

Peter is Released - Faithfulness, Patience, Peace

Scripture Passage: Acts 12:1-18

Memory Verse: Hebrews 11:1 Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.

Beliefs: The Spirit helps me to be faithful, have patience, and have peace in good times and hard times.

Actions: I can believe in God's plan, feel peace, and wait patiently for my instructions with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Materials

*additional passage versions
& reference passages are
included at the end of the
lesson plan

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Main Teaching Passage:

Acts 12:1-18 (NIRV)

12 About this time, King Herod arrested some people who belonged to the church. He planned to make them suffer greatly. 2 He had James killed with a sword. James was John's brother.

3 Herod saw that the death of James pleased some Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 4 After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in prison. Peter was placed under guard. He was watched by four groups of four soldiers each.

Herod planned to put Peter on public trial. It would take place after the Passover Feast.

5 So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed hard to God for him.

6 It was the night before Herod was going to bring him to trial. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Two chains held him there. Lookouts stood guard at the entrance. 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. A light shone in the prison cell. The angel struck Peter on his side. Peter woke up. "Quick!" the angel said. "Get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists.

8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter did so. "Put on your coat," the angel told him. "Follow me." 9 Peter followed him out of the prison. But he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision.

10 They passed the first and second guards. Then they came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. They went through it. They walked the length of one street. Suddenly the angel left Peter.

11 Then Peter realized what had happened. He said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his angel. He set me free from Herod's power. He saved me from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

12 When Peter understood what had happened, he went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark. Many people had gathered in her home. They were praying there. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 She recognized Peter's voice. She was so excited that she ran back without opening the door. "Peter is at the door!" she exclaimed.

15 "You're out of your mind," they said to her. But she kept telling them it was true. So they said, "It must be his angel."

16 Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. He explained how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said. Then he went to another place.

18 In the morning the soldiers were bewildered. They couldn't figure out what had happened to Peter.

Acts 12:1-18 (MSG)

1-4 That's when King Herod got it into his head to go after some of the church members. He murdered James, John's brother. When he saw how much it raised his popularity ratings with the Jews, he arrested Peter—all this during Passover Week, mind you—and had him thrown in jail, putting four squads of four soldiers each to guard him. He was planning a public lynching after Passover.

5 All the time that Peter was under heavy guard in the jailhouse, the church prayed for him most strenuously.

6 Then the time came for Herod to bring him out for the kill. That night, even though shackled to two soldiers, one on either side, Peter slept like a baby. And there were guards at the door keeping their eyes on the place. Herod was taking no chances!

7-9 Suddenly there was an angel at his side and light flooding the room. The angel shook Peter and got him up: "Hurry!" The handcuffs fell off his wrists. The angel said, "Get dressed. Put on your shoes." Peter did it. Then, "Grab your coat and let's get out of here." Peter followed him, but didn't believe it was really an angel—he thought he was dreaming.

10-11 Past the first guard and then the second, they came to the iron gate that led into the city. It swung open before them on its own, and they were out on the street, free as the breeze. At the first intersection the angel left him, going his own way. That's when Peter realized it was no dream. "I can't believe it—this really happened! The Master sent his angel and rescued me from Herod's vicious little production and the spectacle the Jewish mob was looking forward to."

12-14 Still shaking his head, amazed, he went to Mary's house, the Mary who was John Mark's mother. The house was packed with praying friends. When he knocked on the door to the courtyard, a young woman named Rhoda came to see who it was. But when she recognized his voice—Peter's voice!—she was so excited and eager to tell everyone Peter was there that she forgot to open the door and left him standing in the street.

15-16 But they wouldn't believe her, dismissing her, dismissing her report. "You're crazy," they said. She stuck by her story, insisting. They still wouldn't believe her and said, "It must be his angel." All this time poor Peter was standing out in the street, knocking away.

16-17 Finally they opened up and saw him—and went wild! Peter put his hands up and calmed them down. He described how the Master had gotten him out of jail, then said, "Tell James and the brothers what's happened." He left them and went off to another place.

18-19 At daybreak the jail was in an uproar. "Where is Peter? What's happened to Peter?" When Herod sent for him and they could neither produce him nor explain why not, he ordered their execution: "Off with their heads!"

Large Group Worship - 15 minutes

2 songs as closely related in theme as possible

- Family Service Project Info
- Small Group Challenge: Raise your hand if you worked on your verse this week and you know it in your heart!!
 - Awesome! I'm excited to find out how many people learned it this week!!! Be sure to update the graph in your room.
- Review Fruit of the Spirit
- Dismiss to small groups.

Opening Illustration - 5 minutes: Have Patience? Use Patience.

- Ask for several volunteers. If a child who cannot read volunteers pair them with an older child.
- Say - I am going to give you a piece of paper with instructions. Read the instructions then do what it says. It may get a little loud and crazy in here so be ready! Do only what your paper says and DO NOT turn it over until I say "GO!"
- Pass out instruction sheets and say GO.
- Encourage students, cheering, etc
- After a few minutes ask children if any of them read ALL of the instructions before beginning to act. (assuming none did)
 - If a student followed the final instruction first, ask them to read that instruction out loud for the others.
- Thank all of the children for being great volunteers and direct to Life Groups as they learn 3 more characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit.

Teaching

- Review last week's lesson:
 - Say - We've studied one bible happening about a group of Christians in Macedonia who received love and joy from the Holy Spirit and showed it by giving generously from what little they had. Then we heard about Peter who did not give money to the man who asked for it, but did give him what he had. What did Peter give? healing through the power of Jesus
 - Say - When Peter healed the man in Jesus's name what characteristics of the Spirit did he show? gentleness and kindness
 - Ask - Did you notice yourself showing any of the Fruit of the Spirit last week? How so?
- Say - This week we're going to study another happening from Peter's life. It's got some pretty not fair parts, but has an AMAZING ending. Let's open our bibles to Acts chapter 12.

for younger groups storytell this part of the event

Acts 12:1-4 About this time, King Herod arrested some people who belonged to the church. He planned to make them suffer greatly. 2 He had James killed with a sword. James was John's brother. 3 Herod saw that the death of James pleased some Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. 4 After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in prison. Peter was placed under guard. He was watched by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put Peter on public trial. It would take place after the Passover Feast.

- Ask - So what just happened? King Herod (grandson of the King Herod who was king when Jesus was born) was earning points with some of the people who didn't like Christians by persecuting the Christians in pretty severe ways - he even killed James. He saw that got him se-

rious popularity so put Peter in prison too. He left him there with LOTS of guards until after Passover.

- Read Acts 12:5. This is a super important verse.
 - So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed hard to God for him.
 - Ask - What is the key in this verse? the church prayed hard for him
- Say - Picture this while I read it. Read Acts 12:6
 - It was the night before Herod was going to bring him to trial. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Two chains held him there. Lookouts stood guard at the entrance.
 - Ask - Can you see it? Let's keep going.
 - 7 Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. A light shone in the prison cell. The angel struck Peter on his side. Peter woke up. "Quick!" the angel said. "Get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists. 8 Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter did so. "Put on your coat," the angel told him. "Follow me."
 - Ask - What just happened?! An angel pops into the prison WHILE Peter is chained up and sleeping, pokes him, and tells him to get dressed and follow him. AND Peter's chains fall off! AND the angel doesn't tell him where they are going or what they are doing. AND it's after he's been in prison for DAYS.
- Say - Next!
 - 9 Peter followed him out of the prison. But he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. 10 They passed the first and second guards. Then they came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. They went through it. They walked the length of one street. Suddenly the angel left Peter.
 - 11 Then Peter realized what had happened. He said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his angel. He set me free from Herod's power. He saved me from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."
 - Ask - What did Peter think was happening? dreaming/vision
 - Ask - What did he KNOW when he realized what was really happening? God set him free
- Say - Wow! This has been intense! Where do you think Peter goes next? accept answers
 - Say - Let's read to find out the end of the happening!
 - 12 When Peter understood what had happened, he went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark. Many people had gathered in her home. They were praying there. 13 Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. 14 She recognized Peter's voice. She was so excited that she ran back without opening the door. "Peter is at the door!" she exclaimed.
 - 15 "You're out of your mind," they said to her. But she kept telling them it was true. So they said, "It must be his angel."
 - 16 Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. 17 Peter motioned with his hand for them to be quiet. He explained how the Lord had brought him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers and sisters about this," he said. Then he went to another place.
 - 18 In the morning the soldiers were bewildered. They couldn't figure out what had happened to Peter. 19 So Herod had them look everywhere for Peter. But they didn't find him. Then Herod questioned the guards closely. He ordered that they be put to death.

- Say - What?! Wow!!
 - Ask - Where did Peter go? Mary's, his friend John Mark's mom, house
 - Ask - Were they so excited to see him? YES! The servant answered the door and then closed him out because she was so excited. Hah!!
 - Ask - So then what did he do?! stood there knocking until someone finally let him in
 - Ask - What did Herod have done to the guards? put to death
 - Ask - How does that make you feel? accept answers
- Say - We got to study an interesting and miraculous happening in Peter's life. Do you remember WHY we studied it tonight? learning about faith, patience and peace through the Holy Spirit
- Ask - How does Peter show these fruit? accept answers
- Ask - What do you wonder about in this happening? wonder together

Scripture Memory Verse

- Spend a few moments creating motions or a rhythm to go with the bible verse.
 - **Session Verse: Hebrews 11:1**
Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of what we do not see.
 - **Unit Verse: Galatians 5:22-23**
But the fruit the Holy Spirit produces is love, joy and peace. It is being patient, kind and good. It is being faithful and gentle and having control of oneself. There is no law against things of that kind.

Application Activities - 20 minutes:

Game: Capture the Flag/Jail Break - In the worship center.

Split the kids into 2 even teams. On each side, use the cones to mark off an area that will be the prison. On each side, use the cones to mark off an area that will house the flag (usually a 5-foot by 5-foot circle). The object of the game is to steal the other team's flag and bring it over the center line to your side without getting tagged. Anyone who is on the other team's side, and is tagged by a member of that team, MUST go immediately to prison. To be saved from prison, someone from your team must make it all the way to you without being tagged, and then must walk you back (holding onto your clothing, hand, linking elbows...etc.), to your own side. You can only save one person from prison at a time, and both saver and "savee" must walk back to their own side before re-joining the game (no breaking away to steal the flag!). You cannot pass/throw the flag to another member of your team. If someone tries to steal the flag, and is caught before crossing the center line, then that person goes to prison and the flag goes back inside the safe zone.

Wrap Up

- Say - So far we've learned about love, joy, gentleness, kindness, peace, patience, and faithfulness.
- Say - Next week we will learn the last 3 characteristics of the Fruit of the Spirit. I'm excited to hear how the Spirit helps you this week.
- Be sure to send home their Family Page and Personal Study materials.

Family Component

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Personal Study

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Related Sources:

Additional Passages

Main Teaching Passage: