

## 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
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time
- Word of Wonder: Psalm 66:19–20
- Word of Wonder Activity
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Prayer Partners



Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist

### INVITATION

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

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**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 12

**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 or Small Group

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

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### Pre-Service (15–20 min)

**RESOURCES:** [Coloring Page](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

*Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.*

**While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..**

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

**I’m curious ...**

- **Do any of your favorite sounds involve other people? Explain.**
- **What do you think might be some of God’s favorite sounds?**

**Leader Tip:** God created us to be curious, and our curiosity can lead us to Him! Give kids space and permission to be curious. It’s OK to ask questions that don’t have prescribed answers. If a discussion starts heading off the rails, bring it back by sharing what you know to be true about God.

### Small Group Begins: Welcome Question 2–3 min

**SUPPLIES:** whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

As kids arrive, invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question:

**“What is a sound that makes you happy?”**

Right at your service time, move into Small Group time by sharing your own answers and allowing kids to talk about their answers.

## Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids 5–8 min

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. Invite the kids to open their Bibles to Acts 12. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

### Read Acts 12:4–16 aloud.

**\*Remember to use dynamic voices, inflection, and pauses to keep the reading engaging!**

- Who was the king who arrested Peter and put him in prison?
- What were prisons like in Bible times?
- Why do you think some people didn't want others to hear the good news about Jesus?
- How did God answer the people's prayers for Peter?
- What an amazing story of how God heard the prayers of Peter's friends and then rescued him from prison. What did you notice about the friends who prayed for Peter?
- Peter was probably confused before he realized what God had done. Have you ever had a time when you were confused about a situation but then realized how God was working?
- How do you think the people felt when they realized God had answered their prayers?
- What are some ways God has answered your prayers for others?

**"Peter was in a really difficult situation. But the Christians who knew Peter didn't give up hope—they kept praying, and God heard their prayers for Peter. Let's take some time to talk to God too!"**

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Encourage the kids to share some prayer requests with the group. You can start the time by sharing one of your own prayer requests. Then invite a few children to pray for the prayer requests that were shared. Remind the kids that God always hears our prayers for others.

## Small Group Discussion: Older Kids 8–12 min

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

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. Invite the kids to open their Bibles to Acts 12. Encourage adult volunteers to help kids find the passage.

**Give a brief overview of the history and context using the info on page 3 of this guide.**

**Read Acts 12:4–16 aloud.**

**\*\*Remember to use dynamic voices, inflection, and pauses to keep the reading engaging!**

- **What did we learn in God's big story today about the early church?** (For example, where did the church begin, what were their leaders called, and how did people respond to their teaching?)
- **Why did Herod put Peter in prison?**
- **How did God answer the people's prayers for Peter?**
- **What an amazing story of how God heard the prayers of Peter's friends and then rescued him from prison. What did you notice about the friends who prayed for Peter?**
- **Peter was probably confused before he realized what God had done. Have you ever had a time when you were confused about a situation but then realized how God was working?**
- **Why do you think the Christians praying for Peter didn't give up hope?**
- **Does God always answer prayers the way we want Him to? Why do you think that is?**
- **Are there times when you've seen God answer your prayers for others? What happened?**

**"We can always turn to the Lord with our prayers, no matter what is going on. Some of us know others who are in tough situations. We can always talk with and listen to God and pray for others. Let's take some time to do that together right now!"**

**Leader Tip:** God loves us, hears us, and sees beyond our current circumstances. Help kids understand that sometimes God answers our prayers with a "no," "wait," or "not yet," but we can always trust Him to know what is best for us.

## Older Kids – Notes Page

**\*\*Complete the Notes Page with kids. Helping them to fill out all of the spaces. This is an important way for parents to see what their kids are learning each way and have meaningful conversations at home!**

## Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite the kids to share some of their personal prayer requests with the group. Ask for volunteers who will pray for each prayer request. You may want to suggest that those praying go near the kids they are praying for and either put their hands on them or stand near them (if kids are comfortable with it) as a way of encouraging those being prayed for.

## Word of Wonder

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid)

**"The Word of Wonder we are learning for the Power of Prayer series is Psalm 66:19–20. We saw how God listened to the people who were praying for Peter, and these verses remind us that God listens to our prayers too. Let's read it together!"**

Invite the kids to open their Bibles to Psalm 66. Ask everyone to read the verse aloud together. Read it together a few times and invite the kids to emphasize different words each time. When the kids read that God has *listened* or *heard*, they can cup their ears like they are listening. When they read *praise*, they can throw their hands in the air or shout out, "praise!" When they read *love*, they can hug themselves or hug one another.

## Word of Wonder Activity

**"God hears our prayers for others, and we can praise Him for it! Let's practice our Word of Wonder together."**

**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids. Make sure you help them recite the Word of Wonder as they may not be able to read it for themselves yet.

Invite the kids to stand in a circle. Assign someone to begin by reciting (or reading) the Word of Wonder to someone else in the circle. They should address the other person by name as they recite by saying, for example, "Bella, but God has surely listened ...". After the Word of Wonder has been recited, invite kids to cheer and praise God. Bella can then address someone else in the circle and recite the verse to that person, and when she is finished, encourage the kids to cheer and praise God. Continue until everyone has said the Word of Wonder.

**"God hears your prayers for others, and we can pray for each other just like we said the Word of Wonder to each other."**

**Leader Tip:** For Older Kids. Invite several older kids to lead everyone in the Word of Wonder, modeling the motions (or creating their own!) for each key word.

Talk about these questions:

- Which phrase in our Word of Wonder stands out to you most? Why?
- Why is it important to pray for others?

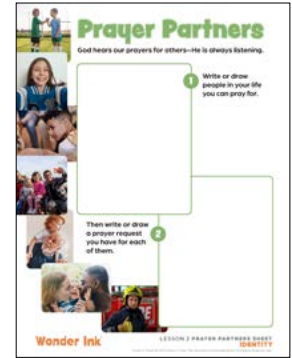
**Large Group!**

## Responding in Worship: Prayer Partners

**SUPPLIES:** writing utensils, coloring utensils

**RESOURCES:** [Prayer Partners Sheets \(1 per kid\)](#), [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print copies of the Prayer Partner Sheets, one per kid. Set out writing and coloring utensils. Gather kids together. Display the Responding in Worship Slide.



**Leader Tip:** As you talk about prayer today, help kids understand that prayer is more than just talking at God. It is communicating and connecting with God through talking and listening to Him. We can pray out loud, silently, on our own, or with others.

**"Today we learned about how Peter was in a very scary situation. He was in prison and about to face trial because he taught others about Jesus. But his friends continued to pray for him, and God heard their prayers. If God hears our prayers, does it always mean that He will do what we want Him to?** Invite kids to share their thoughts.

**God always listens to our prayers and hears us when we pray for others. When we pray, we talk with God, and we share our praise, concerns, and requests with Him. We trust that God is King over everything, and He always knows the best way for us and those we are praying for. We can trust that God will always do what is right.**

**God wants us to pray for others, and He listens to our prayers. We're going to take some time to think about some people in our lives who we can pray for.**

Pass out the Prayer Partners Sheets, writing utensils, and coloring utensils. Invite the kids to spend time writing or drawing people in their lives they can pray for. Play songs from the [Power of Prayer Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as the kids work.

After a few minutes, encourage the children to write down one or two ways they can pray for the people they thought of.

**God always listens to us when we pray, and He loves it when we come to Him and offer up prayers for those in our lives. Let's take some time to pray for the people on our papers."**

If your kids are comfortable, encourage them to partner up and pray for the prayer requests they've put on their papers. Kids can also pray on their own, and younger kids may want to pray with you or another leader in a bigger group.