



WHEN JESUS GOT INTO A BOAT

A Reader's Theater
Bible Study
of Matthew 8:23-9:9



1 LESSON | LEADER GUIDE + STUDENT WORKSHEETS

Leader's Guide

Ready...set...action! Reader's theater is a creative way of inviting students to immerse themselves in the story of Scripture. Not only is it a fun way to read, it also helps readers (and listeners) hear and see the story with greater clarity. You can sit around a table or a living room and simply read it, or you can choose to stand and act it out. Either way works!

After reading the script aloud, follow the discussion guide to explore the story to your desired level of depth. Note that this guide won't be providing "answers" to the questions. Rather, the questions invite you to enter into the story and see what you discover. Your group will have more unique insights than this guide could possibly include. The goal isn't application but rather response. Each story invites us to respond to God.

Before you begin, print out scripts for every member of your group. Decide if you want to print the optional worksheets.

Part 1: Reader's Theater

1. Assign a **role** (or roles) to each person in the group. Note that the roles are different for each story.
 - The number that appears in parentheses after each role lets you know how many lines of script the person filling that role will be reading. This doesn't indicate how many *times* they will speak, but rather how is a measure of how much they'll be reading. If someone in your group struggles with reading, you can give them a role with a smaller number of lines.
 - If you have fewer people than roles, the scripts also note which roles can be easily combined. If you need to further combine roles, consider using simple props and more exaggerated voices to help differentiate them.
2. After you have assigned roles, give everyone a copy of the script and ask them to circle or highlight their parts. You may also want to ask them to read through their parts first and see if there are any words they need help pronouncing or defining.
3. Decide if you want to sit and read or stand and act it out.
4. Before you begin reading, remind everyone to have fun with it!
5. Say "Action!" and enjoy the show!

Part 2: Discuss

Discussion can take place with or without the worksheet. If your students are visual or need something to keep their hands busy or their minds focused, the worksheet can play that role. However, it may be that they engage better through simple conversation. Experiment with it!

1. Help orient students with the setting of the story by asking two questions:
 - **What time is it?**
 - Explore where this story takes place within the larger story of the Bible. If you are using the worksheet, look at the ups and downs of that larger story and what they've all been building to. The stories in this series travel up that steep hill that Jesus is standing on. Anticipation for God's Kingdom is ramping up and there is a sense of desperation.
 - Are there any other markers of time in the story? For example, Jesus was in the wilderness for 40 days. Are there any other stories in the Bible where someone was somewhere for 40 marks of time? You might discuss the similarities.
 - **Where are we?** Explore the physical location of where this story took place. Did any other notable stories take place in this location? For example, did any other stories in the Bible involve 40 marks of time in a Wilderness? Are there any connections between those stories?
2. Help students explore who is in the story and what they are doing.
 - **Who is here?** Identify all of the characters in the story, including those who didn't have speaking parts. Have we seen them in other stories? Do you notice any behavior patterns? Remember to point out that God is the main character in every single story, whether He speaks or not.
 - **What do we see each character doing?** What are they like? Most of the time, the people in Bible stories are not playing the role of "hero." Rather, their story acts like a mirror to show us how normal people act. So how are they acting? Are they complaining? Are they suspicious? Are they desperate for something? Ask what you have in common with the characters in this story.
3. (optional) Consider running through the script again at this point.
4. Connect with God.
 - **What is God doing in this story?** What do you see Jesus doing? How is he connecting with the people in the story? If you were in this story, how might he want to respond to you.

If your students have OneStory's Bible Binder, they can file the scripts and workbook pages in the Gospels section.



Reader's Theater: When Jesus Got into a Boat

Roles: Narrator 1 (16), **Narrator 2** (13), **Disciple** (2), **Jesus** (8), **Possessed Person** (3), **Scribe** (1)

(The following roles can be easily combined: Disciple+Possessed Person+Scribe)

Narrator 1: When Jesus got into a boat, his disciples followed him. Behold, a violent storm came up on the sea, so much that the boat was covered with the waves; but he was asleep. The disciples came to him and woke him up, saying,

Disciple: Save us, Lord! We are dying!

Narrator 2: He said to them,

Jesus: Why are you fearful, O you of little faith?

Narrator 1: Then he got up, rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm. The men marveled, saying,

Disciple: What kind of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

Narrator 2: When he came to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, two people possessed by demons met him there, coming out of the tombs, exceedingly fierce, so that nobody could pass that way. Behold, they cried out, saying,

Possessed Person: What do we have to do with you, Jesus, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time.

Narrator 1: Now there was a herd of many pigs feeding far away from them. The demons begged him, saying,

Possessed Person: If you cast us out, permit us to go away into the herd of pigs.

Narrator 2: He said to them,

Jesus: Go!

Narrator 1: They came out, and went into the herd of pigs; and behold, the whole herd of pigs rushed down the cliff into the sea and died in the water.

Narrator 2: Those who fed them fled and went away into the city and told everything, including what happened to those who were possessed with demons. Behold, all the city came out to meet Jesus. When they saw him, they begged that he would depart from their borders.

Narrator 1: Jesus entered into a boat and crossed over, and came into his own city. Behold, they brought to him a man who was paralyzed, lying on a bed. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic,

Jesus: Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you.

Narrator 2: Behold, some of the scribes said to themselves,

Scribe: This man blasphemes.

Narrator 1: Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said,

Jesus: Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven;’ or to say, ‘Get up, and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins—

Narrator 2: then he said to the paralytic,

Jesus: Get up, and take up your mat, and go to your house.

Narrator 1: He arose and departed to his house. But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled and glorified God, who had given such authority to men.

Narrator 2: As Jesus passed by from there, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax collection office. He said to him,

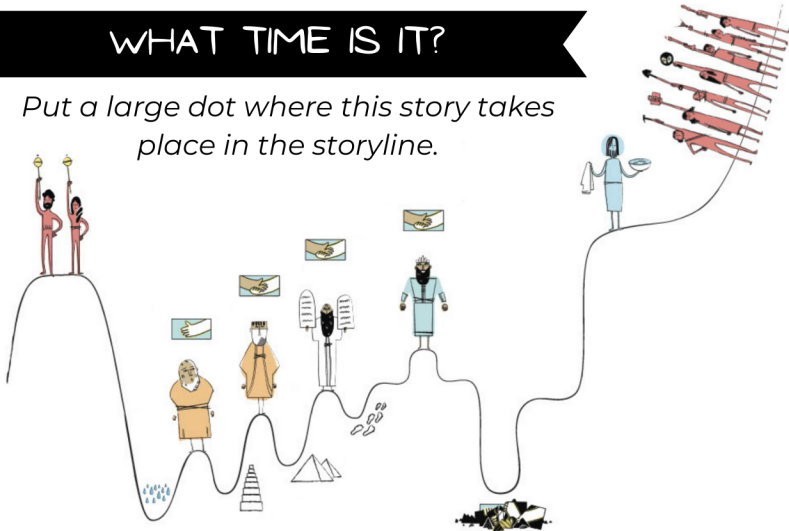
Jesus: Follow me.

Narrator 1: He got up and followed him.

When Jesus Got into a Boat

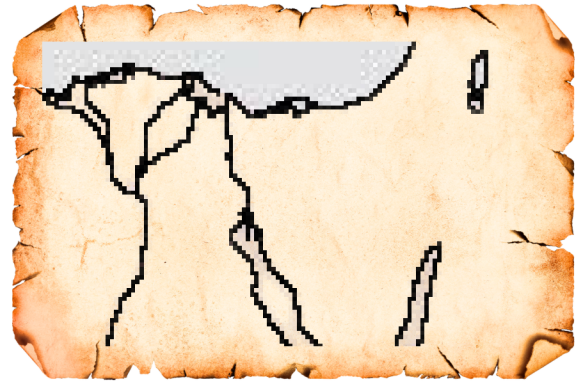
WHAT TIME IS IT?

Put a large dot where this story takes place in the storyline.



WHERE ARE WE?

Draw a 📍 to show where this story takes place on a map.



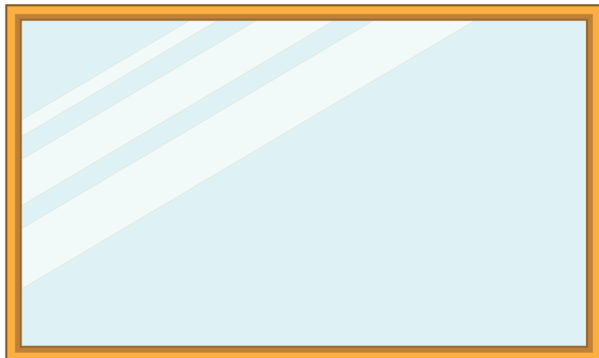
WHO IS HERE?

Draw or name the characters in this story.



LOOK IN THE MIRROR

Write or draw what you see people doing. Then circle what reminds you of yourself.



WHAT IS GOD DOING?

Write or draw what you discover about how God is meeting with people.