people there. They went in the boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them.

³⁷ A very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves began coming over the sides and into the boat. It was almost full of water. ³⁸ Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, “Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!”

³⁹ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. He said, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

⁴⁰ Jesus said to his followers, “Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?”

⁴¹ The followers were very afraid and asked each other, “What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”

⊕ **Bible notes and background:**

a. The Seaside Scene:

Today's story takes place on the water rather than on the beach. Jesus has just been teaching the crowds and his disciples. Earlier Mark also has recorded some of the miraculous activity of Jesus as he drives out evil spirits, heals and forgives sins. On the command of Jesus, the disciples find themselves on the Sea of Galilee, heading to the opposite side.

A terrible storm (of hurricane proportions) hits the boat. (Although the lake is a small area of water, the hills around it can act as a funnel for sudden and unpredictable winds). The disciples, some of whom are experienced fisherman, are convinced they are about to die. Waking Jesus and questioning his care for them, the disciples then witness Jesus giving the storm its marching orders. Immediately the wind drops, and more staggeringly still, the sea is completely calm.

Jesus challenges the disciples about their faith in him and the basis for their fear. The miracle causes yet more fear on the part of the disciples and leaves them asking the obvious question: "Who is this man who has power over the wind and waves?"

b. Jesus' authority:

Jesus here shows his authority over the laws of nature. Jesus is the creator of the sea, the wind and the waves, and so has the authority to use them as he sees fit. The power Jesus displays echoes passages in the Old Testament (e.g. Psalm 107:23-30; Psalm 89:7-9) that speak of God having unique power over the wind and waves and the authority to hush and still them. Now Jesus – the image of the Invisible God – claims that same authority for himself.

c. The response:

Jesus' disciples are slow learners. Having seen Jesus at work in miraculous ways already in Mark's gospel, their trust and faith in Jesus all but disappears as they find themselves in the middle of the storm, doubting both Jesus' care and protection.

Jesus' question, "Where is your faith?" is a challenge as much as a rebuke to begin to put the pieces together and grasp who he is – and trust him.

The response of the disciples to Jesus' authority – fear – is tellingly honest, and reminds us that this is no piece of fiction, but a truthful, eye-witness account of what actually happened.

d. What about us?

Are we like the disciples – still not grasping just how great Jesus is? Over the week we have seen the evidence stack up that Jesus is the one with all of God's authority. Nature responds to that authority, as does sickness and death. As we can see in the parable of the sower it is only people who have the choice as to how they respond to him. Will we be like the fishermen, trusting and following (but still with lots they don't understand), like good soil, or like the mocking onlookers at Jairus' house...?

Group Time Ideas: Mark 4: 35-41

⊕ **'Big Idea':** *Jesus calms a storm and shows his authority over nature.*

INTRO/ WAY IN activities:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.01	Get to know you game – choose from the selection at the end of day one.		Y,R,G,B
4.02	Fishes in the Sea. Children stand in a circle with 1 person (the fisherman) in the middle. Divide children up into types of fish (e.g. cod, tuna, salmon) When a fish name is called, all the players in that category move around the outside of the circle in a clockwise direction until they reach their starting place again. They are instructed on how to move with various direction: Hide tide – move quickly Low tide – move slowly Tide turns – change direction Fisherman about – crouch down to avoid the nets Storm – walk backwards as if being blown back by the storm. The last person back to their place becomes the fisherman.		

TEACHING SESSION: opening up the bible passage:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.03	'Bible Time'. See sheet at end of teaching material document. You will need to adjust the questions for your own group or make up your own to help your group dig deeper into the passage. Use in conjunction with ideas below if you wish. There is also a accompanying sheet to help with application.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.04	Tell the story. Tell the story or explain the meaning of the passage using pictures. You could find them on the internet or in a good Children's Story Bible. Use prompts such as, "I wonder what might be happening here", "I wonder what this person might be thinking", "How might you feel if you were this person?"	N	Y,R,G
4.05	Jesus calms a storm: Colouring page with Bible verse that could form the basis for a discussion in your group.	Y	Y,R,G
4.06	Stilling of the Storm: Another colouring page that gives the children a chance to think about the reactions and feelings of the disciples at various points in the story.	Y	Y,R,G
4.07	In the mood: Ask if anyone has been anywhere by boat or ship and experienced bad weather. Get everyone into sailing mood by practicing the following: rocking from side to side more and more violently, battling with high winds and sea spray, being sick overboard, lying on a bed in a cabin groaning, rowing hard.	N	Y,R,G

4.08	Rap: Storm at Sea: Rap that tells the story from the point of view of the disciples. Get the group to rap it with moves!	Y	G,B
4.09	Who will be king? After you have explored the Bible story together you may want to finish by giving your child a copy of "Who will be King" – a simple explanation of the Christian faith that connects with this week's theme of authority. An electronic version of this can be found at: http://www.matthiasmedia.com.au/2wtl/whowillbeking/ You may want to go through this together with your groups and encourage them to explore the responses with you.	N	Y,R,G,B
4.10	Wish you were here: Postcard (two sides) to decorate. Get the children to write to someone on the back and get them tell the person they are writing to 1 or 2 things that they have learned from the Bible about Jesus this week. You could supply stamps and get the children to send them.	Y (2)	Y,R,G,B
4.11	Mini Drama/Act it Out: I do like to be beside the seaside... Short drama script based on the day's Bible passage. Include props, a pretend camera, microphone etc to make it more interesting. A chance to explore what is happening in the story in more depth.	Y	R,G,B
4.12	Jesus has authority: Add a new picture/image to the next picture frame (see day 1). What picture of Jesus is emerging?	Y	Y,R,G
4.13	Guess Who? Chance to look at some important Old Testament Bible passages that, in the light of today's story, give us big clues about the identity of Jesus.	Y	R,G,B
4.14	Storm Maze: Find the way to get to Jesus through the waves.	Y	Y,R,G
4.15	Seaside Sensation Word Search: Word search with 15 words to find from today's Bible passage	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.16	A boat that will float: Give each child a piece of paper and any extra bits and pieces that you have available – straws, pots, etc. Can they make a boat that will float? Test them in a washing up bowl. There is a sheet provided that shows how to make a floating boat from paper which you can use once they have come up with their own creations.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.17	Boat Maze: Find the way through the boat sail.	Y	Y,R,G
4.18	Questions Questions: If you haven't done so already, encourage the children to write down any questions about Jesus that they have thought of during the week and put them into a collection box. Find a time during the day to answer those questions (get help from other leaders and encouragers if you need it!). Make sure that the children don't go home at the end of the week with unanswered questions about Jesus.	N	Y,R,G,B

REINFORCING THE MESSAGE – games

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.19	Quiz: You will need 10 plastic lids from water bottles or milk containers and 10 questions on today's passage. Write a number from 1-10 inside each lid. Float them on a bowl of water so that the numbers are not visible. Children take it in turns to choose a lid and answer the corresponding numbered question.	N	Y,R,G,B
4.20	Parachute ball game: Get hold of a parachute (if you can't find one a bed sheet will work). 1. Calm sea: Roll a ball around the outside edge of the parachute (each child will have to gently raise and dip the parachute to keep the ball moving in the right direction). 2. Stormy sea: divide group into two teams one each side of the parachute. The aim is to bounce the ball so high that it goes over the heads of the opposing team.	N	Y,R,G
4.21	World Tile Game: Run a relay type race where children collect the pieces that reveal something about Jesus from today's story. Children could collect each piece of the statement after answering a question about the passage etc.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.22	Windy Balloon Relay Race: Divide children into two teams. Each team has an inflated non-helium balloon. Children take turns to move balloon over short course using their breath only. When the child has reached end of course they bring the balloon back and pass on to next child. At the end when all children have gone they have to pop balloon to find a memory verse which they have to arrange (see Word Tile resource sheet).	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.23	Windy Balloon Competition: Variation of above game. Divide group into 2 teams. Have them face each other with a line marked out between them. Using only their breath each team has to try and ensure an inflated, non-helium balloon remains on the other team's side.	N	Y,R,G,B
4.24	Amazing: Divide group into 2 teams. Each team has 2 chairs facing each other with some distance between them. On one chair is a pile of confetti. The aim of the game is to move the confetti to the other chair. The catch is that you can move the confetti using only a balloon. Begin by running the balloon on your head 5 or 6 times. Then bring the balloon to the confetti. Take confetti to other chair and take/rub off with hands. Take balloon back to next teammate. Game ends when all confetti is transferred. Seems amazing? Hard to explain? Jesus' stilling of the storm was a <i>real</i> miracle showing us he is the image of God on earth.	N	Y,R,G,B

RESPONSE TIME PRAYERS - possible prayer time reflection:

Ref	Suggested activity	Sheet	Groups
4.25	Use an acrostic for the sequence of prayer. e.g. STOP: Sorry, Thanks, Others, Please , (Alternative ACTS: Adoration, Confession, Thanksgiving, Supplication). If you use ' STOP ' - the theme for today is 'Please'. As the children pray for themselves it would be good to pray in the light of today's message.	N	Y,R,G,B
4.26	Prayer Banner. Give each child a boat template and encourage them to write a prayer on the sail. Encourage the children to pray their prayer out before fixing it to the banner. On this last day you might encourage them to include 1: Thanks for something they have received from God 2: Something they will give or share from this week. 3. Something they have learned about God this week. 4. A question they would like answered about God.	Y	Y,R,G,B
4.27	Prayer Sheet. Provide each child with a sheet of paper (or mini fabric banner if you are really creative) on which they add their prayers for each day (and can take home at the end of the week).	N	Y,R,G,B

‘Bible Time’ ideas and questions:

Group times provide a great opportunity to explore the message of the Bible together in all kinds of creative ways. During your first group time each morning, it would be helpful to spend some time looking at the day’s Bible passage together and reflecting on its meaning with your children.



It is worth remembering that the Bible passage will have been unpacked in the “All Together” time, so there should be scope for recapping and clarifying as you get a feel for what has been understood.

How long you spend looking at the passage and the depth of exploration will largely depend on the age of your children, but even if you have just a short time exploring the story, doing this well and enthusiastically will model something important to your group and hopefully shape the remainder of your time together.

As with any Bible study, the key is having some good questions ready that will unlock the main ideas and direct you towards some appropriate applications.

Below, for each of the 4 passages, you will find a skeleton Bible study.* The questions have been divided up into three sections: ‘way in’, ‘observation’ and ‘deeper’. The first section is designed to introduce the theme, the second to encourage investigation, and the final section to explore the avenues of application and to grapple with the deeper message of the passage.

N.B. *You will need to adapt and select the questions for your own groups.* If you are working with younger children some of the questions (especially in the last section) will prove too demanding and you may want to skip them or come up with better or more age-appropriate ones. You may be surprised by how much the children are able to grasp, especially if they are encouraged to “hunt for clues” and are given help along the way.

Finally, enthusing others about the passage each day will be easier when we, as leaders, have been excited by its message!

* If you want to be able to edit the questions or copy out the passage for your group, you can access this document and its content online at: <http://www.backpackers-online.org.uk/>

Day 1 Bible Time: Seaside Stroll

Mark 1:14-20:



¹⁴ After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee and preached the Good News from God. ¹⁵ Jesus said, "The right time has come. The kingdom of God is near. Change your hearts and lives and believe the Good News."

¹⁶ When Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee, he saw Simon and Simon's brother, Andrew. They were fishermen and were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, "Come and follow me. I will make you fishermen for men." ¹⁸ So Simon and Andrew immediately left their nets and followed him.

¹⁹ Jesus continued walking by Lake Galilee. He saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, preparing their nets to catch fish. ²⁰ Their father Zebedee and the men who worked for him were in the boat with the brothers. When Jesus saw the brothers, he called them to come with him. They left their father and followed Jesus.

Way in:

- Can you think of a time when something so exciting happened that you dropped everything you were doing to investigate or find out more?

Observation:

- What was the Good News that Jesus was bringing from God?
- Jesus says the "Kingdom is near." What do kingdoms need? What do you think Jesus was saying (about himself)?
- What job did Simon and Andrew do? What job does Jesus want to give them? What do you think they might be doing in their new job?
- What is Andrew and Simon's response to Jesus' command?



- What would saying “yes” to Jesus mean for Simon and Andrew do you think?

Deeper:

- If God’s King is arriving to bring God’s kingdom in, why does this spell the need for big changes in our lives?



- If you were choosing some people to be part of your team, what sort of people would you be looking for? Is it surprising who Jesus chooses?
- Why do you think Simon, Andrew, James and John all responded to Jesus’ command in the way they did?
- How do you think they felt as they obeyed Jesus? Why?
- What do you think it would mean if we also decide to recognise Jesus’ authority and follow him? What changes do you think we would need to make?

MARK 1:14-20: THEM AND US

Seaside Stroll	Them	Us
<i>Names(s)</i>		
<i>Place where you live</i>		
<i>Job</i>		
<i>What Jesus says to... (v.15)</i>		
<i>What Jesus says to... (v.17)</i>		
<i>What's the answer?</i>		

Me	
How can you be like the fishermen in the story?	
How can you follow Jesus?	
How can you tell other people about him?	

Day 2 Bible Time: Seaside Story

Mark 4:1-9:



¹ Another time Jesus began teaching by the lake. A great crowd gathered around him. So he got into a boat and went out on the lake. All the people stayed on the shore close to the water.

² Jesus used many stories to teach them. He said, ³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant his seed. ⁴ While the farmer was planting, some seed fell by the road. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁵ Some seed fell on rocky ground where there wasn’t much soil. The seed grew very fast there because the ground was not deep. ⁶ But when the sun rose, the plants withered. The plants died because they did not have deep roots. ⁷ Some other seed fell among thorny weeds. The weeds grew and choked the good plants. So those plants did not make grain. ⁸ Some other seed fell on good ground. In the good ground the seed began to grow. It grew and made a crop of grain. Some plants made 30 times more grain, some 60 times more grain, and some 100 times more grain.”

⁹ Then Jesus said, “You people who hear me, listen!”

¹⁰ Later, when Jesus was alone, the 12 disciples and others around him asked Jesus about the stories.

*¹³ Then Jesus said to the followers. “Do you understand this story? If you don’t, then how will you understand any story? ¹⁴ The farmer is like person who plants God’s teaching in people. ¹⁵ Sometimes the teaching falls on the road. This is like some people. They hear the teaching of God. But Satan quickly comes and takes away the teaching that was planted in them. ¹⁶ Others are like the seed planted on rocky ground. They hear the teaching and quickly accept it with joy. ¹⁷ But they don’t allow the teaching to go deep into their lives. They keep it only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the teaching, they quickly give up. ¹⁸ Others are like the seed planted among the thorny weeds. They hear the teaching. ¹⁹ But then other things come into their lives: worries, the love of money, and wanting all kinds of other things. These things stop the teaching from growing. So that teaching does not produce fruit in their lives. ²⁰ Others are like the seed planted in the good ground. They hear the teaching and accept it. Then they grow and produce fruit – sometimes 30 times more, sometimes 60 times more, and sometimes 100 times more].

* If you are in a group with younger children, you might only read verses 1-9 with them. However, you will need to make sure that as you think about the meaning of the story, Jesus’ explanation shapes where you end up!

Way in:

- If you were to say that someone had a “fruitful” life – what do think that would look like?

Observation:



- What is the seed that Jesus is talking about? What do the different soils represent?
- Why is there no sign of a response on some types of soil? Why might some people show no response to the good news about Jesus?
- What happens to the seed that falls on the rocky ground? What is the problem here according to Jesus?
- Why can't the seed in the weedy soil grow well?
- What happened to the seed that fell on good soil? What is so amazing about the result?

Deeper:

- Plants need good roots if they are to keep growing – especially in tough places and conditions. How can we make sure that we have deep roots in Jesus?



- What are the things that can crowd out Jesus in our lives (the weeds and the thorns).
- How can we be rich soil for God's word, so that it grows in us and we produce good fruit?

MARK 4:1-20: THEM AND US

<i>Seaside Story</i>	<i>Them</i>	<i>Us</i>
What it is	SOIL	PERSON
What is planted in it?		
What stops it growing		
What is the best result		
What Jesus wants us to do		

<i>Me</i>	
How can you be like the good soil?	
How can you bear fruit?	

Day 3 Bible Time: Seaside Rescue

Mark 5:21-24, 35-43:



²¹ Jesus went in the boat back to the other side of the lake. There, a large crowd gathered around him. ²² A ruler from the synagogue named Jairus came to that place. Jairus saw Jesus and bowed before him. ²³ The ruler begged Jesus again and again. He said, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her. Then she will be healed and will live. ²⁴ So Jesus went with the ruler.

³⁵ Some men came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue ruler. The men said, "Your daughter is dead. There is now no need to bother the teacher."

³⁶ But Jesus paid no attention to what the men said. He said to the synagogue ruler, "Don't be afraid, only believe."

³⁷ Jesus let only Peter, James and John, the brother of James, go with him to Jairus' house. ³⁸ They came to the house of the synagogue ruler, and Jesus found many people there crying loudly. There was much confusion. ³⁹ Jesus entered the house and said to the people, "Why are you crying and making so much noise? This child is not dead. She is only asleep." ⁴⁰ But they only laughed at Jesus. He told the people to leave. Then he went into the room where the child was. He took the child's father and mother and his three followers into the room with him. ⁴¹ Then he took hold of the girl's hand and said to her, "Talitha, koum!" (This means, "Little girl, I tell you to stand up!") ⁴² The girl stood right up and began walking. (She was 12 years old). The father and mother and the followers were amazed. ⁴³ Jesus gave the father and mother strict orders not to tell people about this. Then he told them to give the girl some food.

Way in:

- Have you ever been in a situation where you were totally helpless? Describe the situation. How did you feel?



Observation:

- How bad was the situation when Jairus first came to Jesus? What clues do we have that show us how Jairus was feeling?

- Jairus still had hope. Why had he come to Jesus and what did he want Jesus to do?
- How did the situation become much worse? What shows that people now thought things were beyond hope? How would Jairus be feeling at this point in the story?
- What does Jesus say to Jairus? If others feel hopeless and afraid, what do Jesus' words tell us about how Jesus was feeling?
- Describe the scene as Jesus arrived at Jairus' home. Why do the mourners laugh when he tells them that the girl is sleeping?
- How does Jesus raise the girl from death? What is the response of the people who are there?

Deeper:

- When we face a situation that is completely beyond us, what do we need most?
- If Jesus is the one person who has power over death what should be our response to him?
- Some people think that they don't need to bother about Jesus or that he is irrelevant to life. After exploring this story, do you think they are right? Why/why not?



MARK 5:21-24, 35-43: THEM AND US

Seaside Rescue	Girl	Us
Parent's name		
Age		
Where you live		
Major problem faced		
What can we learn about Jesus?		

Me	
Jesus raised the girl to life to show us that he is God. How can that help us when we face tough situations or problems?	
Jesus said that if we trust him, death won't be the end and we can live with him forever. That's even more amazing than what the girl experienced. Have I trusted him?	

Day 4 Bible Time: Seaside Sensation

Mark 4:35-41:



³⁵ That evening, Jesus said to his followers, "Come with me across the lake." ³⁶ He and the followers left the people there. They went in the boat that Jesus was already sitting in. There were also other boats with them.

³⁷ A very strong wind came up on the lake. The waves began coming over the sides and into the boat. It was almost full of water. ³⁸ Jesus was at the back of the boat, sleeping with his head on a pillow. The followers went to him and woke him. They said, "Teacher, do you care about us? We will drown!"

³⁹ Jesus stood up and commanded the wind and the waves to stop. He said, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind stopped and the lake became calm.

⁴⁰ Jesus said to his followers, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ The followers were very afraid and asked each other, "What kind of man is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Way in:

- Describe a time when you felt *really* scared.

Observation:

- Whose idea was it for the disciples to go across to the other side of the lake?
- How can you tell this was no ordinary storm the disciples are facing? How were the disciples feeling at this point?
- When they woke Jesus up, what question did they ask Jesus? What do you think they wanted Jesus to do?



- What does Jesus do, and what happens as a result? How can we be sure this was something supernatural?
- Put yourself in the boat – how would you have felt after seeing what Jesus has just done?

Deeper:



- Jesus asks his followers, “Where is your faith?” Why should they have trusted Jesus, even in this bad situation?
- After Jesus calms the storm, the followers of Jesus are now very afraid. Why do you think that is?
- What obvious question do the disciples ask? How would we answer that question ourselves?
- Jesus makes the promise that he will never leave us or abandon us if we trust him. Think of situations (in our own lives?) where that is really wonderful to know.

MARK 4:35-41: THEM AND US

Seaside Sensation	Disciples	Us
How I travelled here (v.45)		
The time of day (v.47)		
What scares me (v.50)		
What amazes me (v.51)		
What my mind finds hard to grasp (v.52)		
What we can learn about Jesus?		

Me	
Jesus' friends were amazed by what Jesus did. What amazes me about Jesus?	
Jesus' friends found it hard to understand who Jesus was. What don't you understand about Jesus? Speak to your leader about your question. If they don't know the answer they will find someone who does!	

Simplified Bible Passages:

Here are the four Bible stories written in a slightly more accessible way for the youngest children. Thinking of ways to make the stories more visual and finding words to explain the big concepts simply will be helpful as you try and communicate them and their message.

⊕ Day one passage (simplified):

Mark 1:14-20

Jesus Chooses Some Followers

¹⁴ Jesus went into Galilee and told people the Good News from God. ¹⁵ He said, “The right time is now here. God’s kingdom has come! Change your hearts and lives, and believe the Good News!”

¹⁶ Jesus was walking by Lake Galilee. He saw Simon and his brother Andrew. These two men were fishermen, and they were throwing a net into the lake to catch fish. ¹⁷ Jesus said to them, “Come and follow me, and I will make you a different kind of fishermen. You will catch people, not fish.” ¹⁸ Straightaway they left their nets and followed Jesus.

¹⁹ Still walking by the Lake, Jesus saw two more brothers, James and John, the sons of Zebedee. They were in their boat, getting their nets ready to catch fish. ²⁰ When Jesus saw the two brothers, he told them to come with him. They left their dad and followed Jesus.

⊕ Day two passage (simplified):

Mark 4:1-9

A Story About a Farmer Sowing Seed

¹ One time Jesus began teaching by the lake, and lots of people came to hear him. He got into a boat so that he could sit and teach from the lake. All the people stayed on the beach next to the water. ² Jesus used stories to teach the people many things. One of his stories went like this:

³ “Listen! A farmer went out to plant seed. ⁴ While he was scattering the seed, some of it fell on the path. The birds came and ate all that seed. ⁵ Other seed fell on rocky ground, where there was not enough earth. At first it grew really quickly there because the soil was not deep. ⁶ But then the sun rose and the plants were burned. They died because they did not have deep roots. ⁷ Some other seed fell on ground full of weeds. The weeds grew and stopped the good plants from growing. So they did not make the grain they were meant to. ⁸ But some of the seed fell on good ground. There it began to grow, and it made grain. Some plants made 30 times more grain, some 60 times more, and some 100 times more.”

⁹ Then Jesus said, “You people who hear me, listen!”

⊕ Day three passage (simplified):

Mark 5:21-23, 35-43

Jesus gives a dead girl her life back

²¹ Jesus went back to the other side of the lake in the boat and lots of people joined him by the shore. ²² An important man called Jairus came to Jesus. ²³ He got on his knees and begged Jesus to come and make his sick daughter better. She was very ill and close to death.

³⁵ On the way some people arrived from the house of Jairus. "It's too late," they said, "Your daughter has died. Don't waste any more of Teacher Jesus' time."

³⁶ Jesus didn't seem worried and said to Jairus, "Don't be scared, just trust me."

³⁸ When Jesus arrived at the house of Jairus lots of people were crying very loudly and making a huge fuss.

³⁹ Jesus said, "Why are people so sad and making so much noise? The girl is not dead, she's just asleep."

⁴⁰ Everyone laughed at Jesus because they knew she really had died. Then Jesus went into the room where the girl was, along with her parents and three of his followers.

⁴¹ Jesus took the girl's hand and said, "Get up!"

⁴² Straight away the girl stood up and starting walking around. Everyone was amazed!

⁴³ "Don't tell everyone about this for now," said Jesus, "and give the girl some food to eat."

⊕ Day four passage (simplified):

Mark 4: 35-41

Jesus calms a big storm

³⁵ One evening Jesus said to his followers, “Come with me in the boat across the lake.” ³⁶ So they left all the crowds behind and got into the boat. ³⁷ A big wind began to blow, and the waves were so big that the boat began to fill with water. ³⁸ Jesus was at the back of the boat – asleep, with his head on a pillow. His followers woke him up and said, “Teacher, don’t you care? We are all about to drown!”

³⁹ Jesus stood up and gave orders to the wind and the waves. He said, “Quiet! Stop!” Straightaway the wind stopped blowing and the lake became completely calm.

⁴⁰ Jesus said to his followers, “Why were you so frightened? Don’t you trust me?”

⁴¹ The followers were really scared now and asked, “Who is this man, Jesus? Even the wind and waves do what he tells them to do!”