

stories

from the water's edge

 the water's edge
C H U R C H

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How to Use This Guide

Stories from The Water's Edge is a four-week invitation to meet Jesus in ordinary places.

Again and again in the Gospels, Jesus shows up at the shoreline—teaching, calling, feeding, restoring. He meets people in noisy places, empty places, not-enough places, and places they would rather avoid. This guide is meant to help you meet Him there, too.

The goal is not to finish a workbook.
The goal is not to impress God.
The goal is not to have all the right answers.

The goal is to slow down, listen for the voice of Jesus, tell the truth about your life, and resemble Jesus more.

Start with Prayer

Begin with the Stories from The Water's Edge Prayer. Pray it often. Use it at the start of your week, before House Church, or anytime you need to come back to center.

Each Week Follows the Same Rhythm

Each chapter is built to guide you through a simple, repeatable rhythm:

at the water's edge introduces the Scripture and the heart of the week.

the current gives the big idea.

a shoreline rhythm helps you reflect in community or on your own.

scripture in the boat invites you to read slowly and pay attention.

conversations by the shore helps you talk honestly with others—or with God.

creating ripples helps you name one practical response for the week.

prayers from the shore gives you simple prayers to carry with you.

seeking the deep offers a short Bible reading plan for the week.

stepping into the water gives a few small ways to live this out in everyday life.

a question to carry along the shore gives you one question to keep in front of you all week.

**You do not need to do everything.
This guide is meant to be helpful, not heavy.**

For House Churches

Use the weekly guide as a conversation companion. Start by slowing down. Read the passage out loud. Let people answer honestly. You do not need to get through every question. Pick the ones that lead to the most openness, reflection, and prayer.

Try to leave time for *creating ripples*. That is where people move from insight to response. The goal is not just to talk about Jesus, but to notice where He is inviting each person to trust, obey, receive grace, or take a step of faith with courage.

Then pray for each other. Keep it simple. Keep it real.

For Individual Reflection

This guide also works well on your own. Read one week at a time. Move slowly. Write in the blanks. Sit with the questions. Pray the prayers. Let the page become a shoreline between you and Jesus. You do not need a group to use this well. You just need to be authentic and willing to seek God at the water's edge.

If possible, share something you are learning with a friend, spouse, or someone from church. Growth tends to deepen when we bring another person into it.

A Few Important Things to Remember

Keep it simple.

Choose one or two practices each week, not all of them.

Keep it real.

You do not have to sound spiritual. Just tell the truth.

Keep it small.

Small and steady steps are better than big intentions that never leave the dock.

Keep it grace-filled.

If you miss a day, do not try to catch up. Just begin again.

This guide is not about trying harder. It is about making room.

Making room to hear Jesus.

Making room to trust Him.

Making room to receive His grace.

Making room to follow Him a little farther into the life He has for you.

So come to the shore.

Bring your real life with you.

And expect Jesus to meet you there.



stories from the water's edge prayer

Jesus -

Meet me at the water's edge.
When my heart is noisy, slow me down.
When I feel empty, find me there.
When what I have seems small, help me place it in your hands.
When I feel ashamed or stuck, meet me with grace.
Teach me to listen for your voice,
to trust your word,
and to follow where you lead.
Let your truth sink deep in me.
Let your grace ripple out from me.
And lead me a little farther into the life you have for me.

Amen.

week 1 seeds at the water's edge

Mark 4:1-20

at the water's edge

Jesus is at the water's edge, the crowd is pressing in, and he climbs into a boat so everyone can hear. Then He tells a story about dirt. Seeds. Birds. Rocks. Thorns. Roots. It is wonderfully ordinary and a little invasive.

Jesus is not merely asking whether we heard his words. He is asking what kind of ground his words are landing on in us.

This week is an invitation not to try harder, but to pay attention. To let Jesus tell the truth about our hearts, and to trust Him to grow something good there.

the current

Jesus is always speaking. The question is whether we are becoming the kind of people who can hear Him, receive Him, and bear fruit.

watch



shoreline rhythm

For House Churches and/or Individual Reflection

Come to the Shore

Take one minute.
No fixing. No performing.
No pretending.
Remember that Jesus is near.

Opening Prayer

Jesus –

You still speak by the water's edge and
in the middle of ordinary life.
Quiet the noise in us.
Soften what is hard.
Deepen what is shallow.
Clear out what is crowded.
Let your word take root in us and bear
good fruit through us.

Amen.

what you're bringing to the shore

Share briefly:

One thing that has been crowding my mind this week is _____.

Lately, my heart feels most like: *(Circle one)*

packed down shallow thorny open tired hopeful distracted tender

scripture in the boat

Read **Mark 4:1–20** slowly.

Then sit with these questions:

What word, phrase, or image stands out to you? What feels comforting? What feels convicting?

conversations by the shore

1. What stands out to you about the scene itself: Jesus in the boat, the crowd at the water's edge, and this earthy story about seed and soil?
2. Why do you think Jesus puts so much emphasis on listening?
3. Which soil feels most familiar to you right now?
4. What tends to steal God's word from you before it has time to settle in?
5. Where do you notice shallow roots in your life—quick response, little endurance, easily discouraged, something else?
6. What are the "thorns" in your real life right now? Worry? Hurry? Distraction? Desire for other things? Bitterness? Exhaustion?
7. When have you seen God's word bear fruit in your life over time? What helped that happen?
8. What is one small way you can make more room for Jesus this week?

A good reminder for this conversation: **good soil is not perfect soil.** It is honest soil. Open soil. Soil with room for roots.

creating ripples

One thorn I need Jesus to help me notice is _____.

One small way I will make room for God's word this week is _____.

Circle the boundary you need most at this season in your life:

Time Control Tech Pace Comparison Noise People-Pleasing

My specific boundary this week is _____.

The person who can encourage me in this is _____.

prayers from the shore

One-Line Prayers

Put a check mark by the one-line prayers you are going to pray this week:

Dear God –

- Show me the true condition of my heart without fear or shame.
- Soften what has grown hard in me.
- Pull up whatever is crowding out your word.
- Give me deep roots, not just quick reactions.
- Help me obey the next thing you say.
- Let your word bear fruit in my life that blesses other people.

Amen.

stepping into the water

Choose one or two.

Keep it small enough to be successful through the week.

Step into the Water with God

- Before you look at your phone in the morning, sit still for one minute and pray: *“Speak, Lord. I’m listening.”*
- Read the day’s passage out loud. Sometimes hearing Scripture with your actual ears changes things.
- Circle one word or phrase from the reading and carry it with you through the day.

Find a Quiet Stretch of Shore

- Take one ten-minute (or whatever is right for you) walk this week without headphones. Ask Jesus, *“What is growing in me right now?”*
- Pick one thorn to pull this week: one hurry habit, one distraction, one anxious spiral, one need to always be “on.”

Let Grace Ripple Out

- Share one thing God highlighted to you with a friend, spouse, or House Church member.
- Pray by name for one person who seems spiritually tired.
- Give one conversation your full attention this week: phone away, multitasking off, presence on.

a question
to carry along
the shore



*What kind of soil
am I offering Jesus
right now?*

week 2 when jesus gets in your boat

Luke 5:1-11

at the water's edge

Jesus is still at the water's edge, only this time He steps into a borrowed boat that smells like work, weariness, and disappointment. Simon and the others have fished all night and caught nothing. Empty nets. Tired bodies. One more sunrise over another unproductive shift.

Then Jesus asks something unreasonable: go back out. Put down the nets again. The miracle is not that Simon understands everything. The miracle is that, in his exhaustion, he says yes.

This week is an invitation for all of us who feel worn out, disappointed, or a little done. Jesus often meets us where our nets feel empty: not to shame us, but to call us deeper.

the current

Jesus often meets us in the places where we feel tired, empty, and ordinary—and he calls us to trust Him there.

watch



shoreline rhythm

For House Churches and/or Individual Reflection

Come to the Shore

Take one minute.
No fixing. No performing.
No pretending.
Remember that Jesus is near.

Opening Prayer

Jesus –

You are not afraid of empty nets or tired hearts. Meet us in the places where we have worked hard and come up empty. Teach us to trust Your voice over our own assumptions. Give us the courage to obey You in ordinary things. And call us deeper into the life You have for us.

Amen.

what you're bringing to the shore

Share briefly:

One place where I feel tired or discouraged right now is _____.

Lately, my life feels most like: *(Circle one)*

empty tired worn stuck hesitant hopeful unsure open

scripture in the boat

Read **Luke 5:1-11** slowly. Then sit with these questions: What word, phrase, or image stands out to you? Where do you notice resistance? What feels helpful?

conversations by the shore

1. What stands out to you about the scene itself: Jesus teaching from Simon's boat, the empty nets, and the strange instruction to go back out?
2. Simon says, "We've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything." Where do you identify with that line?
3. Why do you think Jesus so often meets people in the middle of ordinary work, fatigue, and disappointment?
4. Simon obeys with a kind of tired honesty: "But because you say so..." What do you hear in that response?
5. Where is Jesus inviting you to trust Him again, even when it does not make much sense to you?
6. Jesus says, "Don't be afraid." Is there an area of your life right now where you need to trust Him and take a next step?

A good reminder for this conversation: **Jesus is not looking for polished people.** He meets tired people. Honest people. Willing people.

creating ripples

One empty-net place I need Jesus to meet me in is _____.

One small act of trust I will take this week is _____.

Circle the place where Jesus may be inviting you to trust Him more in this season:

Comfort Control Hurry Cynicism Fear Distraction Certainty

One specific way I will practice trust this week is _____.

The person who can encourage me in this is _____.

prayers from the shore

One-Line Prayers

Put a check mark by the one-line prayers you are going to pray this week:

Dear God –

- Meet me in the places where I feel empty.
- Teach me to trust You even when I am tired.
- Give me courage to obey Your next instruction.
- Free me from fear when You call me deeper.
- Use my ordinary life for Your Kingdom.
- Make me willing to follow You with my whole heart.

Amen.

stepping into the water

Choose one or two.

Keep it small enough to be successful through the week.

Step into the Water with God

- Before you check your phone in the morning, pray:
“Because you say so, Lord, I will.”
- Read the day’s passage slowly and notice one invitation from Jesus.
- Name one place where you feel empty, tired, or stuck. Offer it to God.

Find a Quiet Stretch of Shore

- Take one ten-minute (or whatever is right for you) walk this week without headphones. Ask Jesus, *“Where are my nets empty right now?”*
- Do one small act of obedience this week that feels simple, quiet, and faithful.

Let Grace Ripple Out

- Encourage one person who seems tired, discouraged, or overlooked.
- Share one place you are trying to trust Jesus again with a friend, spouse, or House Church member.
- Serve someone in one ordinary way this week without needing credit for it.

a question
to carry along
the shore



*Where is Jesus
asking me to
trust Him again?*

at the water's edge

A large crowd follows Jesus to the far shore of the Sea of Galilee. There is hunger in the air, a lot of need, and not much in sight to meet it. By evening, all they can find is a boy's lunch: five small loaves, two fish, and a reason to shrug.

Jesus does not shame the little or ignore the need. He takes what is offered, gives thanks, and feeds more people than anyone imagined. This is not a story about pretending our limits are not real. It is a story about what happens when small things are placed in the hands of Jesus.

This week is an invitation for those of us who feel stretched, under-resourced, or quietly afraid that what we have is not enough. Jesus does not ask us to manufacture abundance. He asks us to bring what we have and trust him with the rest.

the current

What feels insufficient in our hands becomes enough in the hands of Jesus.

watch



shoreline rhythm

For House Churches and/or Individual Reflection

Come to the Shore

Take one minute.
No fixing. No performing.
No pretending.
Remember that Jesus is near.

Opening Prayer

Jesus –

You see the needs around us and the smallness within us. Keep us from panic, cynicism, or pretending. Teach us to bring what we have to You with open hands. Multiply what is small. Grow trust where we feel scarcity. And let Your generosity overflow through us.

Amen.

what you're bringing to the shore

Share briefly:

One place where I feel stretched thin or not enough right now is _____.

Lately, I'm feeling: *(Circle one)*

hungry stretched anxious small guarded grateful open weary

scripture in the boat

Read **John 6:1-14** slowly. Then sit with these questions: What word, phrase, or image stands out to you? What feels challenging? What feels hopeful?

conversations by the shore

1. What stands out to you about the scene itself: the crowd, the hunger, the small lunch, and Jesus giving thanks?
2. Philip sees the math. Andrew sees the little that is available. Which response feels more like you right now?
3. Why do you think Jesus sometimes lets us feel the weight of need before he shows us what he can do?
4. The boy's lunch was small, ordinary, and offered. What in your life feels small right now, yet maybe available to Jesus?
5. Where are you tempted to think, "It's not enough, so why even try"?
6. Who in your life might need a ripple of God's provision, kindness, or encouragement through you this week?

A good reminder for this conversation: **Jesus does not despise small offerings.** He uses them in ways we could not have imagined.

creating ripples

One area where I feel not enough right now is _____.

One small thing I will place in Jesus' hands this week is _____.

Circle the struggle that most keeps you living like there is not enough:

Scarcity Comparison Hoarding Hurry Fear Control Self-Reliance

The step of trust I want to practice this week is _____.

The person who can encourage me as I practice that trust is _____.

prayers from the shore

One-Line Prayers

Put a check mark by the one-line prayers you are going to pray this week:

Dear God –

- Teach me to bring You what I have.
- Free me from fear that there will not be enough.
- Multiply small acts of faithfulness.
- Make me generous, not grasping.
- Help me trust Your provision.
- Let what You give me bless other people.

Amen.

stepping into the water

Choose one or two.

Keep it small enough to be successful through the week.

Step into the Water with God

- Before you check your phone in the morning, open your hands and pray: *“Jesus, here is what I have.”*
- Read the day’s passage slowly and notice what Jesus does with small offerings.
- Name one need you cannot fix on your own—and place it honestly before God.

Find a Quiet Stretch of Shore

- Take one ten-minute (or whatever is right for you) walk this week without headphones. Ask Jesus, *“Where am I living from scarcity instead of trust?”*
- Practice one small act of gratitude before you practice problem-solving.

Let Grace Ripple Out

- Give something this week: time, encouragement, attention, or help.
- Share one area where you feel “not enough” with a friend, spouse, or House Church member.
- Notice one overlooked person this week and offer a quiet kindness.

a question
to carry along
the shore



*What small thing
am I being invited to
place in Jesus' hands?*

week 4 breakfast on the beach John 21:1-19

at the water's edge

It is early morning by the Sea of Galilee. The disciples have gone back to fishing, perhaps because they do not know what else to do with themselves. They work through the night and catch nothing. Then, from the shoreline, a familiar voice tells them where to cast the net, and suddenly the water breaks open with abundance.

But the miracle is not the whole story. Jesus has breakfast waiting on the beach: bread, fish, a fire, and room for Peter to face what he would rather avoid. The risen Christ does not meet failure with distance. He meets it with presence, food, and grace.

This week is an invitation for all of us who carry regret, shame, or the feeling of having let Jesus down. He does not meet us at the shoreline to humiliate us. He meets us there to restore us and send us again.

the current

Jesus does not meet our failure with shame. He meets us with grace, restoration, and a next step.

watch



shoreline rhythm

For House Churches and/or Individual Reflection

Come to the Shore

Take one minute.
No hiding. No rehearsing.
No pretending.
Remember that Jesus is near.

Opening Prayer

Jesus –

You know the places where we have failed, drifted, or gone numb. Meet us on the shoreline of our regret. Feed what is hungry in us. Restore what is wounded in us. Speak grace stronger than shame. And call us again into the life you have for us.

Amen.

what you're bringing to the shore

Share briefly:

One place where I carry regret, shame, or disappointment right now is _____.

Lately, my life feels most like: *(Circle one)*

ashamed restless guarded numb uncertain hopeful tender hungry

scripture in the boat

Read **John 21:1-19** slowly. Then sit with these questions: What word, phrase, or image stands out to you? What feels exposing? What feels restoring?

conversations by the shore

1. What does this scene show you about Jesus before anyone even says a word?
2. The disciples go back to fishing. Why do you think people often return to what feels familiar after loss, confusion, or failure?
3. John says, "It is the Lord." What do you notice about the moment of recognition in this story?
4. Jesus has already made breakfast before anyone explains themselves. What does that reveal about his heart toward weary and ashamed people?
5. Peter had denied Jesus around a fire, and now Jesus restores him beside another fire. Why might that detail matter?
6. Jesus asks Peter, "Do you love me?" What kind of restoration does Jesus want Peter to experience?
7. Where do you sense Jesus offering you grace, restoration, or a fresh calling in this season?

A good reminder for this conversation: **Jesus is not waiting to shame us.** He meets us with grace, truth, and purpose.

creating ripples

One place where I need Jesus' restoring grace is _____.

One small step of obedience I will take this week is _____.

Circle the struggle that most keeps you from receiving Jesus' restoring grace right now:

Shame Avoidance Defensiveness Hiding Busyness Numbness Control

The part of my life Jesus is asking me to bring into the open this week is _____

The person who can walk with me in that is _____.

prayers from the shore

One-Line Prayers

Put a check mark by the one-line prayers you are going to pray this week:

Dear God –

- Meet me in the places where I feel ashamed.
- Feed what is weary and hungry in me.
- Restore what failure has wounded.
- Free me from hiding and defensiveness.
- Ask me the questions that lead to healing.
- Give me grace and purpose.

Amen.

stepping into the water

Choose one or two.

Keep it small enough to be successful through the week.

Step into the Water with God

- Before you check your phone in the morning, place your hand on your heart and pray: *"Jesus, meet me with grace."*
- Read the day's passage slowly and notice how Jesus moves toward tired, ashamed, or confused people.
- Name one place where you feel regret, disappointment, or shame - and bring it honestly into the light.

Find a Quiet Stretch of Shore

- Take one ten-minute (or whatever is right for you) walk this week without headphones. Ask Jesus, *"Where am I still hiding?"*
- Practice one honest conversation this week with God or with a trusted person instead of withdrawing.

Let Grace Ripple Out

- Offer one small act of care to someone who seems weary, embarrassed, or discouraged.
- Let someone encourage you this week instead of brushing it off.
- Offer hope to someone who needs to hear that Jesus is not finished with them.

a question
to carry along
the shore



*What might Jesus
be restoring in
me right now?*

notes







the water's edge

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