

LESSON 6: PETER ESCAPES PRISON

Leader Guide for Grades 1 & 2

Classroom: Adventure

 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

Kids 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

Kids pretend to escape jail, smell a surprise, and pray.

Supplies

- Bibles
- black crepe paper
- tape
- fishing line (optional)
- flashlight
- poster board
- 10 inflated balloons
- pin
- freshly-popped popcorn or other fragrant snack
- extra adult who can briefly stop by

Easy Prep

- Section off a part of your room by taping strips of black crepe paper to the ceiling so they hang down and look like jail cell bars. If you have high ceilings and can't do that, you could tape fishing line from one wall to the other and hang the crepe paper from that. Make sure the area you section off is large enough for all the kids.
- Arrange with your extra adult what time you're planning on doing the Core Bible Discovery. That person will stand outside the room with the fragrant snack, waiting for your cue to knock on the wall. The cue will be when you gather kids' attention after the question about things that are so good, they felt like a dream. (The person should remain hidden from the kids' view, but you'll want to keep the door open so the smell wafts in.)
- Set the balloons in the back of the room, opposite where you'll be teaching.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids 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 kids' 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

Kids whisper through long tubes.

Supplies

- various types of long cardboard tubes or plastic tubes



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids 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 kids.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

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



CRAFT

Kids make baskets to surprise their families.

Supplies

- paper plates (1 per child)
- crayons
- stickers
- "Surprise Coupons" handout (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- child-safe scissors
- stapler
- 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.



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids discuss people's reactions to surprises and do a blind activity.

Supplies

- Bibles
- glasses or sunglasses
- wax paper
- transparent tape

Easy Prep

- Cover the lenses of the glasses or sunglasses with wax paper.

**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.
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Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids give a foot-five (a high-five with a foot) to two friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids give the birthday child a fist bump with fireworks. (Don't know what this means? Ask your kids!)
- 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 kids share knock-knock jokes.
- After small groups have discussed, ask two or three kids to tell their knock-knock jokes to the whole group.

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

- Bibles
- black crepe paper
- tape
- fishing line (optional)
- flashlight
- poster board
- 10 inflated balloons
- pin
- freshly-popped popcorn or other fragrant snack
- extra adult who can briefly stop by

Easy Prep

- Section off a part of your room by taping strips of black crepe paper to the ceiling so they hang down and look like jail cell bars. If you have high ceilings and can't do that, you could tape fishing line from one wall to the other and hang the crepe paper from that. Make sure the area you section off is large enough for all the kids.
- Arrange with your extra adult what time you're planning on doing the Core Bible Discovery. That person will stand outside the room with the fragrant snack, waiting for your cue to knock on the wall. The cue will be when you gather kids' attention after the question about things that are so good, they felt like a dream. (The person should remain hidden from the kids' view, but you'll want to keep the door open so the smell wafts in.)
- Set the balloons in the back of the room, opposite where you'll be teaching.

Go to Jail

Say: **Today we're going to see that God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. Our Bible story is full of surprises! As we act it out, pay attention to everything that's surprising. When you hear something surprising, raise your hand and share it.** Have your adult or teen helper stand near the balloons with a pin. Whenever a child shares something surprising, your helper will pop a balloon. For example, kids might share that they're surprised when an angel shows up in jail, when the gates open by themselves, when Peter knocks at the door, or other parts of the story. It's okay if you end up not using all 10 balloons.

Say: **Our story starts in prison.** Have kids join you in the crepe-paper jail you set up earlier. If it's cold enough that some kids brought coats, have them bring those to jail.

Say: **Some people didn't want anyone talking about Jesus. They were arresting people who talked about Jesus! That's how Peter, one of Jesus' friends, ended up in jail. Peter was sleeping in a cold jail cell without a coat or even shoes.** Have kids take off their shoes.

Say: **He was chained between two soldiers.** Have kids sit down and link arms.

Escape Jail

Say: **Then something surprising happened!** Read Acts 12:7, and turn on the flashlight. Say: **Quick! Get up!** Have kids get up quickly and unlink arms.

Read Acts 12:8. Have kids put on their shoes and coats if they have them.

Read Acts 12:9-11 as an adult or teen helper leads kids out of the jail and around the room using the flashlight to represent the angel. You can pause when the gate opens all by itself and make a gate by holding a piece of poster board in kids' way. When they approach, step aside and let all the kids through the gate.

Say: **All this walking has made me tired! Let's sit for a minute.**

Smell a Surprise

Have kids sit and discuss this question.

Ask: • **What's something you've experienced that felt like a dream because it was so good?** Share your own example first, such as a surprise trip your parents gave you or Christmas morning when you were a child.

As you start to wrap up this question, there should be some knocking at the door or wall.

Ask: • **Hmm, who do you think is knocking?**

Encourage kids to use their other senses to figure out why someone might be knocking, without going to the door and looking out.

Say: **We can't see who's knocking, but we can smell something that gives us a clue about why they're here! Let's see what happened when Peter went to a house and knocked.**

Read Acts 12:12-14.

Ask: • **What was so unbelievable about what Rhoda said?**

Say: **Rhoda didn't open the door to see Peter, but she heard his voice and believed God had answered their prayers! But the other Christians didn't believe this surprise could be real.**

Read Acts 12:15-17.

Say: **Let's invite our guest in and see if the surprise we smell is real.** Open the door or go out into the hall to invite your guest in. Distribute the popcorn.

As kids eat their popcorn, have them discuss this question.

Ask: • **What were the most surprising things that happened to Peter and the other Christians?**

• **What were some surprising things that happened to our class?**

Say: **God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises.** His surprises in this story were hard to believe! At first, Peter thought he was just dreaming. And the Christians didn't think Peter could possibly be knocking at the door! Even when God's surprises are hard to believe, we know they're real.

Pray With Expectation

Say: **Sometimes we're like the Christians in the Bible story. We might pray for something, but we don't *really* believe God could answer. Or God answers our prayers in a way we don't expect. Let's practice praying with expectation. That means praying with belief that God will answer...maybe even in a way that's more surprising than we expected!**

Have kids form trios and share prayer requests, then pray for each other.

Say: **You just prayed for each other, and you can trust that God is surprising. So watch for his surprises this week! He might answer your prayer in a way that's even better than you prayed for! Let's close our Bible time with a verse about that.**

Read Ephesians 3:20-21.



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 kids' 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 write or 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' papers 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

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

Whisper softly: **God is surprising!** Now speak in a regular voice: **Did you hear me? Whispers are usually really quiet. Hold up one of the tubes. But when we use tubes, we can make a whisper sound loud for someone else to hear.**

- Have kids form pairs, and give each pair a tube. If you don't have enough tubes, you could give one 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" and other messages about God through the other end of the tube.
- Invite the Listeners to whisper messages about God 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 through the tubes. 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 kids.

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.
- Kids will try to run into the square, grab a stuffed animal, and run back out without getting tagged by a Guard.
- If a child 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 kids 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 kids 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 kids 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?** Kids 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, stomach, heart and stomach, heart and stomach. Head, stomach, heart and stomach, heart and stomach. Elbows, and knees, and laugh so silly** (pause and lead kids in a silly laugh). **Head, stomach, heart and stomach, heart and stomach.**
- 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](#))
- child-safe scissors
- stapler
- 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.



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.
- Help kids 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 kids loop a chenille wire through the whole, 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 child cut out and color two sets of coupons to take home.

Surprise!

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



What if I Haven't Felt Surprised by God?

Supplies

- Bibles
- glasses or sunglasses
- wax paper
- transparent tape

Easy Prep

- Cover the lenses of the glasses or sunglasses with wax paper.

Examine

Say: **We're learning that God is surprising. Let's look again at how surprised the people in our Bible story were when God freed Peter from jail.**

Read Acts 12:9.

Ask: • **On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being really surprised, how surprised did Peter seem at first?**

Have kids stand in a line to show their ranking, and allow kids to explain.

Say: **Maybe Peter was so surprised he thought it was too good to be true. Or maybe he wasn't that surprised at first because he thought it was just a dream. Let's look at the people who were praying for Peter.**

Read Acts 12:14-15.

Ask: • **On a scale of 1 to 10, how surprised did the people praying for Peter seem at first?** Again have kids stand in a line and explain their rankings.

Say: **Peter didn't react the way we'd expect, and neither did the people praying for him. God did a very surprising thing for Peter and his friends, but we're not sure if they felt surprised right away.**

What if we don't feel surprised by God? Let's dig in to that.

Blind Yourself

Say: **Let's look at some of the things that could block us from watching for God's surprises.**

Read James 4:2-3.

Ask: • **What do these verses show you about missing God's surprises?**

Say: **When we focus on ourselves instead of God, we might miss his surprises. They might be right in front of us, but we just don't see them. It's kind of like this.**

Have kids take turns wearing the covered glasses. As kids wear them, other kids can make funny faces but then stop before each person takes off the glasses.

Ask: • **How did it feel wearing the covered glasses?**

Say: **When you were wearing the glasses, you missed out on some funny stuff right in front of you. And when you focus on the wrong thing, you can miss out on God's surprises right in front of you, too.**

Ask: • **What are some things that can keep us from seeing God's surprises?**

Say: **One thing that can blind us to God's surprises is called *skepticism*. That's what it's called when we tend not to believe something. When we don't want to believe God is surprising us, we might give the credit to something *other* than God. We might give credit to science, medicine, or "good vibes." But God is surprising. So let's take off our blinders and figure out how to watch for his surprises. Set the glasses aside.**

Dig Deeper

Read Psalm 118:24.

Say: **One way we can take off our blinders is to rejoice in every day, knowing that God made that day. On the count of three, let's all shout one exciting thing about today. One, two, three! Shout with the kids.**

Read Isaiah 43:19.

Ask: • **What have you seen God doing in your life?**

Say: **These verses ask, “Do you not see it?” If you’re not watching for what God is doing, you might miss it! So keep an eye out! Let’s look at one more way to take our blinders off.**

Read Psalm 5:3.

Ask: • **What do you normally do after you pray?**

Say: **This Bible verse talks about waiting expectantly after we pray. Sometimes we pray and then get busy with other things. But God wants us to pause, wait, and go through our day expecting big things from him.**

Peel the wax paper off the glasses as you say: **God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises** when we rejoice in every day, keep our eyes open for what God is doing, and wait expectantly for him to work. Let’s take off our blinders and watch for God!

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