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Introduction

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Why a Water:Walk:

Every day hundreds of thousands of people in Africa are forced to walk miles upon miles to reach water, and the water isn’t even guaranteed to be clean or safe to drink. By participating in a Water:Walk, you are putting yourself in another person’s shoes and paralleling what it’s like to walk for water in Africa. Not only are you raising awareness for those who walk, you can also use the walk as an opportunity to raise money to bring clean water access to communities in Africa. Walk for water so they don’t have to.

The information provided in this guide will help you host a Water:Walk event in your community. This guide, plus your own ingenuity, will help you plan and implement your event. At Blood:Water, success isn’t measured by the amount of dollars raised. Each dollar is important, more so, however, is each person who learns about issues and answers God’s call to act.

Let’s get started.
How to Host a Water:Walk

Before the event

1. Assemble your team.
   You can’t do it alone. Depending on the size of your event, a team of three to five leaders can effectively lead your Water:Walk.

2. Set your route.
   Plan your route and make sure it is approved by the proper city officials.
   We recommend a two mile round trip, with a collection point in the middle. A standard two mile walk will require about 45 minutes which is typically enough to feel the effects of the event.

   Location details:
   Designate a starting point for your Water:Walk.
   Participants will carry milk jugs, buckets, jerry cans, etc. from the start of your walk to a water collection point—river, lake, etc.—and then return to the starting point. In participating, people will learn the difficulty of finding and keeping clean water in the developing world. They’ll learn, firsthand, the value of hard work and gratitude. Awareness matters. Your event is an experiential “walk” toward understanding.

3. Set a date and time.
   Again, make sure your local government approves the date, time and location.

4. Set your fundraising goal.
   Note: A well for a community in need costs approximately $10,000. Would you be so bold as to call your people to raise enough corporate support to build a well? You can read about other financial solutions on bloodwater.org/solutions.
Encourage participants to fundraise and recruit sponsors for their walk. Participants can communicate to each potential donor that $20 will provide clean access to water for one African. Participants can set up fundraising pages at bloodwater.org/waterwalk.

5. Get the word out.
Spend six to eight weeks promoting. If your church Water:Walk is open to the community, list the event on local radio show bulletin boards. Post signs around the community with a specific link about how people may sign up to participate. Advertise the walk in your church bulletin, announcements or other church communication outlets.
Inform local news media outlets about your event and invite them to attend and cover your walk to create even more awareness. Utilize the press release options on bloodwater.org/resources for ideas and templates. We’d love to help with press. Just email us at marketing@bloodwater.org.

6. Educate.
Use the four weeks of Bible Study sessions included in this guide to prepare participants for the experience. Spiritual preparation matters. Each week of study will call participants to learn, pray and prepare for their walk experience. Also take time to educate your community. People cannot support your effort if they don’t understand your effort. Equip participants with talking points for effectively sharing the strategy with those around you.

7. Raise support.
Participants can set up fundraising pages at bloodwater.org/waterwalk. It’s an easy way to set a goal, recruit fundraisers and raise money for Africa.
At the event

1. Bring your own container to carry to fill with water—milk jugs, gatorade jugs, paint buckets, coolers, jerry cans, etc. (suggested size: 2-5 gallons). Bring extras in case participants forget to bring theirs.

2. Register each member of your walk, collecting names, phone numbers, mailing addresses and email addresses.

3. At the start of the walk, at the water collection point and at the end, share stories and talk about what Blood:Water is doing to bring clean water to communities in Africa. We recommend walking back in silence as participants carry the water. This offers a good time for reflection.

4. Discuss your experiences with one another at the end of the Water:Walk.

Supplies: The following list outlines all of the supplies needed for the event.

- Volunteers to help facilitate the event
- Container to collect water (suggested size: 2-5 gallons)
- Sign up sheets
- System to collect donations

After your Walk

First, congratulate all your participants. Send a follow up message to thank them for participating and also to announce your grand fundraising total. Alert Blood:Water to the success of your event. Submit photos and stories to Blood:Water by emailing marketing@bloodwater.org.

Next, mail any collected donations to Blood:Water. PO Box 60381 Nashville, TN 37206

Thank you for partnering with us to share Christ’s love in such a tangible way. We hope your missional outlook expanded in such a way that prompts each individual to seek new ways to honor God, serve others and make change in the world.
When it comes to water access and sanitation, the statistics in Africa are astounding—613 million people in Africa lack access to improved sanitation and more than 320 million lack access to an improved source of drinking water.[i]

Blood:Water, by design, exists to speak into those statistics and enact change. Your efforts to conduct a Water:Walk in your community tangibly affect those efforts. This Bible study is a key component of your Water:Walk. Thank you for stepping into this study and shining light on those in the world without access to our most basic need.

“And whoever gives one of these little ones even a cup of cold water because he is a disciple, truly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.” – Matthew 10:42 (ESV)

Format:

Each of the sessions in this four-week Bible study is designed to help participants interact with the heart of God.

God is a provider. He is a healer. Through Christ, He is a redeemer. And in His church for all generations, He is an equiper.

Water is present throughout scripture. In the beginning, God created it. In the flood, God purified the world with it. Throughout Old Testament history, he provided it and used it. The New Testament offers us a picture of baptism by it. And Jesus Christ became the ultimate illustration of it. When we work to provide safe access to it, we become the hands of feet of Jesus to the world.

This study will help participants prepare for the walk event. That is certainly a goal. Beyond that, however, the word of God is transformational. As you prepare to lead this experience, pray that God’s Word would shape the heart of each Bible study participant and move your heart as leader toward Christ and the power of His Holy Spirit.

Your role as facilitator is to navigate each section of the study for your group. Whether you are leading a team of adults or middle/high school students, learners can be motivated and moved toward a walk event that is successful and a daily walk that is deeper in Christ.

**Connect:** This is the call to gather. Through the study, group members will build relationships with one another. Connect is a chance to start talking and make a move toward transparency, unity and, ultimately, growth.

**Learn:** This is the call to grow. What does the Bible say? Who is God and who are we called to be in light of His word and His spirit? This is the meat of the study where participants will engage in scripture and discuss God’s Word.

**Pray:** This is the call to commune. How we approach God on behalf of those who are hurting counts. How we approach God on behalf of our own heart change counts too. Participants are invited to pray and to steer their hearts toward the mission and the mind of Christ.

**Prepare:** This is the call to walk. Each week, there is an application point for participants to contextualize for their own daily walk with Christ as well as an action step to help them prepare for the Water:Walk event.
God Provides

Passage: Water from a Rock

Key Point: In our distress, God provides what we need. In the world’s suffering, what the world needs most are Christ and the living water He provides. As followers of Jesus, we are called to answer to the world’s cry.

Connect

Begin your introductory session by giving everyone the opportunity to introduce themselves to the group. Even if each participant knows the other group members, take time to engage in the following introductory icebreaker. The goal is to create community and focus the attention of your group toward the idea of provision.

Open: Start by sharing your name and one little known fact about yourself.

After each group member has taken a moment to share a brief introduction, dive into the following connection questions in an open-ended discussion.

- What is the most distant place you have ever traveled?
- Did you have everything you needed or was there an item you forgot to pack for the journey?
- How do you feel when you forget something or when you enter a situation unprepared and don’t have everything important that you need?

Learn

Openly discuss the difference between needs and wants.

Ask: How do you determine the difference between needs and wants in your life?

Ask: Are there things in life that you refer to as necessity but that are not in any way a legitimate need in your life? What leads us to do that?
Instruct participants to locate Numbers 20:1-13. Read the narrative aloud together.

Background: Miriam died and was buried in this passage of scripture. Later in Numbers 20, we learn of Aaron's death. According to Numbers 33:38, Aaron died in the 40th year after Israel's grand exodus from Egypt. That means the Israelites have been wandering for decades. That means this instance is not one in the same with their first encounter with water from a rock in Exodus 17. Water was Israel's greatest need during their wilderness wandering. God provided food each morning with specific instructions for how to gather, store and consume the special manna from heaven. Water took more creativity. From their first encounter with post Egyptian exit water at Marah (Exodus 15) to the moment 40 years later, water was a recurring theme because it was a specific need.

Discuss:

- How did the people respond to God in light of what they lacked?
- There is a fine line between expressing your needs to God and complaining to God about what you lack. Share a moment when you have been tempted or even when you crossed the line.
- How did Moses sidestep the specifics of God’s instruction in this passage?
- In spite of Moses’ disobedience, what was the end result regarding water?

C.S. Lewis writes in *Mere Christianity*, “There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him.”[i]

Share: To obey God is to indicate trust in God. Are there steps of obedience that God has called you to take regarding His provision? As a leader, take time to share that testimony with your group.

Read Exodus 17:6 and Numbers 20:8.

Summarize: Both Exodus 17 and Numbers 20 deal with water from a rock. In Exodus 17, Moses was instructed to strike the rock. Here in Numbers 20, God asks Moses to speak to the rock. God’s faithfulness over the 40 year wilderness period should certainly had warranted Moses’ obedience in this moment, but as in other instances, Moses had a mind all his own. Vacate Moses’ disobedience for a moment and land on the connection point between Exodus 17 and Numbers 20. What is the link between the two passages? (The rock)

Explain: In both moments, God used a rock to meet Israel’s need. There is spiritual significance there.

Read Matthew 16:18.

Explain: Jesus’ play on words identifying Peter (Petros) as the rock (petra) as the foundation where the church would be built matters. Was it the personal ministry of Peter that would build Christ’s church? Or was it faith like that of Peter (who had just identified the divinity of Jesus in the verses prior) that would build Christ’s church? Either way, it’s on a rock. That same word, petra, appears in 1 Corinthians 10:4 where Paul references Israel’s water from a rock in Exodus/Numbers.
Read 1 Corinthians 10:4.

Discuss: According to Paul, what is the rock?

Explain: In Exodus and Numbers, God’s people drank physical water from physical rocks. In 1 Corinthians, God’s people learn to drink from a spiritual rock that is Jesus. He is the well that will never run dry.

Discuss the following open-ended questions as you transition to the PRAY section of this study.

- How do you depend on God through Christ? In what ways do you illustrate your dependence on God?
- As a member of Christ’s body, the church, why should we be part of meeting the world’s needs?
- In what way(s) does this passage translate to your Water:Walk experience?

Explain: As part of Blood:Water efforts in Africa, water can come from a rock. It’s the rock of Jesus, represented by Christ’s body the church. Throughout scripture and throughout history, God has miraculously provided for people. As part of the church, the redeemed body of Christ, we are part of that miraculous solution for a world in need today.
Pray

Today, take time to pray for those without water who may be complaining. Pray for those without water who refrain from grumbling as well.

Leader: Provide a slip of paper. Pass it around and ask participants to list personal goals for the Water:Walk, as in how many people they would like to help gain access to clean water. When everyone is finished, add the sum and announce the total.

Next, take time to pray for that audacious group goal. Explain that each participant is better in numbers than he or she is apart. Ask God to bless and multiply your efforts for the good of His kingdom and His name in Africa and in your community as well.

Finally, pray that God would aid your church, your group, and each individual in understanding what it means to become a spiritual rock for others to have their basic spiritual needs met and to receive immense spiritual blessings.

Prepare

Leaders, use the following tips each week as talking points to encourage your group to maximize their specific Water:Walk efforts.

This week, encourage participants to spread the word. Here is a list of tips to help group members leverage everyday life to secure support for the Water:Walk event.

- Have face-to-face conversations with classmates and/or coworkers and explain your involvement with your Water:Walk.
- Utilize the social media plan provided to reach the maximum amount of people.
- Share stats about water sanitation and scarcity in Africa.
- Consider writing letters as a way to reach those unengaged with digital communication and social media outlets.

God Heals

Passage: Naaman is healed
Key Point: It isn’t water that cleanses but the power of God that heals. We need the power of water literally and figuratively in order to be whole.

Connect

Start this session with a taste test. Before the session, purchase various bottled water brands and a pack of small paper cups. For each brand of water you purchase, assign it a corresponding letter (example: A through D if you purchase 4 brands of bottled or distilled water). Assign a final letter to normal kitchen or bathroom tap water. Label your paper cups accordingly. One at a time, invite participants to taste each lettered cup of water and guess which is which. Enjoy the game. When taste testing is complete, reveal the right choices and reward the group member who provided the highest number of correct responses.

Open: All water is composed of bonded molecules of hydrogen and oxygen. Water is always H2O. Somehow though, water from different sources can feel and taste differently.

After activity clean up, dive into the following connection questions in an open-ended discussion.

- Name as many uses for water as you can.
- Are there moments when water is problematic? (i.e. leaky pipe, flooded streets, spilled glass)
- Have you ever been under a water ration or restriction? If so, what was the reason and what was that like?
- In what ways can water be medicinal and represent part of the healing process for you?
Get ready for a difficult exercise. Instruct everyone in your group to share two things that they really love about themselves. Many participants will find this challenging. They will offer up things they love about their family, their life or circumstance, but find it nearly impossible to name or claim something they love about just themselves.

Go around the group and press everyone to think and share.

Far easier is the task of naming something we don't like about ourselves. Ask participants to think of one thing, not to share, but to have in the center of their minds as you navigate this passage together.

Explain: The character in our session today is significant. The passage we’ll read starts out with four incredible statements about Naaman but concludes with one difficult reality. He had a skin disease.

Instruct participants to locate 2 Kings 5:1-14. Read the passage aloud together.

Background: Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army. He was a military hero. He was a man of valor. He had high social status and wealth. However, he had leprosy. After having taken a young Jewish slave girl during one of their raids, the girl told Naaman's wife about Elisha. Naaman's first course of action, at the instruction of the Syrian king, was to report to Israel's king. However, the king over Israel had no power over sickness. Only God. Enter Elisha. Naaman's response to Elisha's instruction was an indication of frustration and not faith. At his servants' request, however, Naaman complied. He went into the water. And he was healed.

Discuss:

· How difficult is it to recognize and share the great things about yourself?
· Why do you think it is easier to focus on the negative aspects of who we are?

Explain: Naaman's disease didn't change who he was and what he was capable of doing. So many times, we may allow the negative aspects of who we are to cloud and overshadow the positive. We also do that in our perceptions of others. The people we are serving in Africa don't have water and their sanitation conditions are poor. That doesn't mean they are lazy, ignorant or evil. They can be kind, brilliant, loving, men and women of valor and even status in their community. They also happen to be people without access to a basic need. This need for water, although great, doesn't mean there aren't wonderful things to be cherished and considered about their lives.

Read 2 Kings 5:15.
Summarize: Naaman wasn’t healed because the water of the Jordan was somehow magical. He was healed in obedience to the will of God. As a result, he received a gift of faith. Not only did Naaman’s disease leave him; he experienced a heart change in response to God’s miracle as well.

Discuss: In what way is physical healing or help an important part of spiritual healing or wholeness?

Ask: How does your involvement with the Water:Walk provide both physical and spiritual healing?

Share Matthew 10:42.

Explain: In this passage, Jesus is explaining motivation. It’s one thing to welcome a stranger, help someone out, or offer sustenance to someone in need. Doing it as a disciple of Christ ups the ante. When we do something in the name of Christ, or because we are disciples of Christ, there is a spiritual inheritance. The reward for us is growth, nearness to Christ, and joy from giving. We don’t serve to earn salvation. We serve as a product of the salvation we’ve been freely given so we can enjoy it more fully. Therein lies our reward.

Explain: Because of Naaman’s healing, he believed in the God of Israel. Remember what else we learned about Naaman at the start of 2 Kings 5. He was a man of status and influence. How do you think his newfound faith in God translated to that life of influence?

Summarize: It’s important that we don’t only see those without water as people in need. They are people of integrity, importance, and influence.

Ask: If, by receiving access to water, their faith turns to Christ, what will be the result?

Discuss as a group:

- How has your life been changed by Christ?
- How have you been able to use your influence to impact others with the good news of the gospel?
- In what other ways is God calling you to leverage all the great things about you for His glory and someone else’s physical or spiritual healing?

Explain: The people you help aren’t just people without water. They are moms, dads, children. They are teachers, reformers, readers. They are kind, passionate, influential. When we provide water in the name of Jesus, we also provide hope and faith. If they receive it and their lives are changed by it, they can honor God and use all the great, wonderful things about themselves to help others, too.
Pray

Today, take time to praise God for the people your efforts will impact. Thank God for making them unique and special. Thank Him for giving them all unique gifts and passions. Thank Him for providing family and other great attributes and aspects of their lives.


Ask God to use your efforts in providing water as a way to also provide hope; hope that translates into faith; faith that changes a life; a life that can be leveraged for God's glory.

Prepare

Leaders, use the following tips each week as talking points to encourage your group to maximize their specific Water:Walk efforts.

This week, encourage participants to continue spreading the word but to also be in the Word. Ask them to commit Matthew 10:42 to memory this week and to meditate on what it means to offer hope and spiritual healing. Encourage them to read verses that zero in on what God truly thinks about them. How He loves them. How He's equipped them. How He's jealous for them. How He's protective over them. It's easy to stomach the not so great things about us when we come face to face with all that is wonderful about each of us because of God and His goodness.

Preparing to walk for water isn't just a physical or financial exercise. It is a spiritual one. To get ready, be in God's Word.
God Redeems

Passage: Jesus encounters a Samaritan woman
Key Point: Jesus’ redemption is once and for all. The water He gives will quench for all time. Once you have Jesus, you will never be thirsty again.

Connect

Start this session with stats about water. Read the following statements aloud. Some are true and some are false. Each is marked accordingly. Have your group agree or disagree with each statement before revealing its validity. You can do this by a simple show of hands. A variation would be to choose a side of the room that represents the word “agree” and the opposite side would then represent “disagree.” You might choose to have your participants move to the side that indicates their guesses before revealing the factuality of each statement.

Introduction: In a very real way, that was the state of God’s people in their wilderness wandering. On their own, they didn’t have everything they needed. On one hand, this forced interdependence within the community. On the other, it invited Israel into a deeper level of trust in God to provide for all of their needs.

Ask: What were some specific needs in your life that you saw God’s power provide?
True or False?

1. Water covers around 70% of the Earth’s surface. [TRUE]

2. On average, every kilogram of seawater contains around 35 grams of dissolved salt. [TRUE]

3. The longest river in the USA is the Mississippi River. [FALSE: It’s actually the Missouri, measuring approximately 20 miles longer than the Mississippi. Together, the two form the longest river system in the USA]

4. Water in the form of ice is found at the polar ice caps of the planet Mars. [TRUE]

5. Roughly 70% of an adult’s body is made up of water. [TRUE]

6. More than 2 million people die each year from water, sanitation, and hygiene-related causes. Nearly all deaths, 99 percent, occur in the developing world. [FALSE: The related death toll is actually in excess of 3 million annually]

7. An American taking a 10-minute shower uses more water than the average person in a developing country slum uses for an entire day. [TRUE: However, even a five-minute shower uses more water]

8. More people have a toilet than a mobile phone. [FALSE: It’s the exact opposite. More people have mobile phones than toilets]

9. Drinking too much water can be dangerous. [TRUE: Here’s why. Drinking too much water too quickly can lead to water intoxication, which occurs when water dilutes the sodium level in the bloodstream and causes an imbalance of water in the brain]

10. By the time a person feels thirsty, his or her body has lost over 4 percent of its total water amount. [FALSE: The correct percentage is 1%]

**Background:** One of the most important aspects of this passage is Jesus’ declaration about who He truly is. The fact that this declaration was made in the context of reaching out to a sinful, foreign woman who was a social outcast is an indication of the way that Christ came to lovingly redeem all people. When the nation of Israel split after Solomon’s rule, the northern kingdom of Israel was ruled by Omri and the capital city of Samaria was named. After Assyrian invasion, the Jews intermarried with the new inhabitants forming the mixed race of Samaritans. When the Jews returned from captivity, tensions mounted. The Samaritans withdrew from worshipping Yahweh in Jerusalem to worship him at Mt. Gerizim. Jesus encounters this woman alone at a well because she is unable to come with the other women in the community. She is an outcast. She is surprised when He speaks to her but soon becomes comforted by His words of redemption.

**Discuss:**

- How do you get water?
- How do you maintain your water’s purity?
- What was Jesus’ physical need during this passage?
- What was the woman’s physical need during this passage? What was her spiritual need?
- Do you think she was aware of her spiritual need in light of her response to Jesus in verse 15? Why or why not?

Choose readers who will look up and read the following verses. Then ask all participants to summarize each verse’s significance regarding the discussion question that follows.

1. **Jeremiah 2:13**
2. **Ezekiel 47:9**
3. **Zechariah 14:8**
4. **Isaiah 12:3**
5. **Isaiah 44:3**
Discuss: How does each of these verses give greater meaning to Jesus’ statements in John 4:10 and John 4:14?

Ask: How is someone’s physical need for water synonymous with their spiritual need for Christ? How is it different?

Open share:

As a leader, your testimony matters. By now, your group may know a great deal about you. They have walked with you through a few weeks of study. To this point, you haven’t been instructed to share much about your initial encounter with Christ. What is your well story? How did you meet Jesus? What is your conversion story?

Take a few moments to share how you met Jesus and how your life changed as a result of salvation.

Follow your share time with an opportunity for anyone else in the group who is willing to walk through their “well” encounter with Jesus to share.

Explain: Spiritual thirst is the sinful state in which all mankind finds itself. Jesus came to quench that thirst. The metaphor between physical thirst and spiritual thirst is clear. The connection between meeting someone’s physical need and spiritual need is equally clear.

Ask: Why is it important to focus on aspects of both physical and spiritual needs?

Read aloud Jesus’ words in John 6:35 and 40.

Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. John 6:35 (ESV)

For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. John 6:40

Discuss:

· How does Jesus make the connection between physical need and spiritual need?
· How does the woman at the well represent someone in need of both physical water and spiritual water?

Explain: For a Jewish man to speak to a Samaritan woman in public broke very rigid cultural customs. To share a drink with her at a well would have been strictly avoided. In Jesus’ day, Roman rule was oppressive. Taxation was excessive. To be a Jew in the Roman Empire was difficult. Jesus’ audience understood physical need. What they often missed the mark on was spiritual need. What we must understand regarding Christ is that He calls us to meet physical needs but to translate the metaphor into spiritual healing. His redemption includes the cup of cold water but is far greater than a simple drink. Redemption changes lives.
Pray

Today, take time to pray for spiritual conversations. There will be people in your life who applaud your effort to provide water for people in need but misunderstand the spiritual implications. Those people won’t conclude that a Bible study is part of your experience to provide water in Africa unless you tell them. Pray for their spiritual eyes and ears to be open.

Ask God to help you have spiritual conversations with people in your circles of influence. While the families and communities your efforts aid in Africa need physical water, people right next door or just across the hall may be in deeper need of spiritual water only found in Christ.

Ask God to help you be a catalyst to provide it. As you work to create awareness and garnish funds for physical water to those across an ocean, ask God to also tune your heart to provide spiritual water to those around you.

Prepare

Leaders, use the following tips each week as talking points to encourage your group to maximize their specific Water:Walk efforts.

This week, you are just under two weeks out from your Water:Walk. Who do you know that you can invite to walk alongside you? Perhaps they’ll have time to raise their own funds. Perhaps not. The experience, however, is one that will be worth it. Who can come along and carry a jug alongside you? It may make a difference in their life to such a degree that they are inspired to get involved just like you.

Preparing for a walk is not an individual exercise. You should invite others to join your effort and experience the change as well.
God Equip

Passage: Walking on water
Key Point: Jesus invites us to join Him in His mission. He invites us to take part in His miracle. To do so effectively, we must maintain our focus on Him and trust that His equipping will always be enough.

For a fun way to prepare for your upcoming walk experience, fill a large jug or pitcher with water. Provide one small paper cup per participant. Play some catchy tunes from your mobile device. You’ll need a partner leader to man the phone. Start by filling a cup and beginning to pass it. When the music stops, the person holding the cup must say something they are incredibly grateful for and drink the water. They are now out of the circle. Continue filling and passing cups, starting and stopping music, and sharing moments of thanksgiving in this hot-potato style connect activity. When you are down to a single player, he or she should have a cup of water and share a thanksgiving blessing. Also allow the facilitators—whoever poured the water and whoever manned the music—to take a drink and share a story. For an added moment of fun, have the winner finish ALL of the remaining water.

Open: One of the ways we engage this missional opportunity is to reflect on why we do it and why we are able. We are able to love because Christ first loved us. We are able to give in response to how generously He has given to us. We are able to learn because He has called us and the Spirit guides us. This whole experience is an offering to God, but it is also a blessing from God.

Take a moment of transition to thank your group for sharing their thoughts of thanks and for being present. Pray and ask God to bless this final moment of the Water:Walk Bible study.

Introduction: The key characters of Peter’s water walking experience were certainly he and Jesus. However, the water in the story itself is a really important feature. It represented God’s power over creation. Peter walking on it represented his power in creation because of Christ. The waves represent a great deal, too. That’s where our study today takes us.

Ask: When did you learn to swim? Who taught you?

Share: Have you ever been afraid of water? Have you ever had a dangerous encounter with water?
Instruct participants to locate Matthew 14:22-33. Read the narrative aloud together.

Background: Just before this story, Jesus performed one of His most public miracles. Feeding 5,000 men plus women and children from just a few loaves of bread and two fish with 12 baskets of excess at the end of the meal was an incredible feat. After that catered time of teaching, Jesus dismissed the crowds and withdrew to the mountain for some quiet moments of prayer. The fourth watch of the night is approximately 3 a.m. - 6 a.m.[i] Jesus came walking out on the water and they interpreted it as a ghost, indicating a strong belief in the spiritual realm. Instead, it was Jesus. Seeking proof, Peter requested a chance to take part in the miracle.

Discuss:

· What seems strange about Peter’s response to Jesus in verse 28?
· How did Jesus prove Himself to Peter in that early morning encounter?

Explain: The Greek word for “came” in verse 25 is “erchomai” and it literally means “to make an appearance.”[ii] It refers to those moments when God (in this case Jesus) appears before people for the purpose of communicating a message.[iii]

Discuss:

· Knowing that this story follows the feeding of 5,000, what should Jesus’ disciples have already known about Him?
· Why do you think they still doubted?

Summarize: The storm prior to seeing Jesus was intense. The disciples, many of whom were raised on the sea as fishermen by trade, were afraid. They very well may have thought they would lose their lives that night due to the storm. For Peter, the waves represented literal fear, causing him to sink.

Discuss:

· What legitimate fears exist for people in the developing world regarding water access and poor sanitation?
· What legitimate fears exist in your life?
· Why was Peter’s fear of the waves an indication of little faith?

Explain: Our fears in life can be big and they can be very legitimate. A lack of water is a real fear. The possibility of death due to poor sanitation and lack of access to clean water is a literal fear. You have
legitimate fears as well. Peter’s fear in that moment was not unfounded. However, his failure to remember that Christ was more powerful than his fear indicated a lack of faith.

Say: By walking on water and inviting Peter to join Him, Jesus came with the purpose of communicating a message. What do you think the message was?

Ask: How did Peter’s, along with the other disciples’, views of Jesus change as a result of this water-walking experience?

Read Matthew 16:16.

Explain: This response from Peter occurred after the miraculous feeding and the water-walking encounter. It happened in response to an inquiry of Jesus regarding who He really was.

Ask: Why do you think Peter was able to be so confident in that moment?

Summarize: In response to Peter’s affirmation, Jesus labeled Peter’s faith and his ministry as that on which He would build His church. Remember the rock (petra) discussed in week one? Jesus’ design is to show us who He is and then call and equip us to be His followers, communicating that same message to the world. It’s not obvious in scripture if there was one specific encounter that seemed to be the final proof Peter needed to have strong faith rather than weak faith. However, this moment on the boat does seem to be a transitional one.

Share: When has God offered you a moment of distinct proof in His power or faithfulness that caused you to have stronger belief in Him?

Explain: Jesus doesn’t just demonstrate His power to us. He invites us to take hold of it to represent Him to the world. He gives us moments when we can “walk on water” and illustrate God’s power as well.

Read John 14:11-12.

Ask: What do these words from Jesus indicate about His plan to equip us and use us?

Explain: Following these words, Jesus gives the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:15-31). It’s by the power of the spirit that we can serve God and accomplish His good works. It won’t be without fear. But the power of Christ will always overcome those fears, if our faith remains true and strong.

Close with Acts 1:8.

Explain: We have power to provide testimony to the person of Christ because of the Spirit. Our walking on water or walking for water is just another opportunity to give attention to the person of Jesus and prove His salvation by our faith, our equipping, and our lives lived for Him.
Pray

The Bible study portion of this Water:Walk event is concluded. Take a few moments to pray for maximum impact. Pray that the community of onlookers around you will be pointed to Christ and inspired to join you in your mission to provide water and hope to communities in need in Africa. Pray for your co-laborers that God will bless their efforts and multiply the amount of resources you are able to raise and secure for people in need. Pray, finally, for lasting heart change in your own life and in the lives of others. Pray that this experience will illustrate great faith in God and provide opportunities for people here and also in Africa to understand that Jesus Christ truly is the Son of God.

Prepare

Your final week of preparation is a continuation of your prayer time. Pray a final prayer of thanksgiving. Thank God for the opportunity. Thank Him for calling you, equipping you for great things, and for allowing you to be part of His rescue mission for people caught in physical and spiritual captivity. Thank God in advance for the work He will do in your Water:Walk and the work He will continue to do as a result of this experience.


Walk for water so they don’t have to.