



UNIT 32 | SESSION 4

## PETER WAS RESCUED FROM PRISON

### ACTS 12

#### CHRIST CONNECTION:

God heard the prayers of the people. He had a plan for Peter, and He helped him escape from prison. Peter wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what.

#### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.

#### KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:

Like a body has many parts, the church has many people who work together.  
1 Corinthians 12:12



## LEADER Bible Study

Acts 12 tells the story of God's divine and miraculous rescue of His apostle Peter. While King Herod sought to make an example of Peter, it was God alone who was able to showcase His power and might amidst the persecution of the church. This passage highlights the power of prayer amidst hardship and how God's purposes for His church will prevail despite the futile attempts of the enemy.

What can we learn about God's plans despite persecution and suffering? What can we learn about living on mission even during our most difficult circumstances?

God's plan for the good of His church, even during persecution, include the fervent prayers of the saints. The intercession of these faithful believers revealed that their only hope was in the Lord, and it was their prayers that were used by God to rescue Peter from prison. As God answered their prayers, He showcased His power to thwart the evil plans of those who wish to harm His church. Peter's incredible escape from prison reflects the same hope that those who have trusted in Jesus receive as the chains of sin fall off, and we are set free from condemnation. God's purpose for His church was by no means coming to an end in that prison cell; rather the word of God spread and multiplied. (Acts 12:24)

The consequence of declaring the gospel of Jesus Christ was costly for Peter and for James, who was executed by Herod. Though Herod's sentence for James was death, to die would mean this disciple's gain. Peter knew the consequences of sharing the gospel, yet he also believed that Jesus was worth giving his life to, trusting that the salvation of others was worth the risk. Even still, God granted Peter salvation from this prison cell so that he could continue living on mission for Him.

May we be aware that God has done more than send an angel to rescue us from earthly hardship. He sent His very Son to rescue us from the eternal consequence of our sins. Christ's sacrifice on our behalf offers the hope we need to endure difficulties and the boldness we need to share His divine hope with others.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Prayer:** talking to God and listening to Him. Prayer makes a difference in what happens (James 4:2), and faith is a condition for answered petitions (Mark 11:24).



**PREPARE**

YOUR HEART TO TEACH

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



**WELCOME**

### Find doors in the sensory bin

- ☐ "Doors"  
printable, 1 or 2  
copies based on  
size of bin
- ☐ Big Picture  
Question Poster
- ☐ sensory bin
- ☐ linking toys



**LEARN**

### Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage  
Phrase Marker



**LOVE**

### Make paper chains

- ☐ adhesive dots



**LIVE**

### Make a key passage phrase door hanger

- ☐ "Door Hanger"  
printable, 1 per  
child
- ☐ church- or  
nature-themed  
stickers

### Missions activity

- ☐ "Faces from  
Many Nations"  
printable

### Snack and transition

- ☐ snacks
- ☐ Activity Page,  
1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards  
For Families,  
1 per child



**BONUS**

### Knock like Peter

- ☐ hard surface  
such as a table,  
back of a shelf,  
etc.

### Unbuild a block tower

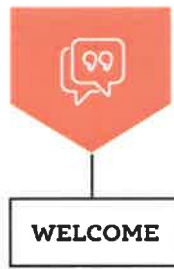
- ☐ large  
interlocking  
blocks
- ☐ index cards, 15

### Dot paint a P for prayer

- ☐ dot paints

### Build a prison

- ☐ interlocking  
blocks



Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

## WELCOME

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

### FIND DOORS IN THE SENSORY BIN

Print and cut apart “Doors” printable. Bury in the sensory bin under linking toys linked together in varying lengths to create “chains.” Place sensory bin near the big picture question and poster. Guide conversation as children work to spark curiosity about the Bible story, but also talk about the difference between a church building and the church as people. (Option: Paper chains or pool noodle slices linked together will work well if other linking toys are not available.)

**SAY** I am so glad you're here today. We have been learning about a big idea that some people have a hard time understanding. You know that a lot of people think the church is just a building with doors and windows. But the Bible tells us that **the church is all Christians everywhere**. In the Bible story today, we will learn about a time the church was praying together for someone. And guess what: There is a door and there are some chains in the Bible story!

Worship songs  
\* Fruit of the Spirit  
\* God is So Good

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





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### **LEARN** the Bible Story

#### **1 INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY**

Enlist someone the children would like to see, like your children's director or pastor, to knock on the door as children are seated in group time. Wait for children to notice the knocking on the door and excuse yourself to answer it. Follow the script in the "Say" portion.

**SAY** ☹️ I wonder who could be at the door? Were you expecting someone? [Go peek out the door and then come back to the group, leaving the person behind the closed door.] Well! What a surprise! It's [visitor's name]! So, I was going to tell you about our Bible story today. ... Silly me! I forgot to let [visitor] in the room! Let me go open the door! [Invite the visitor in.] Sorry, friend! I got so excited that I didn't even open the door to let you in. I was just about to tell everyone our Bible story today. Let's find out what happened! 😊



#### **2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY** *Show video*

Open your Bible to Acts 12. Tell the Bible story using the provided story below.

#### **PETER WAS RESCUED FROM PRISON**

**SAY** ☹️ King Herod put Peter in prison. Believers in the church prayed and asked God to help him.

Peter was sleeping in the prison. All of a sudden, an angel appeared. The angel woke up Peter.

"Quick, get up!" the angel said. The chains fell off of Peter's wrists. He followed the angel out of the prison. He walked past the guards. The gate opened for them, and they walked out onto the street. Then the angel left. The Lord had rescued him!

Peter hurried to a house where other believers were praying. When Peter knocked at the door, a servant named Rhoda answered. She heard Peter's voice and she was so happy she ran back inside without letting Peter in.

"Peter is here!" she said. "He is at the door!"

No one believed her. But Peter kept knocking, so they opened the door and welcomed him in. Peter told them how the Lord had rescued him from prison. 😊

Christ Connection: God heard the prayers of the people. He had a plan for Peter, and He helped him escape from prison. Peter wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what.





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Instruct the children to make happy and sad faces to reflect the actions you retell from the story.

**SAY** 🗨️ Peter was in prison. (sad face) The believers in the church prayed and asked God to help Peter. Peter was asleep and in chains. (sad face) God heard and answered their prayers by sending an angel to help Peter. (happy face) Peter's chains just fell off and he walked right out of the prison. (happy face) God had a plan for Peter and helped him escape from prison. (happy face) Peter wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what. (happy face) 🗨️

### 4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "B-I-N-G-O."

"Like a body has many parts  
The church has many people  
Who work together,  
Who work together,  
Who work together.  
1 Corinthians 12:12"

\* So also is Christ song (video)

### 5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

\* Place the key passage phrase marker at 1 Corinthians 12:12. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Lead preschoolers to learn the key passage phrase. Ask children how many know the motions to "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes." Demonstrate touching your head, shoulders, knees, and toes while asking your question. Explain that as you say the key passage phrase, you will do those motions together, one motion per word.

**SAY** 🗨️ Just like our bodies have a head, shoulders, knees, and toes—and so many other parts to it—the church has many people that are part of it. Each person who is part of the church has a job to do. For the body to work right, all the parts have to work together. So too in the church, people must work together to tell the world about Jesus. 🗨️

### 6 PRAY

Thank God for hearing the prayers of believers in the church, both in Peter's time and ours.  
Thank God for His plan for each believer.

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





LOVE

## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

### LOVE God because of what we learned

#### 1 ACT OUT THE STORY



Place the Bible story picture and a Bible nearby. Use construction paper to make some name signs for various Bible people: Angel, King Herod, Peter, Rhoda, Guard, Praying Believer. Make one sign per preschooler, adding additional guards and praying believers as needed. Angel, King Herod, Peter, Rhoda, Guards (make a couple of these), Praying Believers (make several of these). Retell the story as children act it out. Allow them to speak some, if desired. For example, "Throw Peter in prison," could be something King Herod might have said. Provide guidance as needed.

**SAY** King Herod had a plan to stop Peter, but God had a plan for Peter's life. He rescued Peter from prison so Peter could continue to tell people about Jesus. The believers in the church also learned that God hears our prayers. Peter told people the good news about Jesus no matter what.

#### 2 MAKE PAPER CHAINS

Cut 1-by-6-inch strips of construction paper. Set them on a table with adhesive dots. Demonstrate making a paper loop and gluing the ends together. Help the children make paper chain links from the paper strips. Make the loops at either end as wide as possible so they will fall off the children's wrists. Demonstrate sliding them on and then letting them fall off onto the floor.

**SAY** Remember in the Bible story Peter was in chains inside the prison. The believers in the church were praying for God to help Peter. God heard their prayers and sent an angel to rescue him. The angel woke Peter up, and his chains just fell off. Peter and the angel walked right out of the prison and past the guards, and no one stopped them. God's plan was for Peter to continue to tell people about Jesus.

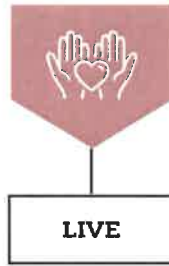
#### 3 MAKE PRAYER REMINDERS

Give each child some crayons and a sheet of construction paper folded in half. Line up each child's hand on the fold and trace around it. Then cut it out without crossing the fold line. The hands should open like a book and resemble praying hands when closed. Allow children to draw people they can pray for inside the reminder book. Write on the outside: [Child's name]'s Prayer Reminder. Talk about the people they will pray for as you work together.

**SAY** Believers in the church were praying for God to help Peter. God listened to their prayers. He rescued Peter from the prison. God hears the prayers of believers in the church today, too. We can pray for others. Use your prayer reminder to help you remember to pray for the people you know.

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





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### **LIVE** for God out of love

#### ✓ 1 **MAKE A KEY PASSAGE PHRASE DOOR HANGER**

Print and prep the “Door Hanger” printable for each child. Set markers, stickers, and door hangers on a table for children to decorate. Read the key passage phrase together as they work.

**SAY** “The key passage phrase says the church is made up of many people who work together. Believers in the church can do many things together to help tell about Jesus, but they can also pray for other believers. Everyone in the church in the Bible story was praying for Peter. They were working together by asking God to help Peter.”

#### ✓ 2 **MISSIONS ACTIVITY**



Print a copy of the “Faces from Many Nations” printable for every group of four preschoolers. Cut apart the cards and mix them up. Place the cards facedown. Form groups of four preschoolers. Tell a preschooler to turn over two cards to see if the faces match. If he discovers a match, he may keep the cards. If the cards do not match, he should put the cards facedown again, and another child takes a turn. After preschoolers match all the cards, allow them to mix up the cards and place them facedown to play another round. Lead a prayer for Gospel City Church and its leaders and members as they work to tell many people from many different places about Jesus.

**SAY** “Pastor David McCaman and his wife, Jennifer, started a church called Gospel City Church. Half of the people living in the area were born in another country. Many of them do not know much about Jesus. The McCamans know people can be different in many ways, but they know Jesus loves every person the same. **What is the church? The church is all Christians everywhere.**”

#### 3 **SNACK AND TRANSITION**



Post an allergy alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ connection.

**SAY** “God heard the prayers of the people. He had a plan for Peter, and He helped him escape from prison. Peter wanted to share the good news about Jesus no matter what.”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.





**BONUS**

## TEACHING HOUR

### **BONUS** Teaching Hour Group Time

#### **1 KNOCK LIKE PETER**

Place a shelf or other hard surface nearby. Call children one by one, telling them to knock loudly on the “door” before entering the group time area.

**SAY:** Excellent work! I heard you so clearly. Thank you for letting me know you were here by knocking on my ‘door.’ In our Bible story today, we will learn about a time someone knocked on a door. Let’s find out who it was!

#### **2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY**

Open the Bible to Acts 12 and talk about the Bible story using the summarized points below.

##### **PETER WAS RESCUED FROM PRISON**

- The king of Judea put Peter in prison for talking about Jesus. Jesus’ followers prayed and asked God to help Peter.
- One night, Peter was sleeping in the prison. All of a sudden, an angel appeared. The angel woke up Peter and told him to get up. The chains fell off of Peter’s wrists. He followed the angel out of the prison. Then the angel left. The Lord had rescued him!
- Peter hurried to a house where his friends were praying. They were so surprised!
- Peter knocked until they opened the door and welcomed him in. God had heard and answered their prayers!

#### **3 SING A SONG**

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “B-I-N-G-O.”

“Like a body has many parts  
The church has many people  
Who work together,  
Who work together,  
Who work together.  
1 Corinthians 12:12”

#### **4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE**

Stack 15 large interlocking blocks near the Bible. Write one word of the key passage phrase on separate strips of masking tape and attach the tape to the blocks in word order. Place the key passage phrase marker at 1 Corinthians 12:12. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Invite children to take one word off the stack as you say the key passage phrase together and “unbuild” the tower.

#### **5 PRAY**

Thank God for all Christians who work together to tell others about Jesus.



BONUS

TEACHING HOUR

## BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

### 6 LISTEN TO PEOPLE PRAY TOGETHER



Work with children to make a list on construction paper of people they can pray for such as pastors, church staff, teachers, friends, family, etc. Lead children to pray together. Allow willing children to pray for someone, but do not insist. If no child wants to pray aloud, model praying aloud for the group.

**SAY** “One thing we can do as believers in the church is to pray for others. In our story today, we learned that the people of the church were praying for Peter. Peter was in prison and needed help. The believers in the church knew that God could help Peter. God heard their prayers and rescued Peter.”

### 7 DOT PAINT A P FOR PRAYER

Draw a large P on a piece of paper for each child. Place the paper and dot paints on a table for children to use. Instruct children to dot along the lines to make a P. Talk about how prayer starts with P, and ask what other words they can think of that start with P (Peter, prison, people, etc.). Guide conversation around the Bible story.

**SAY** “We have heard lots of words today with the letter P at the beginning of them. One of the most important is prayer. The people in the church prayed for Peter. God heard their prayers and rescued Peter from prison. It is important to pray for people, especially when they are like Peter and being put into prison for teaching others about Jesus. Peter wanted to tell people the good news about Jesus.”

### 8 BUILD A PRISON

Set out interlocking blocks for children to build a prison. Retell the Bible story points as they work. Encourage them to expand their building to include a house with a door that could be knocked on, if time allows. Help preschoolers relate their buildings to the Bible story by talking about the prison building Peter was in and the house where the believers gathered to pray.

**SAY** “King Herod had Peter thrown in prison for teaching people about Jesus. The Bible says Peter was in chains inside the prison. The believers in the church prayed to God, asking Him to help Peter. God heard their prayers and sent an angel to walk Peter out of the prison. Peter went to the house where the people were praying for him. At first, no one believed he was knocking on the door. But once he was inside, they welcomed him. God had a plan for Peter’s life. Peter continued to teach people about Jesus.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.