



STEP UP | 10-2-24

LARGE GROUP GAME: Pool Noodle Ninja

Go to the gym. Blindfold someone from each group with a pool noodle. They'll have to try to hit the other group members with their team shouting "next steps" from outside the boundaries.

*Our number one goal tonight is to **challenge every student to take a next step with Jesus** and encourage some to step up even more to take the "Next Level" challenge this year.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (45 minutes)

Walking on Water

Before you begin, have your group members answer this question

1. What's the scariest thing you've ever done?

Then, as a group, read Matthew 14:25-32.

1. Put yourself in the disciples' shoes. What would your reaction be if you saw something or someone floating on the water?
2. At this point, the boat the disciples were on was far from any land. The lake was deep, and the waves and wind were strong. What would your reaction be if Jesus called YOU to walk on that water?
3. What did Peter learn about stepping out in faith?
4. Do you think that Jesus can calm our fears? Why or why not?
5. Do you have any fears right now? What are some things you turn to when you're trying to get rid of your fears?

MATTHEW 14:25-32

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear. ²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." ²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water." ²⁹ "Come," he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Step-Up Challenge

There probably hasn't been a time when you had to step out of a boat into dangerous waters. But there probably has been a time when you were called to "step up." When it comes to our relationship with Jesus, stepping up can look a lot of different ways.

1. Brainstorm as a group as many ways as possible that a Jr. High student might step up or step out in faith? (start a Bible reading plan, invite friends to church, etc)
2. God is calling EVERYONE to a next step. What is one step you think God might be calling you to take?
 - a. You might have kids spread out for a few minutes alone to think about their own next step before coming back.
 - b. You could also have someone write down the step or goal that each kid has so you can check back in and/or celebrate their progress each week.

God is always calling people to take a new step in their relationship with Him. But there are some times we need to do more than take one step. This year we are doing something called the "**Next Level**" challenge for students looking to be challenged all year by one of our leaders who will work with them to make sure they're stepping up a number of different ways. If you want someone to walk alongside you and challenge you to step up each month, sign up and commit to the challenge! Interested students should be committed to attending JHM consistently, stepping up to a challenge in a different area each month and they should be willing to find time to connect with a leader at least twice each month. Students can sign up at wschurch.org/jhm (we'll also have cards for them to take home that night). Students should sign up by next Wednesday, October 9.

HIGH/LOW/GOD THING (15 minutes)

Depending on group size, you might split into even smaller (shepherding) groups for this. Have each student go around and identify a highlight of their week, a low point from their week and where they have seen God show up in their week. This time is to help them see God around them, to celebrate when something goes well and for them to be supported when they have had a rough week. If you're short on time, let them choose one of those three to share.

PRAY

Encourage one student to pray for the group, specifically praying for group members to consider stepping up to the next level with their faith in Jesus. If you wrote down each person's step, consider praying for each person and their goal specifically.