



UNIT 28 | SESSION 3

JESUS FORGAVE PETER

JOHN 21

KEY PASSAGE:

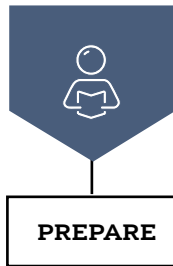
John 17:3

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How do we know that God wants us to know Him? We can know that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

The disciples had turned away from Jesus when He was arrested, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan—as fishers of men who would tell people the good news about Jesus. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

In the beginning of John 21, we read of the resurrected Christ's third appearance to His disciples. Although Peter had seen Jesus, perhaps he had not yet come to terms with his three-fold denial of Jesus. Through a series of three questions and commands, Jesus demonstrated His mercy and forgiveness toward Peter's denial as well as His wisdom to help Peter understand that obedience flows from a heart of love toward God.

How does Christ's forgiveness toward Peter demonstrate His own mercy toward us? What does Jesus' commission to Peter teach us about our call as forgiven disciples?

While Peter hadn't been the first disciple in the boat to realize the man calling them back to shore was Christ, he was the first one making waves to get back and join the Savior where He stood. We witness this headstrong disciple plunge himself into the sea to swim to Jesus while the rest struggled to haul in all the fish they had caught.

In their conversation after breakfast, Jesus repeatedly asked Peter, "Do you love me?" Each time Jesus asked, Peter became more grieved. Jesus didn't ask this question because He didn't know the disciple's response; rather, Jesus wanted Peter to examine his motives and mission before

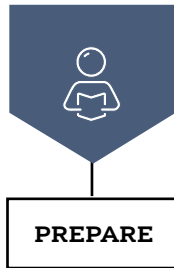
stepping into God's calling on his life: that he would lead others into His gift of eternal life.

Lead the kids in your class to consider how impactful Jesus' mercy was in these moments on the beach. How unbelievable it is that Jesus was willing to forgive Peter after all the times he had denied Him! This same forgiveness has been granted to us through faith in Jesus.

Remember: God chose to use Peter to lead others to Jesus, despite the ways he had fallen short in sin. God can choose us, too. Nothing can separate us from Jesus's love, power, or authority over our lives. With each new day, He beckons us to lead others as we follow Him.

PLACES TO KNOW

Sea of Tiberius: the Sea of Galilee (John 6:1). Tiberius is a city located on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee encompassing today what was in ancient times two separate cities.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ “What Did Jesus Say?” activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ letter beads to spell the word *forgiven*, 1 set per kid
- ☐ nylon or leather cording, 1 per kid
- ☐ dry erase board and marker (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “Jesus Forgave Peter” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ dry erase board (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 28, Session 3” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “The Need for Churches in Denver” missions video
- ☐ “Phillips Family Photo” printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ “This Is Eternal Life (John 17:3)” song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ ball



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ paper towels, 1 per kid
- ☐ watercolor paints, 1 per kid
- ☐ paintbrushes, 1 per kid
- ☐ black construction papers, 1 per kid
- ☐ water

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ paper plates, 1 per kid
- ☐ various colored cupcake liners, 10–15 per kid

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What does it mean to forgive someone? Have you ever had to forgive someone? Was it hard to forgive them? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What Did Jesus Say?” on the activity page.

SAY “Great job discovering the message! In our Bible story today, we will learn the importance of the message ‘Follow Me’ as well as how Jesus forgave Peter.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: MOTIONS OF THREE



Lead kids to play a game similar to Simon Says but with a twist. Explain that any motion the leader instructs, kids have to do three times. For example, if the leader says jump, kids jump three times. Or if the leader says stomp, kids stomp three times. Tell kids that if they forget to do what is said three times or respond when Simon didn't say to do something they are out. Choose one kid to be the leader. Play several rounds as time allows.

SAY “It can be challenging to follow instructions perfectly all the time. We even made this game more difficult by asking you to remember to perform the motion three times. In today's Bible story, Jesus asks something of Peter three times. Let's get ready to learn what Jesus requested of Peter and why it was important.”

☐ OPTION 2: FORGIVEN WRIST BAND

Before the session, gather letter beads to spell the word forgiven and nylon or leather cording. Be sure to have enough materials for each kid. Provide each kid with a piece of cording and the letter beads. Instruct kids to thread the beads on the cord to spell forgiven. Assist kids who need help or consider writing forgiven on a dry erase board for kids to refer to. Assist kids in tying off their wrist band around their wrist and in cutting off any extra long pieces from their wrist band.

SAY “You can wear these wrist bands to remind you of the forgiveness we have through faith in Jesus. The word forgive means ‘to refuse to punish someone who has hurt you or sinned against you.’ We can forgive others because God has forgiven us. But God's forgiveness came at a great cost: Jesus had to die for our sin. Today, we will learn how Jesus forgave Peter and called him to teach others the good news.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





Week 3

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY 🌱 Welcome, kids! I'm [your name], and I'm so excited you are here today! Let's take out our Bibles as we get ready to read the Words of God. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be reading from the Gospel of John. Turn in your Bibles to the New Testament. Then flip to the fourth book to find the Gospel of John.

John was a disciple of Jesus, and he wrote down the events of Jesus' time on earth. John's Gospel tells us that after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to His disciples and continued to teach them. Today, we will learn that Jesus forgave Peter and also gave him a job to do. 🌱

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY 🌱 When God created the world, He made a special creation—people! Adam and Eve were made were made to know God. They were given a special place, the garden of Eden, where they lived with Him. God gave them His commands and wanted them to live with Him forever. Even after Adam and Eve sinned and were removed from the garden, God had a plan for His people to continue to know Him and live with Him forever. God promised that Jesus would come to give His life so that people could know God and have eternal life.

Jesus is the Word because He not only taught God's Word and lived it perfectly, but He reveals or shows us God. When we know Jesus, we can know God. Our big picture question and answer helps us learn this truth. Our big picture question is, How do we know that God wants us to know Him? Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] We can know that God wants us to know Him because He has revealed Himself through His Word. Let's repeat that a few times. [Allow kids to repeat the answer three times.] 🌱

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY 🌱 Over the past two weeks, we learned that after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to some of His followers and His disciples. Who remembers some people who saw Jesus after He rose? [Allow responses.] Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene at the tomb, two men on the road to Emmaus, and His eleven disciples. At this point in our timeline, Jesus has appeared to His disciples twice. Today, we will read about the third time Jesus appeared to His disciples and how He forgave Peter. 🌱



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to John 21. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Forgave Peter.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS FORGAVE PETER

“Three days after Jesus died on the cross, He came back to life. More than once, Jesus appeared to His disciples and proved that He was alive. One day, Jesus met His disciples while they were fishing on the Sea of Galilee.

Peter and the other disciples got into a boat to go fishing. They spent all night on the water, but they did not catch any fish. The next morning, as the sun was coming up, Jesus stood on the shore. He called out to the disciples, but they did not recognize Him. Jesus said, “Men, you don’t have any fish, do you?”

“No,” they answered.

“Put your net in the water on the right side of the boat, and you will catch some fish,” Jesus said. The disciples did what Jesus said. So many fish were in their net, that they could not pull the net back into the boat!

One of the disciples said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” Peter jumped into the water so he could swim to shore. The rest of the disciples traveled to the shore in the boat, pulling the net full of fish behind them.

When the disciples got out of the boat, they saw bread and a charcoal fire with fish on it. “Bring some of the fish you’ve caught,” Jesus said. So Peter pulled the net ashore. It was full of large fish—153 of them!

“Come and have breakfast,” Jesus said. Jesus took the bread and gave it to them. Then He gave them the fish.

Jesus turned to Peter. “Do you love Me more than these?” He asked.

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said. “You know that I love You.”

“Feed My lambs,” Jesus told him.

Jesus asked Peter again, “Do you love Me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said. “You know that I love You.”

“Take care of My sheep,” Jesus said.

Jesus asked Peter a third time, “Do you love Me?”

Peter was very sad that Jesus asked Him a third time. Peter loved Jesus very much! “Lord, You know everything! You know that I love You!”

“Feed My sheep,” Jesus said. Jesus told Peter that he would bring honor to God. Then Jesus said to him, “Follow Me!”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Sketch it: Draw a beach on a dry erase board or sheet of paper. Draw a boat on the water. Sketch stick figures as the characters move from water to land as it is told in the story.

Count it: Each time Jesus asked Peter a question, hold up a finger. Invite kids to hold up a finger as well. Remind kids that just as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him three times.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Christ Connection: The disciples had turned away from Jesus when He was arrested, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan—as fishers of men who would tell people the good news about Jesus. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY In our Bible story, the disciples fished all night but didn't catch any fish. Then Jesus appeared and commanded them to lower their nets in the water, and their net fills with fish! Do you remember another time this happened in the Bible? When? **[Allow responses.]** When Jesus first called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him and become fishers of men, they also had not caught any fish until Jesus appeared. Again Jesus performed a similar miracle, and then He invited them to eat with Him. Even though all His disciples had left Him when He was arrested, Jesus came to them and provided fish for them to eat. Jesus showed that He loved and forgave His disciples.

Peter was so excited to see Jesus that he jumped in the water and swam all the way to shore. After Jesus and the disciples ate, Jesus asked Peter three questions. What did Jesus ask three times? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus asked Peter, 'Do you love me?' What did Peter say to Jesus each time? **[Allow responses.]** Peter said he loved Jesus. Jesus forgave Peter and showed him that following Him means loving Him.

Peter was getting another chance. He had denied Christ three times before His crucifixion, but now he shared his love for Jesus three times. Then Jesus gave Peter an important job to do. When Jesus asked Peter to 'take care of His sheep,' He was commanding Peter to take care of Jesus' followers and spread the gospel to others. Peter became a very important leader in the early church. He was no longer just a fisherman, but a true fisher of men. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY The disciples had turned away from Jesus when He was arrested, but Jesus still wanted to use them in God's plan—as fishers of men who would tell people the good news about Jesus. Jesus is the Lord who forgives us and makes things right again. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)



Show the “Unit 28, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How do we know that God forgives us?
2. Jesus uses forgiven sinners to build His church. How can He use you?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Phillips Family Photo” as you teach about the church planters. Tell the kids that Denver, Colorado, has a growing population. Tell kids that many move to Denver for the fun outdoor activities and the many businesses. Explain that even with 2.9 million people in



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Denver, many do not believe in Jesus.

SAY 🗣️ Denver is in need of many more churches. Chris Phillips, his wife, Libby, and their four children have lived in Denver, Colorado, since 2017. They moved there to start a church called Journey Point Church. Now, Journey Point Church has two campus locations. Chris says he feels like God wants him to use the gifts that God has given him to honor the Lord. He wants their church to tell many people about Jesus. 🗣️

Show the video. Pray that more churches and individuals will be involved in starting new churches in Denver by sending mission teams to help the missionaries and existing churches.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 17:3 together.

SAY 🗣️ God sent His Son, Jesus, so we can know Him and live with Him forever. Even though Jesus is now in heaven with the Father, we can know him through his Word—the Bible. Let's practice our key passage which helps us know more about Jesus. 🗣️

Direct kids to sit in a circle. Challenge kids to quickly pass a ball around the circle while reciting the key passage. Tell kids that while the ball is passed around, you will play music. Lead kids to pass the ball and continue to repeat the key passage until the music stops. Explain that once the music stops, the kid holding the ball is out. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing "This Is Eternal Life (John 17:3)." You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

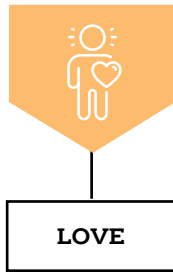
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY 🗣️ God, thank You for sending Jesus so that we may have eternal life. Help us live for you and follow after you in our daily lives. Amen. 🗣️

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide kids to open their Bibles to John 21. Explain this was Jesus' third time to reveal himself to the disciples. Tell kids that Jesus appeared to them by the Sea of Tiberias, also known as the Sea of Galilee. Remind kids that Jesus performed many miracles and taught by this sea throughout His time on earth.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 21:17 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud. Consider pointing out the location of Sea of Galilee (D6) on the New Testament Israel Map.

SAY “ Jesus asked Peter three times, ‘Do you love me?’ Peter became very sad when Jesus asked him again and again. Jesus knew how Peter would answer. Jesus knows everything. But Jesus might have asked this question three times to help Peter understand that we love Jesus and others by obeying His commands.

God wants us to be a part of His plans. We can show we love God by telling other people about Jesus. God loves us and has special plans for us just like Peter. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Peter sinned, but Jesus forgave him. How does Jesus forgive our sins? ”

Guide kids to think about how God shows His love to us through Jesus and offers us forgiveness freely. Discuss how Jesus died on the cross for sin and that when we trust in Him, He takes away all our sin.

SAY “ How can we make things right with others who wrong us? ”

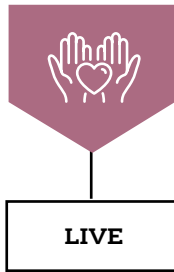
Prompt kids to remember that everyone sins and that we all wrong others at times. Help kids understand that since God has forgiven us of all our sin, we can forgive others who have wronged us. Tell kids that we make things right by forgiving others.

SAY “ Jesus told Peter to take care of His sheep. What job has Jesus given us today? ”

Remind kids that Jesus has given all believers the job of sharing the gospel. Tell kids that God may also one day call us to specific places or specific ministries. Explain that no matter our age or where we live, we can all tell others about the good news of Jesus. Explain that we can also show we love Jesus when we care for others and meet their needs. Remind kids that we share the gospel in word and deed.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ **OPTION 1: CITYSCAPE CRAFT**



Provide each kid with a paper towel, watercolor paint, water, paintbrushes, black construction paper, scissors, and glue. Lead kids to paint the paper towels with watercolor paint using lots of water to create “drip” effects.

Lead kids to cut out four strips of black construction paper to create a frame around their paper towel. Tell kids to glue the strips to the paper towel. Then direct kids to cut out strips of varying lengths to create a skyline on the bottom third of the paper towel. Lead kids to glue the strips across the bottom third of the paper towel. Remind kids that Denver is a large city.

SAY “ You can use your cityscapes to remind you to pray for the people of Denver who do not know Jesus. Remember to also pray for the church planters in Denver who are sharing the gospel with unbelievers. ”

☐ **OPTION 2: FRIENDLY FISH NOTES**

Provide each kid with a paper plate, 10–15 various colored cupcake liners, markers, scissors, and glue. Lead kids to cut out a triangle on their paper plate to create the fish mouth. Direct kids to glue the triangle to the paper plate to create the fish tail. Then lead kids to cut their cupcake liners in half. Direct kids to create the scales of the fish by gluing rows of cupcake liners along the back half of the plate, overlapping each of the liners slightly. Finally, lead kids to draw a fish eye and write a friendly note on their fish such as Jesus loves you, God forgives, or Believe in Jesus.

SAY “ Today, we learned how Jesus loved His disciples and forgave Peter. Jesus showed His love by providing fish for them and by giving Peter an opportunity to be a part of His plan to share the gospel. We can show we love Jesus by serving others, encouraging them, and sharing the gospel. Give your fish to someone to show you care for them. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.