

God's Church is Persecuted!

Bible Lesson: Peter Released from Prison – *Acts 5:12-42*

Main Teaching: God gives peace and courage in persecution. **Word Up:** The Holy Spirit Gives Peace and Courage

- Supplies:**
- Word Up Booklet – Word Up (Resource Pack)
 - Paper and marker for each child – Small Group
 - Recording for “Jesus is the Good News” and “Peace I Leave With You” - Worship (Sing About the King 1 CD)
 - Optional Song Visual for “Jesus is the Good News” – Worship (cefpress.com)
 - Hair dryer, 2-3 Styrofoam cups, ping pong ball or small beach ball – Object Lesson
 - Flashcards for Bible Story “God Shows Mercy to Ninevah” – Bible Lesson
 - Three plastic cups and three bean bags – Review Game (Resource Pack)
 - Quiet Time Sheet Week 3 – Dismissal (Resource Pack)

- Schedule at a Glance (75 min club):**
- 15 min – Small Group
 - 10 min – Word Up / Worship
 - 10 min – Object Lesson
 - 15 min – Bible Lesson
 - 10 min – Review Game
 - 5 min – Missionary Story
 - 10 min – Small Group



SMALL GROUP

Say Memory Verse

Have kids say their memory verse from last week to their small group leader

“**God's Church**” (Optional discussion)

If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go? Can you tell me why you would go there? (*Allow responses.*) If I could travel anywhere I would go (*share your dream vacation location and why*). Did you know that just about anywhere you go in the world there are people who are part of God's family? God's family is called the Church. We are going to learn more about God's Church today in club.

God wants us to pray for others who are part of His Church. One way we can do that is to pray for each other. Does anyone have something to add to our prayer notebook? Do you have any praises for how God has answered your prayers? Is there anyone you talked to about Jesus last week who we could pray for? Don't forget to pray for others who believe in Jesus this week. Let's pray right now.

WORSHIP

To learn songs and motions, go to cefonline.com/freedemos

“Jesus is the Good News”

“Peace I Leave With You”



WORD UP!

“The Holy Spirit Gives Peace and Courage!”

Last week we learned about three things in our Word Up. Let’s review them.

Who is the third person of the trinity? There is God the Father, God the Son (Jesus) and _____? (God the Holy Spirit)

What is it called when you have calm and joy on the inside from knowing and trusting God even when things that are going on are hard? Peace

What is it called when you face danger calmly and willingly even though you may be afraid? Courage

Remember, God the Holy Spirit gives peace and courage. When you believe in Jesus, He lives with you and is your helper.

RULES

Review classroom rules, focusing on any rules the class is having trouble with.

OBJECT LESSON

Peace in the Storm

Materials Needed: Hair Dryer, 2-3 styrofoam cups, small ping pong ball or beach ball

Demonstration at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s7cSGm1x2Y8>

What You Say: “Do you ever feel like life is crazy?” (Turn on blow dryer, pointing it up towards the ceiling.) “You can think of it like a storm, where the wind is blowing, and things start going nuts, and everything seems out of control. And then you try to work in it...” (Hold one cup over the tip of the blower upside down and then release the cup to be blown into the air. The cup should blow up and then fall down.) “...and you just get blown away!” (Repeat with another cup) “Or you try to do something, and it just doesn’t work out.” (Repeat with another cup) “Or you are just trying to do your best and you get lost in the chaos and confusion.”

“But when we allow the Holy Spirit to come into our lives, He may not take away the storm or the trouble, (point to the blower), but He allows us to function within the storm.” (Place small ball over the air flow. It should stay suspended in the air if you keep the air flowing directly underneath the ball.) He allows us to have peace, even

though everything around us is going crazy. Remember, the storm won't always go away when we ask for peace. But the Holy Spirit comes beside us within the storm so that we are not blown away like those cups were before. He wraps His arms around us and brings peace in the middle of the storm."

"In our Bible story today, we are going to learn about a man named Peter. Peter was a man who experienced many "storms" in his life. And God didn't always take the storm away. But Peter learned to have peace in the midst of the storms. Just like Peter, we can count on the Holy Spirit to bring peace and courage when troubles arise."



BIBLE LESSON

Raise your hand if you have ever been to a parade. What was it like? (*Allow responses.*) There are big crowds of people, band music, flags and fancy parade floats. The whole city gets excited.

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

Flashcard 3-1

The city of Jerusalem was full of excitement! Huge crowds of people were gathered at the temple. They had gathered, not for a parade, but to hear what the disciples were going to say. The disciples had been Jesus' closest followers when He was on Earth. Jesus had died and come back to life! He was seen by hundreds of people then went back to Heaven! The things He had done were amazing! And now God the Holy Spirit lived in them and in His power the disciples were doing some wonderful miracles. Besides that, thousands of people were realizing their need for forgiveness and were becoming Christians—followers of Jesus. God's Church, His family of believers, was growing!

Flashcard 3-2

The news that sick people were being healed spread quickly throughout the city. Lots of sick people were brought to the disciples to be healed. Some were even brought from surrounding towns. The excitement increased as one by one every sick person in the huge crowd was healed!

But one group of people was not happy about what was happening—the religious leaders! They had already arrested Peter and John for preaching about Jesus and warned them to stop. But Peter and John were preaching about Him even more and so were all the other disciples! The religious leaders didn't want people to hear about Jesus. They were the ones who had demanded Jesus' death because they didn't believe He was God's Son. They refused to believe He had risen from the dead. How could they stop the disciples from preaching?

They knew one way to do it. They arrested them! The high priest sent the temple guards (the men in charge of keeping peace and order in the temple) to get the disciples and put them in jail. The disciples were being persecuted—treated badly for believing in Jesus and preaching about Him. But they knew God wanted them to tell others that only Jesus could save them

Flashcard 3-3

During the night an amazing thing happened! An angel of the Lord appeared in the prison. The angel led Peter and the other disciples outside. "Go stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life," he commanded. God wanted them to continue preaching the Good News about Jesus, even though they might be treated badly again.



Have you ever been treated badly for believing on Jesus? (*Allow response.*) Maybe someone made fun of you because you told them about Jesus. Or maybe someone called you names or left you out of an activity because you are a follower of Jesus. In many countries of the world, God's family of believers are treated badly and sometimes even killed. It is called *persecution* when you are treated badly because of what you believe. If you have believed on Jesus, you can know that the Holy Spirit is your Helper, who will help you know what to do and say when persecution comes and will give you the courage to do it. He will give you peace too. Remember, peace is having calm and joy on the inside from knowing and trusting God even when things that are going on are hard. **God gives peace and courage in persecution.** You can count on Him. Say with me, "**The Holy Spirit gives peace and courage!**" (*Say with children.*) The words of our memory verse can help you remember that. (*Quote John 14:27 with children.*) God is with you even if you are treated badly for believing on Jesus.

Even though they knew they would probably be treated badly again, God gave the disciples the courage they needed to obey and continue telling about Jesus.

Early the next morning, the disciples entered the temple courts and began preaching once again. Meanwhile, the high priest called a big meeting of the religious leaders, called a council. When all the members were gathered together, the command was given, "Bring the prisoners." Immediately the officers hurried to the prison cell to get the disciples.

Flashcard 3-4

Everything looked fine. The door was tightly shut and the guards stood watch outside. But when they opened the door, the cell was empty! The disciples were gone! Can you imagine their surprise? What do you think the guards thought? What do you think they did? (*Allow responses.*)

The officers and guards were afraid. It was their job to make sure the prisoners didn't escape. The officers quickly returned to the counsel to report. (*Read Acts 5:23.*)

The religious leaders were completely confused and wondered what to do! Then someone came and told them, "Look, the men you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

The captain of the guard and other officers rushed to the temple to get the disciples. This time they had to be careful because the disciples had become popular with the Jewish crowd. The officers were afraid that if they hurt them in front of the people, they would probably become angry and throw stones at them.

Flashcard 3-5

Soon the disciples were standing before the council. The high priest demanded, "Didn't we order you not to teach in this name? You have filled Jerusalem with your beliefs and you want to blame us for His death!"

The Jewish leaders had refused to accept Jesus as God's Son and had killed Him. The rulers had shared a part in killing Jesus but they were not the only ones.



Your sin and mine also sent Jesus to the cross. The Bible says, (*read Romans 3:10*). No one does right all the time and never sins. Many times in many ways, you do things that are against God because you were born a sinner. Jesus was the only person who ever lived on Earth who did not sin. What are some things boys and girls do that are sin? (*Let children give examples.*) Because you are a sinner, you deserve to be away from God forever in a place of suffering. But in spite of your sin, God, who made you, loves you deeply. That is why He sent Jesus, who is God the Son. Just as God the Father is holy, His only Son, Jesus, never sinned. Yet when Jesus died on the cross, all your sins and mine were put on Him. Jesus took the punishment you and I deserve. He suffered, bled and died so your sins and mine could be forgiven. (*Read Revelation 1:5b.*) Because of Jesus' love for you and me He was willing to give His blood to wash (take) away your sin. Then Jesus was

buried. On the third day, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead by His power. Jesus is alive in Heaven today ruling as King. How wonderful that God made a way for you to be forgiven even though your sin and mine sent Jesus to the cross!

The religious leaders did not want to hear that they had a part in killing Jesus. They did not believe in Jesus' resurrection and did not want to hear it taught.

They ordered the disciples to stop teaching and preaching in the name of Jesus. What would the disciples do? Would they obey these men or obey God who told them to speak? *(Allow response.)*

Peter and the other disciples stood up and bravely said, "We ought to obey God rather than men." Then Peter told the whole council that they had killed Jesus but God had raised Him from the dead. Now God had lifted Jesus up as Savior to give forgiveness of sins. Peter boldly said, "And we are His witnesses to these things and so also is the Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit was giving them power to preach with boldness and to perform miracles.

Say with me, "**The Holy Spirit gives peace and courage!**" *(Say with children.)*

By the time Peter finished his message, the leaders were more furious than ever. They were so angry they wanted to kill the disciples. But then one of the most respected leaders, Gamaliel (*guh-MAY-lih-el*), stood to speak. He commanded that the disciples be taken outside. Then he wisely reminded the council that they should let God take charge of the disciples. It was God's business, not theirs.

"Let's not bother these men," Gamaliel urged. "If they are not truly doing God's work, then we have nothing to worry about," he said. "But if they are doing God's work, then we cannot stop them and we will be fighting against God!" The leaders nodded their heads in agreement. They would follow Gamaliel's advice.

The disciples were called in. But before they were set free, the council had them severely beaten and ordered them once again not to speak in the name of Jesus. God did not keep the disciples from persecution but He did give them peace and courage as they suffered.



If you have received the Lord Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit is your Helper. **God gives peace and courage in persecution.** When God allows you to suffer, He will give you courage to live and speak in a way that shows His power in your life. Remember, Jesus also was persecuted. Other believers have been and are now being persecuted. When you are persecuted, thank God that He is with you and ask Him for His peace and courage to continue to tell others about Him. *(Read John 16:33.)* Jesus said persecution would come for those who believe in Him. But He also said He is greater than the persecution. Even though it is hard, God can give you the courage to keep on telling others about Jesus. The Bible says God will reward those who suffer for the sake of the Gospel. You can also trust that God is still working even when you are persecuted.

God was still working in the disciples' lives even though they had been beaten. The religious leaders had the disciples beaten, ordered them to stop speaking about Jesus and released them. What would they do now? Would they stop talking about Jesus?

CLIMAX

Flashcard 3-6

No! The disciples rejoiced that they had been able to suffer for Jesus

CONCLUSION

Every day the disciples preached about Jesus at the temple and from house to house. They did not stop telling people that Jesus is the promised Savior, who died and came alive again, and that He is the only way to become God's child.

INVITATION



Maybe you know that you have sinned and have never received the Lord Jesus as your Savior. God wants you to turn to Him. *(Read John 1:12.)* You can receive Him and become God's child. Receiving means taking Jesus as your own Savior from sin. Believing on His name means you trust with all your heart that Jesus died and rose again, taking the punishment you deserve for sin. When you believe on Jesus, He forgives your sin and you belong to Him as part of His family. When you become a part of God's family the Holy Spirit lives in you to help you in your life. It also means when you die you will live forever with God! Please bow your head and close your eyes and think about these things. Do you know you are a sinner and Jesus is the only one who can forgive your sin? Will you receive Him now and become God's child? If you would like to talk to me about receiving Jesus and becoming God's child, show me by opening your eyes right now and looking up at me. *(Acknowledge responses.)* You may all open your eyes. If you looked up at me because you want to talk to me about receiving Jesus, meet me *(designate time and location)*. I want to show you from the Bible what God says about becoming His child.

? **REVIEW GAME**

Knock the Cup

Stack three cups in a pyramid. When a child answers a question, they get 100 points. They get an extra 100 points for every cup they knock over with the beanbag. Give the kids 3 beanbag tosses.

1. What is persecution? *(When you are treated badly because of what you believe.)*
2. From our memory verse, John 14:27, if you have believed in Jesus, what does He give you that helps you when you are persecuted? *(His peace.)*
3. What is the peace Jesus was talking about in the memory verse? *(Calm and joy on the inside from knowing and trusting God.)*
4. Why were the religious leaders angry? *(They didn't want people ehearing about Jesus because they didn't believe He was God's Son.)*
5. What happened when the guards went to get the disciples out of prison? *(The cell was empty, they were gone.)*
6. Where were the disciples? *(They were in the temple teaching the people.)*
7. Why did God send Jesus to Earth? *(Because He loves you, to die on the cross for you.)*
8. What happened after Peter finished telling about Jesus? *(The religious leaders were furious and wanted to kill the disciples.)*
9. What can you do if you are made fun of for believing in Jesus? *(Ask God for His peace and courage to keep telling others about Jesus; trust the Holy Spirit to help you even if you are afraid.)*
10. What did the disciples do after they were beaten and released? *(They kept telling people about Jesus even though they were persecuted; they rejoiced that they had been able to suffer for Jesus.)*
11. What is God's Church? *(It is God's family of believers; all the people around the world who follow Jesus.)*
12. How do you become a part of God's family? *(Receive Jesus as Savior; believe In Jesus.)*

MISSIONARY STORY

Part 3:

John Gives His Life to God



John was now a child of God—someone who believes in Jesus! But he only knew a little about God and the Bible. He wondered how he could learn more. Soon it was Christmastime and many college students went home for Christmas break. Many of those students attended the Tuesday evening Bible study. One of them was a girl named Jean, who was returning home from a Bible college. John had never heard of such a thing! He applied to the college and two weeks later the college accepted him and even told him they would give him a working student scholarship to help with the cost of school!

In January 1953 John sold his car for \$350 (approximately \$3,000 today) to help pay for his four-year college education. It didn't take him long to make two discoveries. One was that this wasn't just any Bible college; it was also a training college for missionaries. Missionaries are people whose job it is to go and tell others about the Good News of Jesus. Missionaries would often visit the college and tell the students about their missionary work overseas. The second discovery was a young lady with dark black hair and big brown eyes named Lois, who sat two seats behind him in one of the missionary classes. Over time they became good friends.

All the students were required

to do some kind of Christian service along with their studies. Sometimes John went to hospitals to visit the sick, preached on the streets of surrounding towns or talked to inmates in the local jails. What he enjoyed the most was going to the schools and teaching Bible lessons to the children.

Many times there were meetings where the college students were challenged to give their lives fully to God. At one of these meetings John walked slowly to the front of the church. There John prayed, "Dear God, here I am. You have saved me from my sin. Tonight I give you my body and my soul—all that I am. I will do whatever you want me to do."

He thought God might want him to be a missionary but he didn't know where. He had been praying with a group at the college for the part of the world called Asia. Did God want him to go there? He thought about a little country called South Korea. A terrible war was just coming to an end there and people, especially children, throughout the country were left without homes and food. They were dying in the streets because of hunger. John prayed and asked God to help him know what to do. He read a verse from the Bible that talked about crying out to God for the lives of children who are hungry on every street (Lamentations 2:19). John felt sure that God wanted him to go to South Korea!

But what about Lois? Did God want her to go to South Korea too? John hoped so, so He asked her an important question. What do you think he asked? (*Allow response.*)

He asked. "Lois, will you marry me?"

Come back next week to find out Lois's answer!

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY

The Persecuted Church

Families all belong to each other by birth, adoption or marriage. The members of God's Church all belong together because each one has trusted in Jesus. Part of being a follower of Jesus is being part of God's family of believers around the world.

Some people think the Church is only a building that you go to, but the Church is greater than that. It is all the people around the world who follow Jesus. Some of the followers of Jesus are facing persecution even today. These Christians live in countries with leaders who don't want people to know about Jesus. In those places Christians have been put in prison and beaten for their belief in Jesus—some even know they could be killed for their faith—yet still they stand for God. We don't really know why these leaders don't let their people make up their own minds about believing in Jesus. Perhaps the leaders are afraid they will lose power like the religious leaders we heard about in today's lesson.

One of the ways God wants His family to take care of each other is to pray. In your Quiet Time this week, think about believers in Christ who are being persecuted and pray for them.

Leaders: If you know of places where Christians are being persecuted, you could show your kids those places on a map and pray specifically for the believers there.

DISMISSAL

Hand out a Quiet Time Sheet (Week 3 in the Resource Pack) to each child. Encourage them to fill it out and bring it back next week. As children are getting picked up, try and connect with the parents and let them know the kids are working on having peace during hard times this week.

God's Church is Persecuted – Peter released from prison.

This page has been designed for you to photocopy and place in your Bible as a ready reference.

Lesson Outline

I. INTRODUCTION
Raise your hand if you have ever been to a parade.

II. PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

A. Flashcard 3-1 (Acts 5:12-14)

1. Huge crowds were gathered at the temple to hear the disciples speak.
2. Thousands of people were realizing their need for forgiveness and were becoming Christians.

B. Flashcard 3-2 (Acts 5:15-18)

1. Sick people were being healed by the disciples.
2. The religious leaders wanted to stop the preaching about Jesus.
3. The religious leaders arrested the disciples—the disciples were being persecuted.

C. Flashcard 3-3 (Acts 5:19-21)

1. During the night an angel appeared in the prison and led Peter and the other disciples outside and told them to preach in the temple.
2. **God gives peace and courage in persecution.** [John 14:27]
3. Early the next morning, the disciples entered the temple and began preaching again.

D. Flashcard 3-4 (Acts 5:22-26)

1. The door was tightly shut and the guards stood outside but the cell was empty.
2. The officers and guards were afraid.
3. The religious leaders were completely confused then they found out the disciples were teaching in the temple.

E. Flashcard 3-5 (Acts 5:27-40)

1. The high priest demanded, "Didn't we order you not to teach in this name?"
2. Jesus took the punishment you and I deserve. [Romans 3:10; Revelation 1:5b]
3. The religious leaders ordered the disciples to stop teaching and preaching about Jesus.
4. Peter stood up and said, "We ought to obey God rather than men."
5. Gamaliel urged the council not to kill the disciples because, "if they are doing God's work, then we cannot stop them and we will be fighting against God!"
6. When you are persecuted, thank God that He is with you and ask Him for His peace and courage to continue to tell others about Him. [John 16:33]
7. The religious leaders had the disciples beaten then let them go.

III. CLIMAX (Acts 5:41)

Flashcard 3-6
The disciples rejoiced that they had been able to suffer for Jesus!

IV. CONCLUSION (Acts 5:42)

- A. Every day the disciples preached about Jesus at the temple and from house to house.
- B. Will you receive Jesus now and become God's child? [John 1:12]
- C. Will you trust the Holy Spirit to give you peace and courage? [John 16:33]

Scripture verses in parentheses are background text.
Bracketed verses should be quoted or read from God's Word.