



## EXPLORE THE BIBLE.

Session 1: Courage

Suggested Week of Use: March 1, 2026

Core Passage: Matthew 14:22-33

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### **News Story Summary**

In November 1952, Elmer Royce Williams flew his first mission for the Navy in a F9F-5 Panther off the coast of North Korea. In high winds, snow, and low visibility, he encountered seven Soviet fighter jets. Within thirty-five minutes, four of the Soviet jets were shot down. When Williams returned to his base, his plane had more than 250 bullet holes.

Since the Soviets were unofficially involved in the Korean War, the incident was kept quiet for fifty years until Soviet military records were declassified. In the years since then, several military veterans and elected officials campaigned for Captain Williams to be honored. Williams had received the Navy Cross in 2023; but earlier this year, the 100-year-old pilot was invited to the White House to receive the Congressional Medal of Honor, the nation's highest military decoration. Williams earned the award for distinguished acts of valor in combat that went above and beyond.

For more about this story, search “Royce Williams Medal of Honor.”

### **Engage**

To supplement the Engage activities, ask: *What do you consider to be your worst fear?* List responses on the board and note similarities. Summarize the story about Captain Royce Williams's service in the Korean War and his upcoming Medal of Honor recognition. Ask: *How would you describe the fear Williams experienced that day? How do you think he overcame those fears?* Note that he was a patriot on a mission for his country and he was well trained for the battle. Share that in today's session, Peter had to overcome fear to take a step of faith toward Jesus. Encourage the group to consider how believing that Jesus is greater than any circumstance can help them deal with fears they may face.

### **Challenge**

To supplement the Challenge activities, reflect on Jesus commanding the disciples to sail to the other shore while he went up the mountain to pray. Say: *If they had not obeyed Him, they would not have witnessed Him walking on the water. They would have also missed experiencing His power over the wind and waves.*

Remind adults that, like Royce Williams, the disciples may have felt alone in their battle. Say: *But they were able to see Jesus's deity in a way they ever expected.* Challenge adults to

consider what steps of faith Jesus is asking them to take. Ask: *What's keeping you in the boat?*  
Close in prayer, asking God to help each adult overcome their fears and to step out in faith for  
God's glory this week.