

LESSON 6: PETER ESCAPES PRISON

Leader Guide for Ages 3-6

Classroom: Monkeys

 Acts 12:6-17

09/27/2020

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Acts 12:6-17
- In This Passage: Peter is in prison when God surprises him by sending an angel to lead him out of jail. Peter is so surprised at first, he thinks he's dreaming! Peter goes to a house where people are praying for him, and they get a surprising answer to their prayers!
- Bible Point: God is surprising...
- Application: ...so we watch for his surprises.
- Summary Verse: "Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to your name goes all the glory for your unfailing love and faithfulness" (Psalm 115:1).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *God is surprising*. Most kids love surprises (at least good ones). As you teach this lesson, help kids capture an excitement for waiting and watching to see what surprising thing God will do next in their own lives.
- Think About: Thank God for three surprising things he's done for you recently.

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to surprise and wow the kids in your class.

Quick Tip

- Surprise another volunteer or leader with a kind word, a small gift, a hug, or a spontaneous blessing. Let them see God surprising them through you! (Bonus: It'll help your team grow closer together.)

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Preschoolers share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible

Easy Prep

- You might search the internet if you need some example knock-knock jokes to share with kids.



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Preschoolers are greeted with a surprise, act out the story, and sing a song.

Supplies

- Bible
- fragrant snack (1 small portion per child)
- wet wipes
- flashlight
- rope (long enough for all kids to hold)
- stool

Easy Prep

- Choose a snack that kids will be able to smell in the room, such as cut-up ripe bananas or freshly baked cookies.
- Talk with an adult or teen helper ahead of time about showing up at the door with the fragrant snack.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Preschoolers draw needs, pray, and receive a surprise.

Supplies

- heart stickers (1 per child)
- 2 identical boxes or containers with lids
- paper (1 sheet for every 4 kids)
- crayons

Easy Prep

- Cut paper into quarters.
- Place the heart stickers in one of the identical boxes. Put it somewhere that's easily accessible but also out of preschoolers' sight.
- Ask an adult or teen helper to switch out the two identical boxes while kids' heads are bowed and their eyes are closed.



OBJECT LESSON

Preschoolers whisper through long tubes.

Supplies

- various types of long cardboard tubes or plastic tubes (1 for every 2-4 kids)



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers free stuffed animals from jail.

Supplies

- various stuffed animals (2 per child)
- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Tape a square on the floor in the center of the room large enough to hold all the preschoolers.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Preschoolers play a version of Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes.



CRAFT

Preschoolers make baskets to surprise their families.

Supplies

- paper plates (1 per child)
- crayons
- stickers
- “Surprise Coupons” handout (2 per child)
(download [here](#))
- scissors (for teacher use only)
- stapler (for teacher use only)
- hole punch
- chenille wires (1 per child)
- simple prizes, such as erasers (1 per child)
(optional)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Cut apart the “Surprise Coupons” handouts.

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Easy Prep

- You might search the internet if you need some example knock-knock jokes to share with kids.

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have preschoolers stack their hands and cheer, "I love Jesus!"
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having preschoolers do jumping jacks as many times as the birthday child is old. With each jumping jack, they'll say "Happy birthday!"
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we'll learn that God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. That makes me think of when I'm listening to a knock-knock joke. I listen for a surprise ending! Listen for a surprise ending to my knock-knock jokes!**

Share

- Share a few knock-knock jokes that you prepared ahead of time.
- In leader-led small groups, have preschoolers share knock-knock jokes. It's okay if they repeat ones they hear from you or other preschoolers or if they don't make sense.
- After small groups have discussed, have adult or teen helpers share with the whole group a few of the knock-knock jokes they told in their small groups.

Summarize

Open a Bible, and say: **Knock-knock jokes are fun because they give us a surprise at the end! Today as we read the Bible, we'll hear a story about someone who heard a knock at the door and got a surprise when she opened it. We'll find out that we can watch for God's surprises. Let's look in the Bible to hear more about that.**

Pray, thanking God for his wonderful surprises.



Supplies

- Bible
- fragrant snack (1 small portion per child)
- wet wipes
- flashlight
- rope (long enough for all kids to hold)
- stool

Easy Prep

- Choose a snack that kids will be able to smell in the room, such as cut-up ripe bananas or freshly baked cookies.
- Talk with an adult or teen helper ahead of time about showing up at the door with the fragrant snack.

Receive a Surprise

Say: **Today we'll find out that God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. Let's open the Bible and find out what it has to say about God's surprises.** Open the Bible, and say: **We're reading about a man named Peter today.**

The adult or teen helper will now knock loudly on the door. Look surprised and turn to look at the door. **Who is that? I wasn't expecting anyone. Were you?** Invite kids to share whether they knew if anyone was coming. Then sniff loudly, and say: **And I smell something. What do you smell?** Lead kids to share whether they can smell the snack.

Jog to the door without opening it. Say: **I smell [the fragrant snack]! Yes! I'm hungry!** Jog away from the door. **What a surprise—we're going to get to have [the fragrant snack]!**

Sit on the stool. The adult or teen helper will knock again. Say: **Now where were we? I think...** More knocks. **Oh, I guess I should answer the door for our surprise visitor.** Go back to the door and welcome in the adult or teen helper with the snack. Have kids clean their hands, and then give each child a small portion. Allow kids to enjoy the snack for about a minute.

Act It Out

Say: **I'm sorry I left our friend, [name of adult or teen helper with the snack], at the door with the surprise snack. I was just so excited that I forgot to even open the door. That reminds me of the Bible story we're learning today. God gave his friends such a surprise that they didn't even believe it at first! Let's find out what happened.**

Have kids sit in a circle, and dim the lights. Say: **The Bible says a man named Peter was in jail. That's where they keep people when they do something very bad. But Peter hadn't done something very bad. It wasn't fair that Peter was in jail. But he was all chained up.** Place the rope inside the circle near kids' feet. **They chained him to two soldiers—one to his left and one to his right.** Have kids pretend to be chained to the kids beside them by having them hold on to the rope.

Say: **It was nighttime, so Peter was sleeping.** Lead kids to lie down and pretend to sleep, reminding them to keep hold of the rope since Peter had to sleep all chained up.

Say: **All of a sudden there was a bright light in the jail, and God's angel came to visit Peter!** Turn on the flashlight. **God sure is surprising! But Peter was asleep, so the angel had to push Peter in his side.** Have adult and teen helpers touch each child on the back, and when a child is touched on the back, he or she can "wake up" and sit up, still holding on to the rope.

Say: **Then the chains fell off Peter's hands and feet!** Have kids toss the rope down. **I've never seen chains just fall off someone. God is so surprising!**

The angel told Peter to get up and get dressed. Lead kids to stand and pretend to put on pants and a shirt. **The angel also told Peter to put on his shoes.** Lead kids to pretend to put on shoes. **And his coat.** Lead kids to pretend to put on a coat.

Say: **All along, Peter thought he was dreaming. He didn't think all this was really happening. Then**

the angel led Peter out of the jail. Lead kids to walk several steps. **They went past one guard post—that's where soldiers would look for people to make sure they weren't escaping.** Lead kids to tiptoe quietly past the first guard post and then continue walking, following you. Point out that the guards didn't see Peter and the angel!

Stop and say: **Then they went past a second guard post.** Lead kids to tiptoe past a second guard post and then continue walking, following you. **Then they came to a closed gate, and it opened itself!** Lead kids to make a loud creaking sound like an old gate might make.

Say: **Wow, God was doing amazing things through this angel. God is surprising. Peter and the angel were walking down the street when the angel suddenly left Peter. That's when Peter realized he wasn't dreaming. God had saved him from the jail! God is so surprising!** Lead kids to cheer.

Say: **So Peter went to his friends' house where a bunch of his friends were meeting together and praying for him. He knocked on the door.** Knock on a hard surface such as wood. Lead kids to pretend to knock.

Say: **A girl named Rhoda came to the door, but she didn't open it—kind of like I didn't open our door earlier! She heard Peter's voice and was so surprised that she ran away from the door to tell all Peter's friends that he was at the door. All along, Peter was standing at the door—kind of like how I left [name of adult or teen helper] at the door. When she told Peter's friends, they didn't believe her. But then they heard more knocking.** Knock on the hard surface again, and have kids pretend to knock. **They went to the door and found Peter there! They were amazed and surprised at what God had done to help Peter. They found out God is surprising. God has surprises for us, too, and we can look for his surprises!**

Sing a Song

Say: **Let's learn a song to help us remember that we can look for God's surprises.** Lead kids in the following song and motions to the tune of "Boom, Boom, Ain't It Great to Be Crazy?"

Boom, boom, ain't it great to get surprises? (*jump up and wave hands in air*)
Boom, boom, ain't it great to get surprises? (*jump up and wave hands in air*)
Our God is always surprising us, (*hands on hips and nod*)
Boom, boom, ain't it great to get surprises? (*jump up and wave hands in air*)

Say: **God could surprise us with a new friend who moves into our neighborhood! Let's sing the song again and share more ways God surprises us.** Sing the song a second time.

Say: **God could surprise us by making us better when we're sick.** Sing the song a third time.

Say: **God could surprise us by making church really fun even when we have to leave our parents!** Sing the song again, and then invite kids to share other ways God could surprise them. You might help them think of ideas, such as God surprising them with a new baby brother or sister. Keep singing the song as time allows.

Say: **God is surprising, and we can watch for his surprises!**



Supplies

- heart stickers (1 per child)
- 2 identical boxes or containers with lids
- paper (1 sheet for every 4 kids)
- crayons

Easy Prep

- Cut paper into quarters.
- Place the heart stickers in one of the identical boxes. Put it somewhere that's easily accessible but also out of preschoolers' sight.
- Ask an adult or teen helper to switch out the two identical boxes while kids' heads are bowed and their eyes are closed.

Draw a Need

Have kids sit in a circle. Say: **Today we found out that God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. God's friend Peter was in jail, and he needed God's help. One night while Peter was sleeping, God surprised him by helping him escape the jail. We can tell God our needs, like Peter did, and wait for God to surprise us.**

Share about something *you* need right now. You might need more sleep, you might need money to pay a bill, or you might need a friend because you're lonely.

Ask: • **What's something *you* need?** Distribute paper and crayons, and have kids draw their needs on the quarter sheets of paper.

Pray

Say: **We can share our needs with God, and he'll listen.** Collect the kids' drawings in the box, and close it.

Hold up the box. Say: **Let's share all these needs with God now.** Lead kids to bow their heads and close their eyes. Have the adult or teen helper quickly switch the two identical boxes so that the box of hearts is now in place of the box with the drawings. Have the helper place the box with drawings out of sight.

Pray: **God, you're so surprising! You bring us wonderful surprises all the time. And we're so thankful for your surprises. We know you helped Peter when he needed help, so we're sharing some things we need right now with you.** Briefly mention kids' needs. **We know you love us and want only good things for us. We'll be watching to see how you take care of us in a surprising way. We love you! In Jesus' name, amen.**

Open the Box

Pick up the box, and say: **It's great to share our needs with God—he hears us when we talk to him!** Open the lid, and look surprised. **There's a surprise in here for all of us!** Give each child a glimpse of the box of hearts, and then give each child a heart sticker to put on. **God loves us so much—all his surprises are good for us! I'm so thankful that God is surprising!**

Don't forget to watch for God's surprises this week, and come back next week to share any ways God surprised you!



OBJECT LESSON

Whisper Loud

[10 min]

Supplies

- various types of long cardboard tubes or plastic tubes (1 for every 2-4 kids)

Tip

- A variety of tubes will work for this experience. We used cardboard gift wrapping tubes, plastic tablecloth cardboard tubes, a vacuum cleaner hose, and a dryer hose.

Whisper and Listen Through Tubes

Say: **Do you know what a whisper sounds like? Let's whisper a message to someone right now!** Have kids turn to a friend and whisper "God is surprising." **Great job! Whispers are usually really quiet.** Hold up one of the tubes. **Let's see what happens when we whisper "God is surprising" through one of these tubes.**

- Have kids form pairs, and give each pair a tube. If you don't have enough tubes, you could give one tube to a group of four kids and they could take turns.
- Have one child be the "Listener" and put his or her ear up to one end of the tube.
- Designate the other partner the "Whisperer." He or she will whisper "God is surprising" through the other end of the tube.
- Watch the Listeners' surprised reactions. Their friends' whispers will sound really loud!
- Invite the Listeners to whisper "God is surprising" back to their friends.
- Have kids explore and play with different tubes. As they play, remind kids to whisper so they don't hurt their friends' ears!

Talk About It

Say: **Surprise! Our whispers sounded really loud. In our Bible story, Peter's friends were so surprised when they heard him knocking on the door. God had helped him! God is surprising. So we watch—and listen—for his surprises.**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Stuffed Animal Jailbreak

[10 min]

Supplies

- various stuffed animals (2 per child)
- painter's tape
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Tape a square on the floor in the center of the room large enough to hold all the preschoolers.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today's lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Try to Free Stuffed Animals

Say: **Today's Bible story was amazing! God surprised Peter by breaking him out of jail. I have a fun game to play where you'll get to break some stuffed animals out of jail—they need your help!**

- Place the stuffed animals inside the square you taped to the floor, and have your adult and teen helpers stand around the square as Jail Guards.
- Preschoolers will try to run into the square, grab a stuffed animal, and run back out without getting tagged by a Guard.
- If a preschooler is tagged, he or she must stand in the jail along with the stuffed animals and wait to be rescued by a friend who's still free.
- Every few minutes, have the Jail Guards pretend to fall asleep. They can remain standing or crouch down and make loud, silly snoring sounds. If needed, cue preschoolers that when the Guards fall asleep it's a great time to free friends and stuffed animals.
- Each time the Guards wake up again, have them act surprised at who managed to break free from the jail.
- To keep the energy level high, encourage preschoolers to run around a lot to distract the Guards and work together to free the animals and their friends from the jail.
- If everyone ends up in jail or the preschoolers manage to get everyone out of jail, simply reset the game and play again.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Say: **The guards in our game were really surprised when anyone was able to break out of jail. The guards of the jail Peter was in were probably *really* surprised when God set Peter free! The biggest surprise I've ever had was...** Tell about your most memorable surprise, whether it was a surprise birthday party someone had arranged or a stranger surprising you by paying for your order at a restaurant or coffee shop.

Ask: • **What's the biggest surprise that's happened to you?** Preschoolers might share about surprise birthday parties or unexpected visits from family members.

Say: **Surprises can be so much fun and make us say "Wow!" It's fun and exciting to watch for the ways God will surprise us.**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes Remix

Tip

- If you're not familiar with this classic song and its motions, a quick online search will help you easily learn it.

Play a Surprising Version of Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Say: **Today's Bible story was full of surprises when God set Peter free from prison. Peter could hardly believe what was happening. Surprises can be so exciting and fun! Let's play a game that has some surprises.**

- Gather everyone to stand facing you, if they aren't already.
- Practice the traditional version of Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes with kids.
- Once you've established a rhythm with the game and kids feel like they know what to expect, switch up some body parts and alter the sequence of the parts you call out and point to. Such as: **Head, belly, heart and belly, heart and belly. Head, belly, heart and belly, heart and belly. Elbows, and knees, and laugh so silly** (pause and lead kids in a silly laugh). **Head, belly, heart and belly, heart and belly.**
- Have fun varying the song and motions, and ham it up with the kids.

Talk About It

Ask: • **When were you surprised in the game?**

Say: **Surprises can be so much fun! It's also fun to know that a surprise might be coming and to watch for it—that's exciting, too!**

Say: **There are so many great surprises, and sometimes it's God who's surprising us. God is surprising in the ways he loves and cares for us. We can watch for his loving surprises all around us, and it's exciting when we see a surprise from God!**



CRAFT

Surprise Baskets

[20 min]

Supplies

- paper plates (1 per child)
- crayons
- stickers
- “Surprise Coupons” handout (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- scissors (for teacher use only)
- stapler (for teacher use only)
- hole punch
- chenille wires (1 per child)
- simple prizes, such as erasers (1 per child) (optional)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.
- Cut apart the “Surprise Coupons” handouts.



Explain

Say: In our Bible story, we heard how God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. We can surprise other people, too! Let's make baskets to put surprises in for our families.

Make Surprise Baskets

- Give each child a paper plate.
- Have kids use crayons and stickers to decorate both sides of the plate.
- Cut each plate in half, and staple the edges together to make a basket.
- Punch a hole in the center top side of the basket, and have preschoolers loop a chenille wire through the hole, twisting the ends together.

Make Coupons

Say: **When you get home, you can put your basket on a doorknob to surprise your family members with fun presents. You could fill the basket with a drawing, a snack, a sticker, or anything else you can think of to put in there.**

Right now we're going to make some coupons you can put into your basket. You'll make two for a free hug, two for a free high-five, two for a free smile, and two for a free chore. When you give someone a coupon, that person can come to you and get you to do what the coupon says!

Have each preschooler color two sets of coupons to take home.

Surprise!

If you have time, surprise kids with simple prizes like erasers. Preschoolers can stand with their baskets behind them while you place a surprise for them in the baskets.

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