

## LESSON 2

## PETER IN PRISON

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Hears Our Prayers for Others

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 12

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** The apostle Peter is in prison for teaching the good news about Jesus. But believers in Jesus pray for him, and God miraculously rescues Peter from prison because God hears our prayers for others.

**WORD OF WONDER:** But God has surely listened. He has heard my prayer. Give praise to God. He has accepted my prayer. He has not held back his love from me. —Psalm 66:19–20

## CURIOSITY

## BELIEF

## FAITH

- Welcome Question: What is a sound that makes you happy?
- Curiosity Questions
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Responding in Worship
  - Baptism Video
- Blessing Your Kids



### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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**WORD OF WONDER:** Psalm 66:19–20

Take a few moments to read Acts 12:1–16.

I know it sounds strange, but this is almost my favorite passage in Scripture. Why? Because you couldn't make this stuff up if you tried.

A huddle of desperate Christians is deep in prayer for their imprisoned friend, Peter.

Peter, who they love, and who might be executed the following day.

Then, a knock at the door.

It's Peter, whose miraculous release now means he needs someplace safe to shelter. But those praying can't quite believe their prayers have been answered in this way and figure it must be an angel at the door, not Peter himself. It takes a brave servant girl to insist it really is Peter until finally they crack open the door and get him inside.

Sound familiar? Like those believers, we sometimes pray without much expectation that God will answer. We don't want to get our hopes up, don't want to risk disappointment.

But God hears our prayers, including our prayers for others. And when our prayers align with His purposes, remarkable things happen.

So pray your kids come to know and love Him. That the diagnosis is reversed, the crisis calmed, the relationship healed. Pray boldly and specifically for God to act in the lives of people you love.

Do that now—pray for a Peter in your life you'd like to see set free from some sort of captivity. If you take that risk, what might happen?

And then keep listening for a knock at the door.

—Mikal Keefer

Children's Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

The book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke were written by the same author. While the Gospel is focused on the life and ministry of Jesus, Acts focuses on the growth of the church and spread of the good news after Jesus' ascension.

**WHAT?**

Acts 12 is part of a longer series of stories beginning in Acts 8 about the rise of persecution against the church and how God protected His people through it all. In fact, God used the persecution against the church to help spread the gospel.

**WHERE?**

The story takes place in Judea, where Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the Herod who tried to have Jesus killed (Matthew 2:16), reigned.

**WHEN?**

Acts 12 places the story of Peter's imprisonment and rescue by an angel around the same time that Paul began his ministry with Barnabas in Antioch. Persecution against the church in Judea increased as the gospel began to go forth to the Gentiles.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Luke says that his Gospel is about what "Jesus began to do and to teach [emphasis added]" (Acts 1:1, NIV). Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and teach through the Holy Spirit in the apostles. Jesus continues to work in us by His Spirit today!

### Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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### As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loopPlay high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Be sure to move to their level and introduce yourself to any new friends. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding to what they say.

**SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP**

## Welcome Question

Consider using a **30 or 2:00 Countdown** to let leaders and kids know it's almost time to begin!

### At Your Start Time...

**SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION**

### At your start time ...

At your service start time, call attention to the Welcome Question on the screen and invite Small Group Leaders to begin: **What is a sound that makes you happy?**

"Today we're going to learn more about how God listens to us when we pray for others.

**SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS FOR OTHERS.**"



## Small Group

While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

## Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

### VIDEO: COUNTDOWN

"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! I have a little game for us first today!"

## Declaring God's Wonder

### SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

**Thank You, God, that You are good!** (Kids repeat.)

**You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** (Kids repeat.)

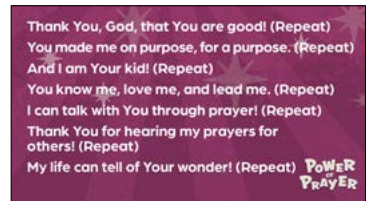
**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

**You know me, love me, and lead me.** (Kids repeat.)

**I can talk with You through prayer!** (Kids repeat.)

**Thank You for hearing my prayers for others!** (Kids repeat.)

**My life can tell of Your wonder!** (Kids repeat.)



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words with these as a guide if needed: **God, how wonderful to be known and loved by You. Through Your Holy Spirit, You're always drawing us closer to You, always shaping our lives. We're open to what You have for us to learn and willing to do what You have for us to do. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you! Remember that some kids may have no idea why we worship or what we are doing!

### WORSHIP VIDEOS: PRAISE, ALIVE WITH YOU

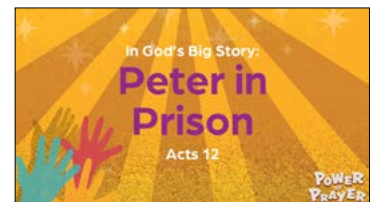
## God's Big Story

### SLIDE: TITLE SLIDE

Remind them that Acts is in the New Testament and is the first book that comes after the four Gospels, which talk about the life of Jesus.

**"Let's start by watching part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will experience more of the story!"**

### VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY



## LESSON 2 PETER IN PRISON EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** paper; permanent marker; scissors (prep only); hat; tape; wearable toy crown; white hat, beanie, or bandana; cardstock (optional); crayons (optional); aluminum foil (optional); stapler, glue, or tape (optional); fake chains (optional); makeshift prison bars (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Roman Helmet Template \(2 sets\)](#)

Ahead of time, gather supplies. Write the letter “P” on paper with a permanent marker; cut it out and tape it to a hat. Either procure two Roman helmet props or create your own by printing two sets of the Roman Helmet Template on cardstock, cutting the pieces out, coloring the tassels, covering the other pieces in aluminum foil, and stapling, gluing, or taping the pieces together to create two wearable Roman helmet props.

Set the costume pieces and props near your teaching space.

**"The book of Acts tells the true story of how the community of Jesus' followers—called the church—first started. Today the church includes people from every nation around the world, and the good news about Jesus has gone nearly everywhere! But the church began in a small area of land in the Middle East called Judea, and the first people to believe in Jesus were Jews.**

**I'll need your help to tell today's part of God's big story. You will be the people of the church in Judea. Every time I say, "the church," you will bow your heads, fold your hands, and say, "Dear God" as if you were praying together. Let's practice:**

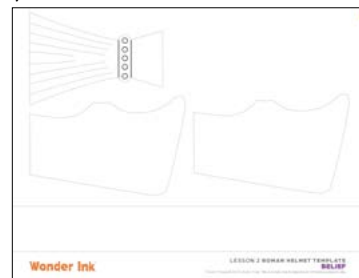
**As the church grew** (pause for kids to respond), **some of the Jewish leaders who didn't believe Jesus was God's Son became jealous. They started to hurt the church leaders** (pause for kids to respond), **called apostles, and other Jesus-followers. Some were forced to leave Judea, and others were put into prison. One believer, a man named Stephen, was even killed for his faith in Jesus. But Jesus' followers continued to pray, the church grew** (pause for kids to respond), **and the good news about Jesus spread.**

**Leader Tip:** For Older Kids. Consider assigning “the church” role to the younger kids and inviting older kids to be extra guards who position themselves around the perimeter of your teaching area. Challenge them to stand at attention the whole time and make their toughest “Roman guard” faces. Their presence will highlight the miraculous nature of Peter's escape!

**Eventually, so many people started believing in Jesus that the Roman government started to notice. Herod Agrippa, the king of Judea, started to punish the leaders of the church** (pause for kids to respond) **in Judea. Hang on ... we need a few actors to help us tell the story.**

Call five volunteers on stage and give each head gear and a motion for whenever you say their names:

- King Herod: wears a crown and stands with hands on hips
- Peter: wears hat with the letter “P” and stands with arms raised to his side and eyes looking up
- Guards (2): wear helmets and stand with arms crossed
- Angel: wears a white hat, beanie, or bandana on head and extends hands to both sides



**Leader Tip:** Consider staging out this next part of the story, arranging a corner of the teaching area as the prison, having fake chains to wrap around Peter's wrists, making the guards stand on either side of him, etc.

### **Make It Inclusive!**

This is an excellent story to offer helping roles to friends with different abilities. Consider pairing a child with a different ability with an older kid to act out one of the characters. Encourage the older child to cue the friend, if needed.

**King Herod** (pause to allow volunteer to respond) **captured the apostle Peter** (pause) **and put him in prison to wait for his trial. During Bible times, prisons were terrible places—maybe just a hole in the ground. They were filthy, and people were treated terribly. Sometimes, prisoners didn't even receive food and would starve to death in jail. King Herod** (pause) **hoped that by getting rid of Peter** (pause), **he could make the Jewish leaders happy and win their support for his kingship.**

**But while Peter** (pause) **was in prison, the church** (pause) **“prayed hard to God for him”** (Acts 12:5). **The community of Jesus' followers did not give up hope that Peter** (pause) **would be set free. They gathered together and looked to God for the help they couldn't give Peter** (pause) **themselves. God answered the prayers of His people.**

**Peter** (pause) **was being held by two chains with guards** (pause) **on both sides of him. The night before Peter's** (pause) **trial, God sent an angel** (pause) **to set him free from prison. The angel** (pause) **woke Peter** (pause), **saying, “Quick! Get up!”**

**Immediately, the chains fell off Peter's** (pause) **wrists. He put on his clothes and sandals and followed the angel** (pause) **past the guards** (pause), **out of the prison, and down the street. If an angel** (pause) **appeared to you and led you out of a prison cell on the night before your trial, would you believe it was real? Peter** (pause) **didn't! He thought it was a vision God had sent to comfort him, something happening in his mind and not in the real world. It wasn't until the angel** (pause) **disappeared and Peter** (pause) **was left alone on the street that he realized God had really rescued him!**

**The church** (pause) **couldn't believe it either. While many Jesus-followers were gathered together praying, Peter** (pause) **showed up at the door. A servant girl named Rhoda heard Peter's** (pause) **voice at the door and got so excited that she ran to the other believers without letting Peter** (pause) **inside! When she told them, they didn't believe her—they thought it must be Peter's guardian angel** (pause) **instead! But when they finally let Peter** (pause) **in, they realized that God had heard their prayers for Peter** (pause).

**It's been nearly 2,000 years since that night, and God has not changed. When we pray for others, God hears us. Our prayers don't have to use the perfect words. And though we never know whether God will answer our prayers with a “yes,” a “no,” or a “wait,” we can always trust Him. We can come to Him with our prayers because God hears our prayers for others.”**

Thank your volunteers for their help, and collect the headwear and any other props.



## Connecting the Wonder Truth

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



**The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts were written by the same person, a man named Luke. Luke says that his Gospel is about what "Jesus began to do and to teach [emphasis added]" (Acts 1:1, NIV). Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and teach through the Holy Spirit in the apostles. We saw God at work through the prayers of His people in God's big story today, and Jesus continues to work in us through His Spirit today!"**

## Responding in Worship

### SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Give a special explanation for baptism and show the video. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.



### VIDEO: BAPTISM

\*\*\*Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. There are no motions to this video. Kids should still stand and leaders should model worship like they would in adult service. Please refer to the Worship Posture Tutorial on the resource page before leading.

### WORSHIP SONG: FAMOUS FOR

## Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids, as a group or as individuals. Use your own words, with these below as a guide if needed.

**Blessing:** May God bless you this week and remind you each day that He is with you. He always hears your prayers for others because He loves you, knows you, and delights in you!