

WEEK 1 LESSON GUIDE

Miracles

BIG IDEA

Jesus does everything out of love.

BIBLE

Jesus Turns Water into Wine:
John 2:1–12; 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

ABOUT THIS WEEK

When you step into an aquarium, you realize how water is more than just something to drink—it can be a home, a place to eat, and so much more. This week, we'll look at the story of when Jesus turned water into wine at a wedding. Jesus showed the guests that water can be so much more than we think, and his miracle helps us see that **Jesus does everything out of love.**

LARGE GROUP TIME

Hey everyone! Guess what? This month is going to be super cool, even ... *miraculous!* We're going to explore the amazing things in the ocean, like all the colorful fish and awesome mysteries hiding under the sea. But you know what's even more amazing than all of that? It's the miracles Jesus did, especially those with water and fish.

We'll learn all about these miracles and see how they show us how to be like Jesus, who is like the most special water ever—the "Living Water." So get ready for a month full of fun, where we'll discover cool things about the ocean and learn how to be a bit more like Jesus along the way.

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

ACTIVITY | Deep Sea Disguises

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you will lay out different-sized pillowcases, blankets, pieces of fabric, whatever you can find. These will serve as "hideouts" of various sizes. Play fun music and have kids roam around. Pause the music and yell "Shark!" at which point kids have to rush to a sheet and place it over their heads. The sheet must fully cover their head to be safe. Otherwise, they are out. Take away a sheet and play again. Keep going until only a few kids are left. To keep kids who are out engaged, you can allow them to rearrange the hideouts while the music plays. Consider marking spots on the ground using painter's tape for smaller spaces and have kids stand on designated spots when the music stops. Peel off a piece of tape at a time to whittle down the safety zones.*
 - ✳ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *To accommodate Deaf or hard-of-hearing kids, hold up a shark picture or stuffed animal when you yell, "Shark!"*
- God created some pretty fascinating creatures in the ocean and gave them unique ways to hide and be safe from predators. We are surprised by new discoveries from the deep ... but what's cooler is that God cares so much about all of these creatures, from Great White Sharks to the smallest fish! That doesn't even come close to how much God loves you and me.
- We'll talk a little more about how Jesus, God's son, always showed that kind of intense love for us all.

ACTIVITY | Fill Up The Jars

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, prepare as many buckets and cups as teams you intend to make. Fill up a bucket with water at the starting line for each team and place a plastic cup inside. Each team has to take turns scooping out a cup of water to take to the opposite side, where there is a clear container with a small opening (like milk jugs or two-liter soda bottles). The first team to fill up their container to the line you've marked with a permanent marker wins! Place your buckets and jars in bins to protect them from spills, and protect your floors with towels or tarps. If you want to play without water, have kids fill up the containers with uncooked rice or beans.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Have preteens travel to their container in different ways while holding their cup of water. Every fifteen seconds, call out a way they need to travel. For example, walk backward, skip, tiptoe, walk sideways, gallop, march, lunge, swirl, hop.
 - ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Have a sensory water table or bin available for kids to interact with instead. Put in various sized cups, spoons, or ladles along with a few larger plastic jars. Place a tarp or towels underneath to catch spills. Let kids engage with the water and fill up the jars with the provided tools.
- Filling up jars with water isn't as easy as it seems, right? Of course, we're surrounded by water at an aquarium, so the aquarists—people who care for sea life and the exhibits—usually load up their buckets with food for the animals.
- In today's Bible story, Jesus instructs some people to fill jars with water for a special reason. Let's find out more together!

POLL | Fake Or Facts?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have two small fish tanks (any clear container will do) and label each with a removable or dry-erase marker. One will say "FAKE," and the other will say "FACTS." Give each kid a few pieces of [glowing fish tank gravel](#) (or jelly beans). They will use this to vote for the correct answer by placing the gravel in the corresponding fish tank for their selected answers. Consider adding water about halfway to avoid loud clunks as kids drop their rocks into the tanks.
- **Which of these are facts, and which are fake?**
 - **Dolphins can recognize themselves in the mirror.** *Facts.* Dolphins, chimpanzees, magpies, elephants, and pigs can all recognize their own reflections. Cats, for example, can't because the animal in the mirror doesn't "smell" like a cat.
 - **Killer whales will kill people.** *Fake.* Killer whales (orcas) only have this name because they hunt other whales or dolphins. But they don't eat people.
 - **Octopuses have three hearts.** *Facts.* Octopuses do have three hearts. Two hearts pump blood to its arms, while the third takes care of its body.
 - **Sharks have to keep swimming to stay alive.** *Facts.* Sharks suffocate when they stop swimming. Water has to constantly flow through their gills so they get oxygen.
 - **Dolphins don't have ears.** *Fake.* Dolphins have ears. They're just hard to see because these animals don't have outer auricle ears. You can only see small holes from the outside.
 - **Chairs are more dangerous than sharks.** *Facts.* Worldwide, more people sustain major injuries because of accidents at home—like falling from a chair—than from shark attacks. If you only look at the numbers, chairs are, in fact, more dangerous than sharks.
- Look how much love and care God put into uniquely creating each animal. We can experience God's love every day, too. Just look around the room. We can see God's love in everyone here. Is it fake or fact? *Facts!*

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | John 2:1–12 (Jesus Turns Water Into Wine)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** This month, consider dressing up—or have a separate storyteller dress up—as a marine biologist sharing fun ocean tidbits and connecting them to the Bible story. Your diving gear could include wearing all black (sweats are okay), goggles, a snorkel, and flippers. Optional: Prepare a gallon-sized container (or fishbowl) to help kids imagine the amount of water in the wine jugs.
 - ✦ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Creating different modalities to acclimate kids who learn differently is very useful. You could incorporate this in your teaching by using methods such as singing a song (musical), drawing a chart or playing a matching game (visual), using hand motions (bodily or kinesthetic), presentation (verbal), discussing in a small group (interpersonal), filling out individual worksheets (intrapersonal), or conducting nature walks through several stations (naturalistic).
- Hey everyone, welcome to the Miraculous Marine Institute, where we study the miracle of ocean life. One thing I've learned from my time as a marine biologist here is that family is important to a lot of sea creatures. It's amazing how we can see God's love in all of creation.
- That reminds me of a time when Jesus did something purely out of love for his family and friends. It comes from the book of John, and it all starts with a grand celebration ...
- **Let's read John 2:1–2.**
 - Over 2,000 years ago, there was a party going on, and not just any party. This was a wedding celebration.
 - **Raise your hand if you've been to a wedding.** Me too! I love dancing at weddings (*do a few silly dance moves*), and I love eating all the fancy food.
 - Weddings are a great way to celebrate two people who want to spend the rest of their lives together. As guests, we get to witness all the joy and love on the couple's faces and on the faces of everyone there.
- **Now let's read John 2:3.**
 - Back during the days of Jesus, weddings lasted multiple days. That's a *lot* of celebrating. This particular wedding had been going on not one day, not two days, but three days. Jesus was among the guests on the list, along with his mother and friends.
 - But then, something happened! The wedding started running out of wine. Now wine was a big part of wedding festivities—and also one of the main beverages—so if they ran out now, they wouldn't have enough to last them the entire length of the wedding celebrations. The guests would have been so unhappy, and the people hosting the wedding would have been so embarrassed.
 - Jesus' mom saw what was happening. She wanted to do something but knew she could do nothing. So she reached out to the one person who could do something about it ... her son.
- **Let's check out John 2:4–5.**
 - Mary probably didn't know exactly what Jesus would do, but she was confident he could help. But Jesus said to her that it's not time for him to begin showing the world who he is yet ... that he's more than just *her* son. He's God's son!
 - Even though Jesus said this, he chose to do what she asked. There really wasn't a good reason to do anything ... except love. Jesus chose to act because he loved his family and friends. So he did something nobody else could do. A miracle.
- **Let's keep reading John 2:6–8.**
 - Jesus told the servants to fill up six jars, each of them having a 20-30 gallon (75–115 liters) capacity. That's a lot of water! That's about as much water in some of our fish aquariums here.

- But that wasn't even the problem. The wedding was running out of wine, not water. How were all these enormous jars of water going to solve anything? If anyone was puzzled, they didn't say anything. They did as they were told. And afterward, they poured out some of the water and gave it to the master of the banquet to taste.
- **Let's find out what he had to say in John 2:9–10.**
 - Aside from the servants who helped by filling up the containers with all that water, Jesus, his mom, and his friends, no one else at the wedding had any idea what had just happened.
 - But somehow, these jars of water became known as the best wine ever. This was *miraculous!* The best part is ... Jesus was only getting started.
- **Let's read John 2:11–12.**
 - What he did here as his first miracle might feel so small when compared to the amazing miracles he would do afterward. But it's incredible that Jesus spent the time and revealed who he was to show his love for the people who were celebrating a big day.
 - Jesus started out as a guest at the wedding but then played a much bigger role and saved the party!
- Well, it's time for me to check on the sea turtles in the Deep Sea exhibit. I hope you come back to visit me soon. I have so many more miraculous things to share.

BIG IDEA | Jesus does everything out of love.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *You will need six plastic clam shells ([like these](#)) and ping pong balls to be the pearls. You can also use clamshell to-go containers ([like these](#)) instead. Write one word from the Big Idea with a permanent marker on each "pearl," then place the pearls inside the clam shells. You can secure the clams closed with tape or rubber bands if needed. Place the clams at the bottom of a large clear plastic tote container and invite a few kids to come up and dig for the clams, taking the pearls out of the clams. Level it up by lining the bottom of the container with sand and adding water (you will use this for the Big Idea every week this month). Once all the "pearls" are found, put them in order and say the Big Idea together.*
- **Do you know how pearls are formed?** It's actually pretty *miraculous!* An irritant, such as a small sea creature or even a grain of sand, will enter the clam. The clam then puts out a solution to cover the irritant, and the pearls grow over time. They are completely covered in this solution that takes on an iridescent glow.
- This reminds us of our Bible story. Even though the situation could have turned out badly, Jesus covered it all with an amazing solution. Maybe not the shiny kind, but it did make the people feel happy and loved.
- Let's say the Big Idea together: **Jesus does everything out of love.**

ACTIVITY | Octopus Tag

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *In this version of tag, the person who is "it" is the "octopus." Have kids line up on one side of the room and cross to the other side without getting tagged by the "octopus." If tagged, they become a "tentacle" and have to stand in the spot where they got tagged to help tag people as they keep crossing sides. The last person to become a "tentacle" is the new "octopus."*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Show [this clip](#) from "My Octopus Teacher" where an octopus recognizes and hugs the human she has bonded with. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
- Thanks for helping out the solo octopus in the game. An octopus is generally an antisocial creature—they like to be alone. But even then, research shows that they can form a bond with others, like with humans. They do have three hearts, after all.
- Connecting with others is a special gift from God that reminds us that we need each other. Sometimes we need help from someone else or even lots of people. Sometimes we are the ones to provide help. When people help us or when we help others, it shows them they are important to us ... it shows love.

- That's what Jesus did at the wedding in today's Bible story. He saw that he was needed to help remedy a problem. He listened to his mom and showed that obedience can be an act of love. It was no big deal for Jesus because he could do anything, but it was huge for everyone else!
- **Jesus does everything out of love.**

OBJECT LESSON | Trick Or Miracle?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Perform this little illusion as demonstrated in [this video](#). You will need two clear glasses and red powder ([fake blood capsules](#) or dark red food dye). Let the kids know you are going to show them how to turn water into wine. If possible, have kids try it with you.
- **Do you think that was a miracle?** Not even close! Here, let me show you how I did it.
- What I did was an illusion. I used some cool supplies and showmanship to convince you that I did turn water into wine. But I didn't. I can't even drink this. It's gross!
- But what Jesus did were real miracles. Miracles don't make sense to us because miracles come from God, and we can't explain them. Jesus really did turn water into wine, though. There were no hidden tricks up his sleeves.
- When Jesus turned water into wine, it was a miracle Jesus was able to do with the power of God. Out of all the miracles Jesus could have started out with, he chose to do something that seemed pretty small and mattered to only a few people. He didn't do it for show, but it did show that Jesus cared about the people he was there to celebrate with.
- **Jesus does everything out of love.**

SCRIPTURE | 1 Corinthians 13:1–7

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read this passage or invite a volunteer to read.
- **What is one word you hear over and over again in this Scripture?** Love.
- This passage reminds us that God calls us all to love. Our motivations for everything we do should be out of our love for God. When we love God, our actions toward others are also loving. We could have all the treasures and accomplishments in the world, but all of it would mean nothing if we did not have love.
- **What are some things this passage says that love is?** It's patient, kind, rejoices with the truth, protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.
- **What are some things this passage says love isn't?** It's not envious, boastful, proud, dishonoring of others, self-seeking, easily angered, keeping records of wrongs, or delighting in evil.
- As you hear each of these words that describe love, doesn't every single one describe Jesus, too? If love were a person, it would be Jesus. It is Jesus!
- Jesus didn't have to turn water into wine. He could have just said, "Sorry everyone, nothing I can do. I guess the party's over." But he didn't. By giving the gift of this first miracle, Jesus showed his love along with his power.
- **Jesus does everything out of love,** and we can, too.

VIDEO | *Miraculous*, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | Big Idea Deep Dive

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play some ocean sounds like [this](#), as you discuss the Big Idea with kids and have them reflect on the prompts given below.

- Let's dive deeper into what we learned today.
- **What part of today's Bible story is the most memorable to you? Why?**
- The ocean is a source of life to all the fish and creatures in the sea, and love is the source of life Jesus shares with us, God's human creations.
- Our Big Idea today is **Jesus does everything out of love**. Sometimes it's difficult to do something out of love, especially when it's something we don't want to do.
 - **Think of a time when someone asked for your help, but you hesitated (or didn't do it at all) because you didn't feel like it.**
 - **What happened?**
 - **What might you do differently next time?**
 - **How would helping out show them love?**
- It's okay not to want to do something ... it happens. Sometimes it's not the right time because you're in the middle of something else important. Sometimes we simply don't feel like it.
- But whenever we feel this way, we can pause, take a deep breath, and remember that our actions should be guided by God's love. When we remember that, it's easy to press pause on our game or TV show, put down the toy we're playing with, or tell a friend you'll talk to them later and go help where you're needed.
- If you're ever unsure about what to do, think about Jesus. **Jesus does everything out of love.**

RESPONSE | Mural Of Miracles

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Put up a long piece of butcher paper on a wall or the ground. Decorate it as an ocean theme. Leave lots of space because kids will be adding to this each week with the [printables](#) provided. If you're in a mobile space, you can roll up the paper and unpack it again next week. You may choose to show [this video](#) of turtles helping others before having kids respond and share. Then, have kids fill out their printables and cut out the shapes. For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Speaking of how Jesus does everything out of love this week, take the time to encourage your preteens about the various ways they like to show love to those around them. Some may prefer to be more conspicuous in how they show love, while others might prefer to work behind the scenes to show love. Spend time with preteens to see how they can help out in your ministry as a way to serve out of love.
- It's *miraculous* that even turtles can sense when one of their own is in trouble and needs help. They may not love the way humans do, but it helps us remember that God's love can be found in all of creation. The hawksbill sea turtle even has a shell that's shaped like a heart. What a marine miracle!
- **On your turtle handout, write or draw one way you can do something out of love for someone else. How is that an act of love?**
- Add your turtle to the mural and make a plan to do as Jesus does: **Jesus does everything out of love.**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 77:14 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples."**

PRAYER

- God, thank you for giving us the miracle of Jesus. Help us to remember this week to be there for our friends and family and see when help is needed. When we help others, it reflects the love of Jesus. Help us to do everything out of love. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

● SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS

- **What was Jesus asked to do at the wedding?** *His mother asked him to fix the problem of the wedding host running out of wine.*
- **How did Jesus solve the problem?** *He told the workers to fill jars with water, and they became wine.*
- **How does this miracle show that Jesus does everything out of love?** *He didn't have to do anything but choose actions that showed his love. He obeyed his mother, and he helped make the wedding celebration better.*
- **Read 1 Corinthians 13:4. How does this verse describe love? How do these words describe Jesus?** *(Possible answers: patient, kind, humble, not self-seeking, protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres. Jesus was exactly this loving in everything he did.)*

● APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **Is it sometimes difficult to show love to your parents or family members? What about people outside of your family? Why?**
- **What do you think it means to do something out of love? Can you think of one way you can do this?**
- **What is one way God has shown you the miracle of love in your life?**

ACTIVITY | Color-Changing Jar

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids take their copy of the [printable](#) and fold it in half like a card. Have them color the inside page blue using crayons, markers, or watercolor paint. Have them cut out the middle portion of the jar, then tape the card closed on the side and bottom. Then, taking a half sheet of purple or red construction paper, trim the edges so that they slide into the opening at the top, turning the "water" into "wine." See a worked example [here](#).*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Make a craft like [this](#) except have preteens cut out a jug or jar shape from one cup, and color half of the other cup blue (for water) and half of it red (for wine). They can write the memory verse and Big Idea on the outside of the outer cup.*
- Today, we learned that Jesus turned water into wine to demonstrate his power as the son of God, his love for God's people, and his concern for the things they cared about.
- **Jesus does everything out of love,** and we should too.