

LESSON 6: PETER ESCAPES PRISON

Leader Guide for Grades 5 & 6

Classroom: Deeply Rooted

 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



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids get surprised as they escape prison.

Supplies

- Bibles
- black crepe paper
- tape
- fishing line (optional)
- flashlight
- poster board
- 10 inflated balloons
- pin
- freshly popped popcorn or another 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.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids discover surprising math equations.

Supplies

- whiteboard or large piece of paper
- marker
- paper (1 piece per child)
- pencils (1 per child)
- calculators (optional)



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids explore how God has surprised them.

Supplies

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

Easy Prep

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



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids play Prison Break Tag.

Supplies

- painter's tape (optional)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Tape a large rectangle on the floor in your play area that's large enough for all the kids to fit inside.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a combination of Telephone and Pictionary.

Supplies

- washable markers (1 per child)
- paper (1 sheet per child)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)



CRAFT

Kids make crepe-paper critters with a surprise inside.

Supplies

- individually wrapped candy (several pieces per child)
- crepe paper (in a variety of colors)
- clear tape
- Glue Dots
- craft supplies such as craft foam, craft felt, googly eyes, yarn, chenille wires, and pompoms

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids pop up to thank God for his surprises.

**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

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're going to learn that God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. In our Bible story, there was a surprise when someone knocked on the door. So let's think about surprising endings to knock-knock jokes.**

Share

- Tell kids a funny knock-knock joke. (Need help? Try this one: "Knock knock! *Who's there?* Etch. *Etch who?* God bless you! Do you need a tissue?" Or try searching online for funny knock-knock jokes.)
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share funny knock-knock jokes.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to tell their knock-knock jokes to the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to Acts 12, and say: **Knock knock, those jokes were funny! In our Bible story, a knock on the door brought a big, fun surprise from God. Let's see what happened and how God is surprising. The Bible is special because it's full of true stories about what God has done. God can even surprise us through the Bible! Let's watch for God's surprises as we hear from the Bible today and as we talk with God.**

Pray, praising God for his surprises.



Supplies

- Bibles
- black crepe paper
- tape
- fishing line (optional)
- flashlight
- poster board
- 10 inflated balloons
- pin
- freshly popped popcorn or another 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 don't end up 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.



OBJECT LESSON

Surprise Math

[10 min]

Supplies

- whiteboard or large piece of paper
- marker
- paper (1 piece per child)
- pencils (1 per child)
- calculators (optional)

Supplies

- Be mindful of kids' comfort and familiarity with math equations. Guide less proficient mathematicians to start with fewer digits, perhaps a three-digit number.

Demonstrate Finding the Nine

Say: **Did you know math can be surprising? You may not believe me, but it's true. I'll talk you through a series of math problems and, surprise! The answer will always be the number nine. Ready to see for yourself?**

- Ask for a child to give you a five-digit number. Any number will work. Write the number on the whiteboard or large piece of paper for kids to see.
- Add the five digits together. For example, if you wrote 97342, you'll add $9+7+3+4+2$, which equals 25.
- Now subtract 25 from your first number, 97342. Write out the equation, and ask for kids' help. In this example, you'll get 97317.
- Now add those digits together. ($9+7+3+1+7$ equals 27.)
- Add those digits together. ($2+7$ equals 9.)

Have Kids Find Nines

Say: **Now it's your turn. I'll talk you through it. Start by writing any five-digit number.**

- Talk kids through each step again until they get the number 9 as their final answer.
- Challenge kids to repeat the process at least twice to see if they can choose a number that doesn't end up giving the number 9.

Demonstrate Finding Threes

Say: **Let's try another surprising math problem. This time, surprise! We'll always find a three.**

- Have a child choose a number between 1 and 10. Write the number on the whiteboard or large piece of paper for kids to see.
- Multiply the number by 2. For example, if you wrote 7, you'll multiply it by 2 to get 14.
- Add 9 to the total. ($14+9$ equals 23.)
- Subtract 3. ($23-3$ equals 20.)
- Divide by 2. (20 divided by 2 equals 10.)
- Subtract your original number, which in this example is 7. Your answer will be 3!

Have Kids Find Threes

Say: **Now it's your turn. I'll talk you through it. Start by writing any number between 1 and 10.**

- Talk kids through each step again until they get the number 3 as their final answer.
- Challenge kids to repeat the process at least twice to see if they can choose a number that doesn't end up giving the number 3.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What surprised you about this experience?**

Say: **No matter what number we started with, we always ended up with 9 in the first challenge and 3 in the second. You may not have expected that consistent result, but surprise! There it was. In our**

Bible story, all the events seemed to add up to Peter being in jail, not free. But surprise! There he was, knocking at the door.

Ask: • Why do you think we're sometimes surprised by God's consistent goodness in our lives?

Say: It's easy to get so focused on solving our own problems that we forget about God's goodness. But God surprises us with glimpses of his amazing love and care. God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises.



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 their choices.

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: **One thing is clear: neither Peter nor the people praying for him immediately reacted the way you'd expect people to if they were surprised. 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.**

Have a child 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 things, you can miss out on God's surprises right in front of you, too.**

Ask: • **What are some things that can blind us to 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 typically tend not to believe something, like when we doubt that God has done an amazing thing and look for a different explanation instead. 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

Have a child 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.

Have a child 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.**

Have a child 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!**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Prison Break

Supplies

- painter's tape (optional)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- Tape a large rectangle on the floor in your play area that's large enough for all the kids to fit inside.

Tips

- Instead of using the painter's tape square, you could use the same crepe paper jail from Core Bible Discovery.
- 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](#).

Play Prison Break Tag

Say: **In today's Bible story, we read about just one of the times God has done something big and surprising. God set Peter free from prison and amazed everyone—including Peter! Let's play Prison Break Tag. There might just be some surprises in it for you!**

- Have everyone stand outside the rectangle.
- Invite a couple of willing kids or helpers to be the Prison Guards—they'll try to tag everyone.
- Cue the game to begin. Anyone who's tagged by a Prison Guard must go to prison (the rectangle taped on the floor).
- Just when the Prison Guards have tagged and jailed almost everyone, call out "Prison break!" and allow everyone in prison to come out and play again. You can also invite two new willing people to be the Prison Guards, or allow those who haven't been tagged yet to become the new Prison Guards.
- Call out prison breaks at varied times throughout rounds of the game to catch kids off guard. You might have a prison break when only one person has been tagged and jailed, before anyone has been tagged or jailed (it'll be silly since no one's in the prison, but fun and surprising), or immediately after anyone gets put into prison so that round's guards just can't get ahead.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What happened in the game that you didn't expect?**

- **Tell about something in your life that happened when you least expected it.**

Say: **Surprises are unexpected and can be exciting, fun, and leave us wondering, "Is this real?" That's what happened for Peter when God freed him from prison. He thought he was dreaming until he realized God had really set him free. God is surprising and can amaze us the way he amazed Peter. He can do the unexpected anytime! You never know when God's surprises will come, so keep an eye out!**



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Not What You Pictured?

Supplies

- washable markers (1 per child)
- paper (1 sheet per child)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

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](#).

Play a Game That Blends Telephone and Pictionary

Say: **Today we're discovering that God is surprising! Surprises are unexpected and—most of the time—exciting. Let's play a game that has a few surprises.**

- Give each person a piece of paper and marker, and then form teams of three.
- Have teams sit in rows so they can reach and "draw" on each other's backs.
- You'll whisper a word or phrase to the people in the back of the lines, describing what to draw. They'll use a finger to draw what they heard directly on the backs of the people in front of them. They'll save their papers and markers for their turn at the head of the line.
- The second person in line will then use a finger to draw what they feel being drawn on their back on the back of the next person in line.
- The person in the front of the line will then draw on their paper what they feel being drawn on their back.
- The message is passed along Telephone-style, but drawn instead of whispered. After the people drawing on the paper have finished, they can hold up their papers so everyone on their team can see the drawing and see if the outcome looks right or is surprisingly different from what the first person drew.
- Have kids swap roles so that everyone gets a turn drawing on the paper and being the one who hears what should be drawn.
- You can choose what you'll have the kids try to draw, or you can use the following ideas:
 - a snowman
 - a sailboat
 - an apple tree
- Kids can also play additional rounds, deciding for themselves what they'll draw.
- If you'd like, play upbeat music while kids play.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How did the final pictures compare to your expectations?**

• **When has something in life turned out different than you expected?** Share about a surprise from your life where something didn't turn out quite as you expected, but even better. Maybe you didn't think you'd be friends with a person the first time you met, but that person ended up being one of your best friends.

Say: **God is surprising, so when things don't go the way we expect, we can look for the good in it and look for God in it. We can watch for God's surprises and know he always wants what's good for us.**



CRAFT

Surprise Piñatas

[20 min]

Supplies

- individually wrapped candy (several pieces per child)
- crepe paper (in a variety of colors)
- clear tape
- Glue Dots
- craft supplies such as craft foam, craft felt, googly eyes, yarn, chenille wires, and pompoms

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Make Surprise Piñatas

Show kids the sample craft you made.

Ask: • **What do you think this craft is?**

Say: **There's a surprise about this craft...it's full of candy! Now you can make your own surprise piñata to give as a gift.**

Give kids each several pieces of candy, and make sure kids don't eat any of the candy. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make surprise piñatas.

- Choose a color of crepe paper.
- Start wrapping the crepe paper all around one piece of candy.
- Every few layers, add another piece of candy to wrap until you have a crepe-paper ball about the size of a tennis ball, full of candy.
- Tape the crepe paper in place.
- Decorate your crepe-paper ball using the supplies provided. You could add hair, eyes, arms, and legs to make it into a person. You could add rays to make it into a ball of sunshine. You could add shapes to make it look like a soccer ball. Be creative!

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell something surprising about what God put inside of you!** Share your own example first, such as the ability to lead well or being a good encourager.

- **Tell about someone you'd like to surprise with your piñata.**

Say: God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises. God can even use us to surprise others!
This week, watch for someone who seems like he or she needs a fun surprise. Give that person your craft, and let him or her know there's a special surprise inside!

Have kids take their surprise piñatas home and give them to people who need a special surprise.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

[5 min]

Popcorn Prayers

Pray in a Surprising Way

Say: **God is surprising, so we watch for his surprises.** Think of something surprising you can thank God for. We'll thank him in a surprising way! Let's do a popcorn prayer. Pause for kids to think.

- Have kids crouch down.
- Begin the prayer by praying: **Thank you, God, for...**
- Kids can randomly pop up and shout their thanks.
- Kids can crouch back down and pop up again as many times as they want.

Wrap Up

Pray: **God, thank you that you're surprising! Help us pay attention and watch for your surprises.**
In Jesus' name, amen.

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.

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