

Teaching Guide

Y O U T H

QuickPak

The Emotional Roller Coaster



session one

The Spine-tingler (Fear)

Mark 4:35-41

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Y O U T H



QuickPak

Youth QuickPak

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The Spine-Tingler: Fear

The Heart-Breaker: Love

The Fist of Fury: Anger

Runaway MINE Train: Jealousy

The Tear-Jerker: Sadness

Writer

The Emotional Roller Coaster QuickPak was written by Chris Cash.

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The Emotional Roller Coaster: The Spine-tingler (Fear)

Mark 4:35-41

Introduction

The winds on the lake were legendary to those in the area; they knew full well the power of the storms and what they could do to boats caught in the midst of them. The world of students is full of storms as well—fears of not being accepted, fears concerning their families and friends, fears of their current success and future plans, and fears brought on by uncertain world situations. The disciples were afraid and were probably surprised to find Jesus asleep through it all. They were probably wondering how he could be oblivious to the raging storm or, worse yet, thinking that he was aware but just didn't care. Youth may sometimes wonder those same things as they face the very real fears in their lives—wondering if God even notices, and if God does notice, does God care?

The disciples would soon learn that even the wind and waves obey Jesus. The same power that created the water, the air, and the wood that made the boat they were standing in was at work calming the storm. Their fear was replaced with awe as they realized the power Jesus had...and that Jesus did indeed care. In a sense, Jesus speaks the words he spoke to calm the storm—"Peace! Be still!"—into our lives today. The peace Jesus brings doesn't deny the existence of events, experiences, and even people that produce fear in our lives. Yet this peace can overcome and calm our fears, even if the circumstances or things that produce fear remain. We can face our fears when we trust in the One who calms the fearful storms and, perhaps more importantly, calms us in the midst of our storms.

Set It Up

Handout option:

Remind your group that everyone has certain fears and phobias.

Sometimes we are scared of things that might seem ridiculous to others.

Next, lead your group to complete the provided Phobias handout and explore the subject of fear. After giving students a chance to take their best guesses at the fears listed, go over the answers. Point out that some of the fears on the handout might seem ridiculous, but there may be others that we face ourselves (for instance, the fear of heights). Most of us are afraid of something. Sometimes we are frightened by things (bugs, snakes, needles), sometimes by situations (speaking in public, heights), or sometimes by other people. Even feeling out of control or not knowing the outcome of a situation can cause us to be afraid. While most of us don't suffer from an obscure phobia like metrophobia (the fear of poetry), we all face different fears in life. As we take a look at fear, let's try to be honest with ourselves and others about what makes us afraid.





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Media option:

Show an appropriate clip from the reality show *Fear Factor*. (Some local stations may broadcast repeat episodes of the show.) Contestants on this popular reality show participate in situations, activities, and tasks that would strike fear or disgust in most of us. After watching the clip or discussing a situation from the show, lead the group to discuss the following questions:

Why do you think such a show is popular with viewers?

Why do you think viewers would want to watch people in such scary situations?

Why do you think the contestants are willing to subject themselves to such scary situations?

Do you think you would be willing to be a contestant on *Fear Factor*? Why or why not?

Toss It Around

Begin by helping students reflect on the fact that some fears are temporary. Also emphasize that fear is not always a bad thing. Use the following questions:



Can you think of a fear you had as a child that you “grew out of”?

Is it possible that sometimes our life experiences and maturity bring us to a point where we aren't as fearful about certain things as we once were?

Can fear ever be a good thing? If so, how? (leading us to avoid dangerous situations, driving us to seek the help of others, etc.)

It's important for us to remember that some of our fears are only temporary. Additionally, some fears are not harmful or even all that bad. Yet we face plenty of fears in life that are bad or at least have harmful effects, and sometimes these fears seem as if they will never go away.

How can fear be a bad thing? (paralyze us into inaction; cause us to miss opportunities; lead to excessive worry and possibly affect our emotional, mental, and physical health)

What do you think are some of the most common fears youth have today? (Write individual responses where everyone can view them.)

How do you think youth in general cope with these fears? Is there anything in particular they do, think, change, etc.?



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Have someone read Mark 4:35-41.

What kinds of emotions do you think the disciples were feeling during the storm? While Jesus calmed the storm? After the storm was over?

What do you think the disciples were afraid of in this story?

Share: Not only were the disciples fearful that the storm would sink the boat, but they were also fearful that Jesus was either somehow oblivious to the danger or, worse, that he didn't care. Yet they would soon understand that Jesus was able to sleep through the storm because he wasn't afraid of it. They would be amazed that "even the wind and waves obey him."

If Jesus has such power over even the weather, what might that say about his ability to deal with the things that make us afraid? How might this affect our perspective on what we fear?

Jesus calms the storm in this story, removing the reason to be afraid. Does this mean Jesus will always calm the "storms" in our lives as well?

If this story does not guarantee that Jesus will get rid of everything we fear, what lessons might it still teach us?

Bring It Home Media option:

Find a copy of the song "Sometimes He Calms the Storm" to play for your students. (Written by Tony Wood & Kevin Stokes and originally recorded by Scott Krippayne on his Wild Imagination CD, the song has also been recorded by other artists and is available for purchase and download at several online music stores.) If possible, provide a way for your students to view the lyrics (on a handout, overhead, Powerpoint presentation) as they listen. If you are not able to obtain the song to play, consider using the song's lyrics as part of your discussion. (A simple Internet search for the song title will yield the full lyrics.)

Introduce the song by telling your students it relates to the story of Jesus calming the storm, but explain that it also makes an important point about the storms in our lives that *don't* get calmed.

The chorus of the song includes the following lyrics:

Sometimes He calms the storm with a whispered "Peace be still."

He can settle any sea, but it doesn't mean He will.

Sometimes He holds us close and lets the wind and waves go wild.

Sometimes He calms the storm, and other times He calms His child.

What does this song express about how Jesus helps us when we are fearful?

How do you feel about the idea that Jesus holds us close when the "storms" of life make us fearful?

What difference does it make to you knowing that Jesus can calm the storm or calm *us* in the midst of the storm?






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Concluding Prayer & Reflection:




To conclude the lesson, allow your students to spend time in prayer and reflection concerning their own fears. Give each student a slip of paper, and ask group members to write down privately the fears they face in their lives right now. Encourage them to be open and honest, as no one will read their papers. After giving them a few minutes to write down their fears, lead them in a time of guided prayer and reflection. Encourage them to get comfortable and close their eyes to help remove any distractions.


Start by asking them to imagine being a disciple on the boat, witnessing Jesus calming the storm. Ask them to imagine Jesus saying, “Peace! Be still!” to the raging storm and to envision the wind dying down and the lake waters becoming calm.

After giving them a moment to imagine that scene, remind them that Jesus is still saying the words “Peace! Be still!” in our lives. Ask them to pray about the things they wrote down, naming their fears to God in prayer and asking that these storms in their lives be calmed.


After giving them time to pray concerning the fears on their list, remind them that sometimes Jesus brings peace by removing the things that make us fearful, and sometimes he brings peace by holding us in the midst of the storms of fear. Encourage your students to imagine Jesus saying the words “Peace! Be still!” to them in the midst of their fears.



Conclude the time of prayer and reflection with a short prayer of thanks for God’s faithful presence, even in times of fear.



Conclude the lesson by encouraging your students to write the words “Peace! Be still!” in large letters over the fears they listed on their papers. Encourage them to take the papers home as a reminder that we can trust in the peace Jesus brings in the midst of our fears.



Handout

Nothing to Fear but Fear Itself?

A “phobia” is a fear of something in particular. For instance, “arachnophobia” is the fear of spiders. Explore some lesser known phobias by taking your best guess about the actual fears listed below:

1. Alektorophobia

- a. Fear of people named “Alex”
- b. Fear of chickens
- c. Fear of batteries
- d. Fear of heights

2. Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia

- a. Fear of hippopotamuses
- b. Fear of bright lights
- c. Fear of long words
- d. Fear of reptiles

3. Metrophobia

- a. Fear of poetry
- b. Fear of meter readers
- c. Fear of cities
- d. Fear of meteors

4. Phalacrophobia

- a. Fear of big crowds
- b. Fear of turtles
- c. Fear of becoming bald
- d. Fear of driving

5. Pupaphobia

- a. Fear of puppies
- b. Fear of puppets
- c. Fear of disease
- d. Fear of worms

6. Xenoglossophobia

- a. Fear of foreign languages
- b. Fear of xylophones
- c. Fear of fears
- d. Fear of glass

7. Pediophobia

- a. Fear of dolls
- b. Fear of pediatricians
- c. Fear of pedestrians
- d. Fear of pets

8. Ornithophobia

- a. Fear of ornaments
- b. Fear of birds
- c. Fear of orthodontists
- d. Fear of needles

9. Acrophobia

- a. Fear of fast speeds
- b. Fear of spiders
- c. Fear of dogs
- d. Fear of heights

10. Tonitrophobia

- a. Fear of thunder
- b. Fear of music
- c. Fear of heavy things
- d. Fear of getting lost

Correct answers:

1. B 2. C 3. A 4. C 5. B 6. A 7. A
8. B 9. D 10. A

Source of phobia information: www.phobialist.com
(accessed 10 July 2006).

