

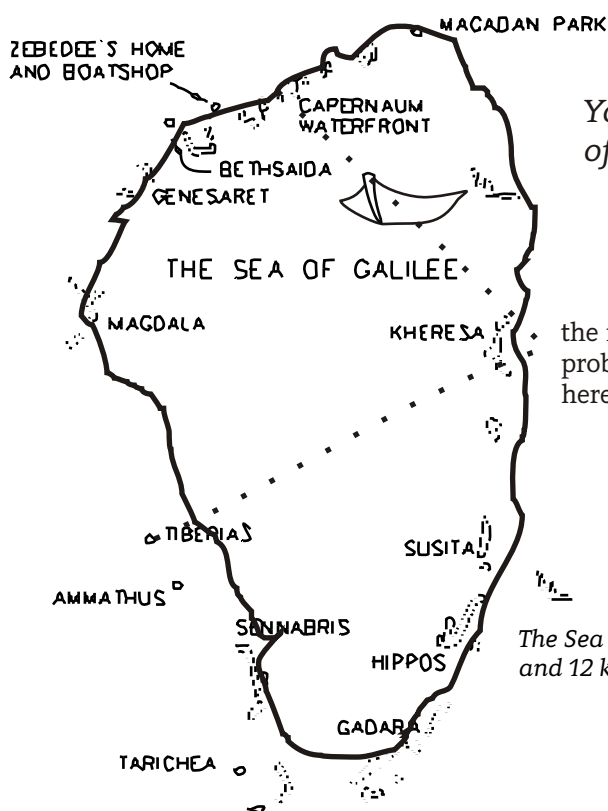
# Take us home!

John 6:16-24

Read the passage from John 6 below.

<sup>16</sup>When evening came, his disciples went down to the lake, <sup>17</sup>where they got into a boat and set off across the lake for Capernaum. By now it was dark, and Jesus had not yet joined them. <sup>18</sup>A strong wind was blowing and the waters grew rough. <sup>19</sup>When they had rowed three or three and a half miles, <sup>20</sup>they saw Jesus approaching the boat, walking on the water; and they were terrified. <sup>21</sup>But he said to them, "It is I; don't be afraid." <sup>22</sup>Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the shore where they were heading.

<sup>23</sup>The next day the crowd that had stayed on the opposite shore of the lake realized that only one boat had been there, and that Jesus had not entered it with his disciples, but that they had gone away alone. <sup>24</sup>Then some boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the people had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. <sup>25</sup>Once the crowd realized that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went to Capernaum in search of Jesus.



*You may like to trace the geography of what's going on with this map.*

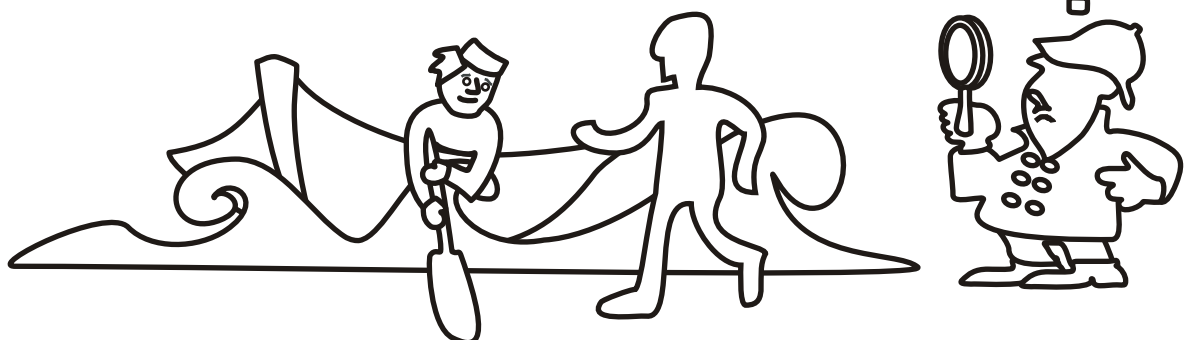
the feeding of the 5000 probably happened around here.

The Sea of Galilee is 21 kilometres long, and 12 kilometres across.

## Brainstorm

We've already seen that the signs in John's gospel can have "symbolic" meanings. Talk about the possible symbolism you can imagine in this story.

Many old hymns, and numerous devotional writers, suggest that this passage shows that Jesus comes to us in the "struggles and storms of life" and guides us through them. How would you respond to this interpretation?



## Dig Deeper

Make a note of all the odd things that happen. Is there anything you missed at first glance?

How do you imagine the disciples are feeling at each point in the story? Why?

We've noticed that we often need to look for "context" - the thoughts and ideas surrounding the signs can give vital clues. This time we need to look a bit further... all the way back to *Job 9* in the Old Testament.

Job is a man with problems. He has been "sorely afflicted" by God, and is in anguish. His friend Bildad has just said, "You'll be right - you're a good bloke and God will fix things." Job responds in chapter 9 with a picture of the "bigness" of God... and closes with a question, "who can mediate for me?"

Take a look at Job 9:1-8. Do you notice an interesting thing that "only God can do"?

What is Jesus "signifying" when he walks on the waves?

Read v27-35. What does Job see as his ultimate need?

What is Jesus signifying by what he does in John 6:20-21?

## Putting it together

The crowd wanted to make Jesus their King... so Jesus withdrew. The point is, Jesus is much more than just a politician. As he walks across the waves to meet his disciples, he announces himself to them as the Lord God "in the flesh."

Go back and read John 1:1-3, 14, 18. How does the connection between this sign, and the background of Job 9, re-inforce the point John makes in chapter 1?

In Jesus, we meet God himself. Job is agonised by his inability to "connect" with God in his majesty and remoteness. But Jesus comes to us - in all our storms! - as "God in person". He bridges the gap between God and man, joins us in the midst of our afflictions, and (John 6:21, cf Ps 107v30) takes us safely home! Maybe the hymn writers had it right after all!

What comfort do you find in these ideas?

