

# Keep Your Head above Water

**The topic** Security

**The object** A Coast Guard-approved life jacket (you know, like the big orange U-shaped ones). If you want to be overt about the lesson, label this jacket JESUS CHRIST. You also need a variety of other (and unapproved) flotation devices, like inflatable rings, sea horses, floaties, rafts, etc. All the flotation devices should be inflated. In an inconspicuous place, label each of the "unapproved" ones with a different way people try to stay afloat in life—friendship, money, popularity, status, alcohol, athletic achievement, etc.

**The lesson** Let students model all the jackets, preservers, floaties, etc., then vote on which one they like best. Next, reveal **that these flashy, colorful, fun floats symbolize friendship, money, etc. and that**

**we too** often try to keep ourselves afloat with these. Then point out the simple, easily missed warning that

comes with most flotation devices: *not* to use them as life-saving devices. Finally, demonstrate that the Coast Guard-approved life jacket isn't fun or stylish, and doesn't come in a choice of designer



colors—yet it's the only one that you can count on to keep a person from drowning.

Scripture points us to the only Lifesaver who, in any crisis or storm, will keep our heads above water. A relationship with Jesus might not be as stylish or as fun-looking as a relationship with a bottle or a boyfriend or girlfriend. But in the end only Jesus will be enough to keep us from going under.

**The Word** Psalm 20:1-9; Matthew 14:29-32  
See also Job 31:24-28; Isaiah 31:1; Psalm 31:4-8; 40:3; 49:6

### Discussion starters

1. What kind of "floatation devices" do people wear around your school?
2. Why is it so difficult to hear the Bible's warning that, when storms come, "toy" life preservers can't be counted on to keep our heads above water?
3. Why are we so reluctant to cling to the guaranteed Life Preserver? What kinds of things make it less attractive than inferior floatation devices?
4. If Jesus is the only real life preserver, what is it that he preserves us from? Does he promise Christians that they'll never have to go down with the ship?

### Life changers

1. What floatation devices are you clinging to?
2. Complete this sentence: *Sometimes life can be rough, and it's hard to keep my head above water, but at least I know I've got —*
3. Which of the following statements describes you right now:
  - ☐ **I feel like I'm going under.**
  - ☐ I'm keeping my head above water for now, but only by clinging to untrustworthy stuff.
  - ☐ My friends are clinging to me, and I'm afraid they're going to drag us all under.
  - ☐ I'm clinging to the real Life Preserver.
  - ☐ I'm clinging to the real Life Preserver, but I keep wondering if there's a slow leak somewhere, or that I'll lose my grip in a storm.