

## NINETEENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

YEAR A

### PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Lord, you are the God  
of power and gentleness.  
Open our eyes to find you  
in the ordinary things of life:  
in the love of our parents,  
in the happiness of friends,  
in the goodness of this world  
in which we live.  
And when things  
do not go so well,  
may we believe  
that you are with us always  
to support and care for us.  
We pray for this  
through Christ, our Lord.

### FOCUS OF THE READINGS:

The focus of our readings is the presence of God in the calming of the storm.

Elijah finds God, not in the storm, earthquake or fire, but in the quiet, gentle stilling of the storm.

The disciples, frightened by the storm, fail to recognize Jesus walking on the water. It is in the stilling of the storm that they recognize him and praise him.

FIRST READING: *1 Kings 19:9a, 11-13a*

*This is a reading from the first book of Kings.*

When the prophet Elijah heard  
that someone wanted to kill him,  
he went to Mount Horeb, the mountain of God,  
and stayed in a cave.

God came to Elijah and said,

“Go out and stand  
in front of the cave to meet me.”

Then there was a powerful, strong wind  
that split the mountain  
and broke the rocks into little pieces.

But God was not in the wind.

After the wind, there was an earthquake,  
but God was not in the earthquake.

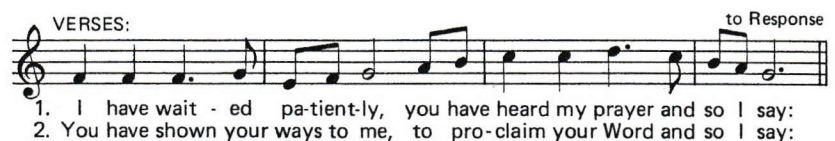
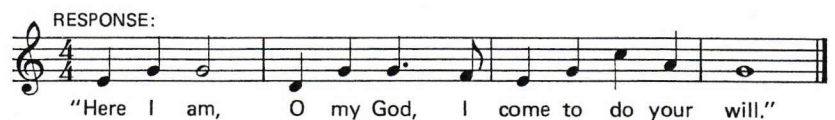
And after the earthquake, there was a fire,  
but God was not in the fire.

After the fire, there was a gentle breeze  
like a quiet whisper.

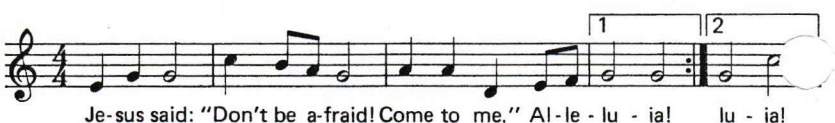
And when Elijah heard it,  
he covered his face with a scarf  
and stood at the door of the cave to meet God.

*The Word of the Lord.*

RESPONSE: *Psalm 40*



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



## GOSPEL: *Matthew 14:22-33*

*This is a reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

After Jesus had given the bread to the crowd of people,  
and everyone had eaten all they wanted,  
Jesus told the disciples  
to sail the boat to the other side of the lake.  
Then he went up into the mountains to pray,  
and he stayed there alone until late into the night.

By this time,  
the disciples were already out in the middle of the lake,  
and their boat was being tossed about by a strong wind.  
During the night, Jesus came walking  
across the water toward the boat,  
but when the disciples saw him walking on the water,  
they were terrified, and they screamed,

"It's a ghost!"

Jesus said,

"Don't be afraid! It is I!"

Peter said to Jesus,

"Lord, if it's really you,  
tell me to walk to you across the water."

Jesus said,

"Come on, Peter!"

So Peter got out of the boat  
and started walking toward Jesus.  
But while he was walking on the water,  
he saw the waves and the wind,  
and he became so frightened  
that he started sinking into the water.  
And he cried out,

"Lord, save me!"

Jesus reached out, caught hold of Peter's hand,  
and said,

"Peter, you have so little faith!  
Why didn't you believe?"

When Jesus and Peter got into the boat,  
the wind stopped.

The other disciples said to Jesus,

"Truly, you are the Son of God."

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## REFLECTING ON THE READINGS WITH CHILDREN:

Help the children visualize and  
imagine the Gospel scene:

- the darkness of the night,
- the storm, waves, wind,
- the disciples in a boat being tossed about,
- their fear, which is quite natural.

Next help them recall what  
happened.

- Where was Jesus before he walked on the water?
- What time was it when Jesus began to walk toward the boat?
- What do you think the disciples were doing in the lake in the middle of the night?
- What did the disciples think when they saw someone walking on the water?
- What did Jesus say? What did Peter say?
- Then what happened?
- Why did Peter begin to sink?
- What did Jesus do and say when Peter cried out, "Lord, save me"?
- Then what happened?

Something changed between the  
beginning of the story and the end.  
What changed? Why?

What does this story tell us about  
Jesus? What does he want us to  
know from this story?

The children should leave know-  
ing that we all have "storms" in life,  
we all have fears, and Jesus wants us  
to have faith in him; he will always  
take us by the hand and help us.

## Nineteenth Sunday of the Year

### Have faith

#### INTRODUCTION

Time and time again, Jesus shows us that when our faith and belief in him are strong, then anything is possible, even walking on water!

#### SIGN OF THE CROSS

#### LIGHT THE CANDLES

Light the candles and say together:

May the light of Jesus shine in our lives.

#### SORRY

During a short period of silent contemplation, encourage the children to think about the events of the past week and to examine their consciences. Ask a child to choose a "sorry color" prayer, which can be read aloud by themselves or the group as a whole.

#### GLORIA

#### GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Alleluia, alleluia.

Open our ears, Jesus, to hear your words.

Fill us with your spirit

so that we will understand them.

Alleluia, alleluia.

#### GOSPEL (MATTHEW 14:22-33)

Before going up to the hills to pray alone, Jesus told his disciples to sail to the other side of the lake. As night fell, the wind grew stronger and the disciples' boat was tossed about by the waves. Suddenly they saw someone coming towards the boat, walking on the water, and they were terrified, because they thought it was a ghost! But Jesus called to them, "Don't be afraid, it's me!"

Peter shouted to Jesus, "Lord, if that really is you, tell me to come to you across the water." "Come!" said Jesus.

So Peter climbed out of the boat and lowered himself onto the water. Looking straight at Jesus, he began to walk towards him; but as he moved further from the boat and felt the strength of the wind, he grew afraid. Suddenly he began to sink and he cried out, "Save me, Jesus!" As Jesus

reached out his hand and pulled Peter to safety, he said, "Why did you not trust me Peter? Is your belief so weak?" When they got back to the boat, the other disciples knelt before Jesus and said, "You are truly the son of God."

#### DISCUSSION

Imagine how frightened the disciples must have been to suddenly see someone walking on top of the water towards them on a dark stormy night. They probably cried out in fear and tried to hide somewhere on the boat.

To calm their fears, Jesus said, "Do not be afraid." He said this on several other occasions when the disciples were frightened by some of the amazing things they saw.

What did Peter do when he heard Jesus calling him to come? Peter climbed out of the boat and began to walk towards Jesus! Can an ordinary person normally walk on water? We can swim in water, and we can lie and float in the water; but if we try to stand without anything to make us float, we only sink.

When Peter felt the strength of the wind, he began to sink beneath the waves, because for just a moment his faith and belief weakened, and he felt afraid. Sometimes we are like Peter, full of courage and enthusiasm at first, but often let down by our lack of faith and by fear of the unknown.

Peter was an ordinary person like us, and he would often let Jesus down because his faith was weak. Yet Jesus is always forgiving and ready to reach out his hand to save us, just as he reached out that night and saved Peter on the lake.

#### ACTIVITY

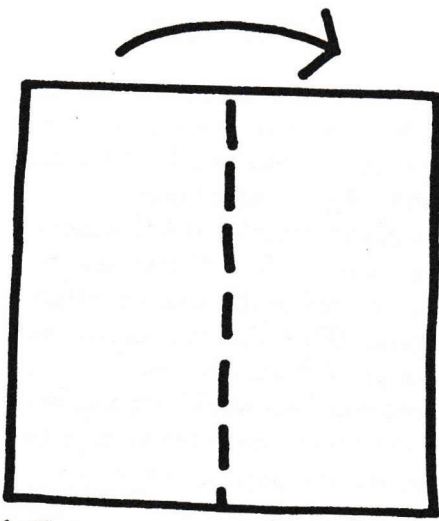
Use squares of colored paper to make boats with masts and sails.

#### CREED

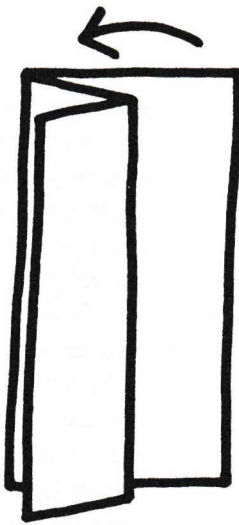
#### CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, give us the courage and faith of Peter,  
whose belief was so strong  
that he could walk towards Jesus  
across the lake.

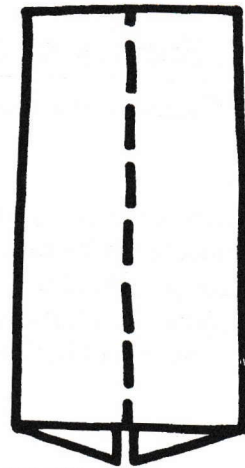
In times of weakness,  
reach out your hand to us  
and rescue us from our doubts.



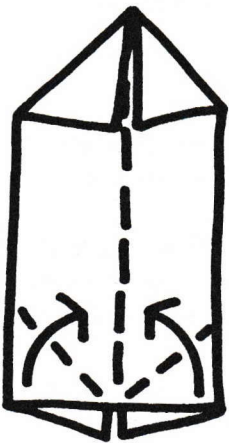
1. Fold square of paper in half.



2. Fold edge of paper back to meet folded edge.



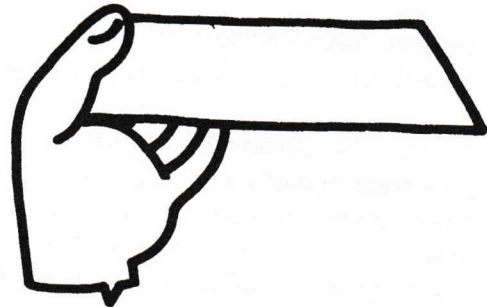
3. Turn paper over and repeat action. Then unfold paper.



4. Fold corners into middle crease.

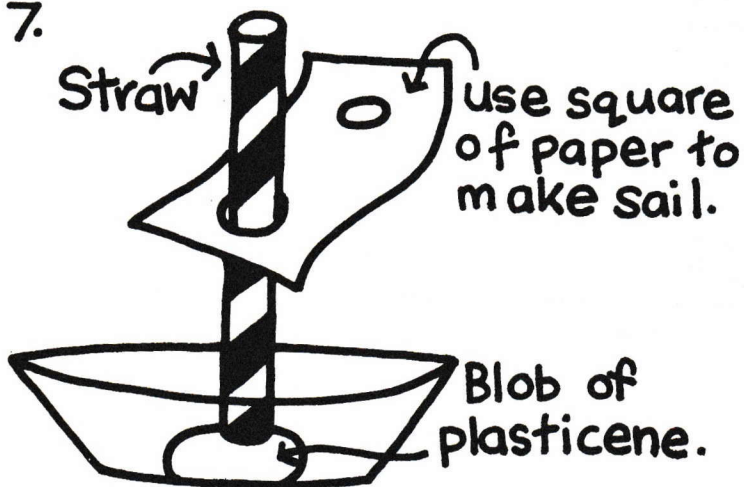


5. Fold right edge over to folded edge.

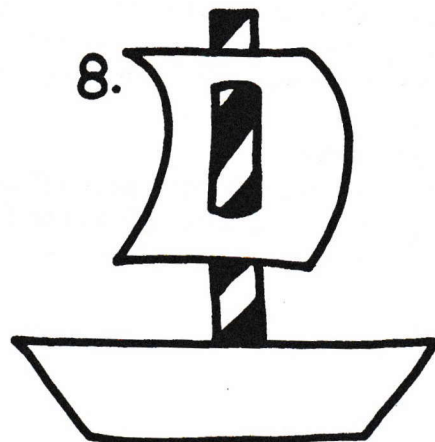


6. Put fingers inside and push corners down with thumbs to make boat 'stand'.

7.



8.



# Nineteenth Sunday of the Year

## Focus

A paper boat arranged on a blue cloth to represent the sea.

## Introduction

Our lives are rather like fishing boats floating on the sea. When our lives are calm and uncomplicated we sail along happily with little to trouble or test us. Everyone experiences stormy times in their lives, when we are tossed about and can lose our way. At such times our faith in God can be sorely tested as we struggle to make sense of what is happening in our lives. In today's Gospel we hear how Peter's faith in Jesus is put to the test on the Sea of Galilee.

## Gloria

## Gospel Acclamation

Light the Gospel candle and sing Acclamation 8.

## Gospel

A reading from the Gospel of St Matthew (14:22-33)  
(See page 375.)

## Reflection

*Why do you think Jesus left the safety of the shore to be with his disciples?*

The Sea of Galilee can experience fierce storms that blow up very quickly. Perhaps Jesus became concerned for the safety of his friends who had set off earlier to cross the sea in a boat.

*How did he make his way towards the disciples' boat?*

*What did the disciples think when they saw the figure of Jesus coming towards them?*

The sight before them seemed totally unbelievable – after all, no man can walk on water (they still did not recognise Jesus as the Son of God), so they thought that they were seeing a ghost or that the early morning light was playing tricks with their eyes! Whatever thoughts raced through their minds, they were certainly terrified by what they saw!

*How were the disciples reassured?*

Jesus called out to them and told them they had nothing to fear.

*Which disciple decided to step out of the boat and go to Jesus?*

Peter often acted on the spur of the moment and acted with less caution than the other disciples. Perhaps in his excitement at recognising his Master walking across the water, he wanted to go and greet him. Peter must have had enormous faith and trust in Jesus to step out of the boat and on to the water.

*Did Peter manage to walk across the sea?*

*What made his faith waiver so that he began to sink?*

When Peter felt the strength of the storm raging around him and the force of the wind, he felt afraid and uncer-

tain. As soon as he began to doubt, he found himself beginning to sink beneath the waves, and he cried out to Jesus to save him from drowning. Just like Peter, we all have times in our lives when our faith waivers or 'wobbles' and we are filled with uncertainty and doubt. At such times it can be hard to believe and follow what our faith teaches.

*What did Jesus do when he heard Peter's cries for help?*

He reached out at once to take his hand and lead him back to the safety of the boat. In moments of doubt or stormy, difficult times in our lives, we too can call out to Jesus for help, knowing that he will reach out in the same way to save us from fear and disaster.

*Having watched all this high drama on the sea, what did the other disciples think?*

They realised that Jesus really had walked across the water, and that Peter's faith in his Master had allowed him to step from the boat and cross the water towards him. As Jesus and Peter climbed into the safety of the boat and the sea became calm, the disciples finally recognised that Jesus was truly the Son of God living as a man amongst them.

## Activity

Photocopy the templates on to thin card. Cut out and colour to make bright bookmarks to remind the children of today's Gospel story.

## Intercessions

As brothers and sisters in one loving family, together let us pray to our heavenly Father:

We pray for our brothers and sisters in faith throughout the world.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the leaders of governments and nations.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for peace and reconciliation in our lives.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We pray for the sick, and all who suffer in mind or body.

Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Knowing that our heavenly Father is listening,

In the silence of our hearts

Let us share our own unspoken prayers with him.

*Silence*

Loving Father,

who knows and loves us so well,

listen to the prayers of your children,

and help us to grow in love and faith.

We make these prayers through Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

