

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: God listens to me and hears my prayers. I can praise Him. —from Psalm 66:19–20

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers for Others

SCRIPTURE: Acts 12

WORD OF WONDER: From 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!

LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Hears Our Prayers for Others

SCRIPTURE: Acts 12

WORD OF WONDER: From Psalm 66:19–20

Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

Introduce the kids to Tac, the curious cat.

Leader: It's so nice to be with you today and to hear another one of God's stories. Today, we are going to ... oh wait, did you hear what I heard?

(Tac interrupts the leader, meowing from the side.)

Tac the Cat: Meow!

Leader: It's Tac, the curious cat! He's back to hear one of our stories too! Welcome, Tac! Are you ready to listen?

Tac the Cat: Actually, first I'm curious about something. How did you know it was me?

Leader: Well, I heard you "meow." I know that's the sound cats make—and you're our favorite cat around here!

Tac the Cat: Oh, wow. You knew it was me just by what you heard, before you even saw me? What about other animals? Do you know what says "woof" or "moo"? And what sound does a person make?

Leader: Well, kids, do you know that? What animal says "woof"?

(Allow the kids to respond.)

Leader: Yes, a dog! And a cow says "moo." And, actually, people say all kinds of things when we talk, even though we all sound different. All of our voices are different, and we can usually tell who is talking just by hearing the sound of the person's voice.

When someone I love calls my name, I can tell who it is just by the sound of the person's voice! Do you ever recognize anyone's voice, just by the sound?

Tac the Cat: I know your voice, of course!

Leader: That's great, Tac! The Bible talks about this too! God knows our voices when we talk to Him in prayer. And there was a woman who knew her friend was at the door just by hearing his voice!

Tac the Cat: What happened? I'm curious!

Leader: We'll find out when we hear God's big story today.

Tac the Cat: That sounds great! I'm going to see whose voices I can hear and if anyone else can tell I'm a cat just from my "meow!" Meow! Meow!

"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: Can you tell when your friends or family members are calling you? Allow the kids to respond. Do you think God knows your voice too? Allow the kids to respond. I wonder—when I pray ... does God hear that too? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how God hears all our prayers for other people?"

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD HEARS OUR PRAYERS FOR OTHERS**. Today, we'll discover more about how God hears our prayers for others!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Encourage the kids to say the declaration boldly with you with the motions.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

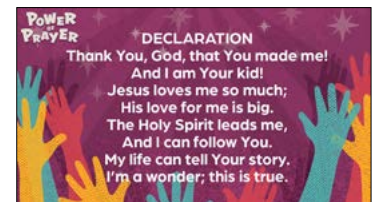
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words, with these below as guide if needed **God, we know You hear us when we pray for others, and You answer our prayers. So we come to You today, excited to learn about Your truth and to see how our prayers have power because of You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

"Today, we'll learn about how God hears us when we pray for others. Let's sing together about how God hears our prayers for others!"

WORSHIP VIDEOS: PRAISE, THIS LITTLE LIGHT OF MINE

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Acts in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found.

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Acts in the Bible.

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, craft sticks (5), glue or tape, scissors (prep only), box, cardstock or construction paper (1 sheet, optional)

RESOURCES: [Craft Stick Puppets \(1 set\)](#)

Ahead of time, print one set of the Craft Stick Puppets and cut out the characters. Tape or glue each paper puppet onto a craft stick, leaving part of the craft stick at the bottom. You will have the following puppets: Peter, two guards, angel, group of people. Set up a box for the people to be inside, praying. You can cut a small door in the box for Peter to knock on. You can make a pretend small jail cell by cutting strips from a sheet of cardstock or construction paper.



"You can help tell the story today with the craft stick puppets. The book of Acts tells the true story of how the community of Jesus' followers—called the church—started. Peter was one of the leaders of the early church. Some people weren't happy he was talking about Jesus so much. So they threw Peter into prison, even though he hadn't done anything wrong. He was chained up and put between two guards so he couldn't escape. Choose a child to come hold the Peter puppet and two kids to come hold the guard puppets. Encourage the kids to put the Peter puppet behind the pretend jail cell (if you have one) between the two guard puppets.

But while Peter was in prison, people from the church prayed hard to God for him. The community of Jesus' followers did not give up hope that Peter would be set free. They gathered together and asked God for help. Allow a child to come hold the people puppet and put it inside the box (pretending it's a house).

God heard the prayers and answered the people's prayers for Peter. Peter was being held by two chains with a soldier guarding him on each side, but he had fallen asleep in his prison cell. The night before Peter was supposed to go to trial before a judge, God sent an angel to set him free from prison. The angel woke Peter saying, "Quick! Get up!" Allow a child to come hold the angel puppet and bring it close to the Peter puppet.

Immediately, the chains fell off Peter's wrists. He put on his clothes and sandals and followed the angel past the guards, out of the prison, and down the street. If using a paper jail cell, tear it apart. Encourage the kid with the angel puppet to lead the Peter puppet out past the guards and move toward the pretend house. The guard puppets can go away.

If an angel appeared to you and led you out of a prison cell, would you believe it was real? Peter didn't—at least not at first! He thought it was a vision or a dream from God. But when the angel disappeared and Peter was left alone on the street, he realized God had really rescued him! Peter walked down the street. The angel puppet can go away.

The church couldn't believe it either. While many Jesus followers were gathered together praying for Peter inside a house, Peter showed up at the door. A servant girl named Rhoda heard Peter's voice at the door and got so excited that she ran to the other believers without letting Peter inside! When she told them, they didn't believe her—they thought it must've been Peter's angel. Encourage the Peter puppet to go to the pretend house and pretend to knock on the door. The people puppet can go to the door from inside the pretend house. **But when they finally let Peter in, they**

realized God had heard their prayers for Peter.

Encourage the people puppet to pretend to open the door on the house and move up and down with excitement.

It's been about 2,000 years since that night, and God has not changed. When we pray for others, God hears us. We can come to Him with our prayers because God hears our prayers for others."

Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

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

The books of Luke and Acts in the Bible were written by the same person, a man named Luke. The book of Luke is about "all that Jesus began to do and to teach (emphasis added)" (Acts 1:1, NIV). Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and teach even after He returned to heaven. Jesus continued to teach people about Himself through the Holy Spirit and 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!"

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for hearing their prayers. Use your own words, with these below as a guide if needed.

God, You love when Your kids talk to You in prayer. And You hear us, God. Thank You that we can come to You in prayer and that our prayers have power because of You. We pray for the people we know. Please remind us of Your presence and Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive a blessing as you speak it over them. Use your own words, with these below as a guide if needed.

Blessing: May you go out this week with the knowledge that God made you, He knows you, and He loves you. He will hear your prayers for others!