



Bible bit  
Matthew 8:23-27

Are you a sailor? Ever been on a boat? Maybe you know how rough the sea can get. If you don't, I'm sure you can imagine. All that raw power, all that danger, all that fear. But Jesus put a stop to it with just a few words. What do you think of that?

# STRESS SURVIVAL SURVEY

Have you ever been in a real-life scary, stressful situation? Was there anyone there to help or rescue you? How did it feel?

You're trekking across the Rocky Mountains when suddenly an enormous, famished grizzly bear leaps out from behind a bush and starts lumbering towards you, growling hideously.

Do you...

- a) collapse in a heap and cry?
- b) climb a nearby tree and wait for Bruno to lumber away again?
- c) raise your hand and say, 'Hellooo, I'm walking here!'

You're deep-sea diving when a lobster snips your air tubes in half with its pincers.

Do you...

- a) lie down in the sand and use your last mouthful of air to sing your own funeral aria?
- b) take a deep breath and struggle upwards towards the boat?
- c) find some sticking plaster in your first-aid pouch, casually stick your air tube back together again, then find the lobster and drag it back to the surface for lunch?

You're picnicking in a park when suddenly storm clouds gather and rain, thunder and lightning start right overhead.

Do you...

- a) put earplugs in and have a nap under the rug?
- b) run for the nearest safe shelter and wait out the storm?
- c) rig up a DIY lightning conductor with the thermos flask and apply electrodes to your mate in the hope that he'll turn into a hideous monster or stop being a hideous monster?

You're orbiting Mars in Klutznik 4 when you're hit by a shower of meteorites.

Do you...

- a) hide behind the pilot seat?
- b) gallantly navigate your way through the storm?
- c) collect the meteorites in a bag and use them for a game of interstellar marbles?

You're in a shopping centre when a crazed shop assistant runs amok with a plastic cricket bat.

Do you...

- a) disguise yourself behind a pot plant till somebody arrests her?
- b) alert a good-looking police officer?
- c) rugby-tackle her, seize her cricket bat and knock her out in a sensitive and caring way?

Mostly As  
Cluck cluck.

Mostly Bs  
Blow me down with a bubble gun, you're soooo sensible.

Mostly Cs  
You've been watching too many 'unsuitable' movies.

## JONAH AND JESUS

Matthew's first readers would have known the story of Jonah back to front. Compare the stories of Jonah and of Jesus calming the storm. What's the same? What's different?

The story of Jonah: Jonah 1-4	Bible ref	The calming of the storm: Matthew 8:23-27	Bible ref
The storm blew up because Jonah disobeyed God.		The storm blew up because of <i>the weather conditions.</i>	
The storm stopped because Jonah was thrown overboard.		The storm stopped because	
Jonah spent three days inside a great fish, then was thrown up onto land.		Jesus spent three days in	
The foreign pagan city of Nineveh was saved because of Jonah's message.		was saved because of Jesus' message.	
Jonah was a great prophet.		Jesus was	

## UNANSWERABLE QUESTIONS

Why does God let Christians go into storms in the first place? Wouldn't it be better if he didn't let storms happen?

What about times when God doesn't stop the storms and bad things happen to people?

What would have happened to the boat if the disciples hadn't woken Jesus up?

Take a few moments to think about what's rocking your boat at the moment - situations that scare you, where you can't see the way through, where it seems impossible that you're going to pull through OK, like the disciples felt in the boat. Write them in the storm clouds. Then quietly read the story in Matthew 8:23-27 again. What does God want to tell you about your stormy situations?

It's a stormy day at the boating lake.

'You'd better call in that last boat, Fred,' says George. So Fred calls through the loudspeaker: 'Boat number 99, come in please.'

'That's odd,' says George. 'We've only got 70 boats.'

Fred thinks for a minute, then lifts up the loudspeaker again and calls, 'Boat number 66, are you OK?'