

Bible Point

Jesus helps us serve him.

Bible Verse

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago” (Ephesians 2:10).

Growing Closer to Jesus

- Children will
- learn that serving Jesus can be exciting,
 - realize that Peter chose to keep serving Jesus,
 - help Pockets learn that there are many ways to serve Jesus, and
 - know that Jesus always helps us.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

■ Peter is set free from prison.



**Acts
12:4-17**

Herod assigned groups of soldiers to take turns guarding Peter—one soldier on each side of Peter and two at his cell door. These measures were extraordinary for such a prisoner. Acts 12:5 describes something of a competition: Peter was securely in prison, guarded by 16 of Rome’s finest and handcuffed to a guard on each side of him. But on the other hand, God’s people were praying earnestly for Peter on the night that Herod intended to be Peter’s last night on earth.

Peter thought he was having a vision as he was released from prison. He had been awakened from sleep and suspected that he was only dreaming. Only after Peter’s chains had fallen off, after he and the angel had walked through the gates to the street, and after the angel had led him down the first street, did Peter realize that he was really free and that God had worked a series of miracles to free him.

The scene that unfolded when Peter arrived at Mark’s mother’s house is somewhat comical. Rhoda, the servant girl, came to see who was knocking at the door in the middle of the night. When she realized it was Peter, she was so excited that she ran back to tell the others without unlocking the door! And then the people who had been earnestly praying for Peter refused to believe that he could really be at the gate. Instead, they may have jumped to the conclusion that Peter was already dead and that his guardian angel had come to tell them the news. And all the while, Peter was standing outside knocking. When they went to the door to see for themselves, they were astonished by the truth. There was so much excitement that Peter had to quiet them down before he could tell them the amazing story of what God had done for him.

Prayer

- Read Matthew 5:15-16.
- Peter immediately told his friends what God had done for him. Who can you tell this week about God’s work in your life?
- Pray: Lord, thank you for always being there for me. Help me to tell others about your work in my life. Help me to share my faith with the students I teach, especially with...

Before the Lesson

- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Today I Learned...” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for the children in your class and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

This Lesson at a Glance

	What Children Will Do	Classroom Supplies	Learning Lab Supplies
Welcome Time	Welcome! —Receive name tags, and be greeted by the teacher.	“Cross Name Tags” (p. 14), markers, safety pins or tape	
Let’s Get Started Direct children to one or more of the optional activities until everyone arrives.	Option 1: Peter-in-the-Box —Pretend to be Peter, and have angels set them free.	Two or three large boxes	
	Option 2: In Jail —Build a pretend jail cell.	Crepe paper or newspaper, building blocks, scissors, tape	
	Option 3: Chain Gang —Make paper chains.	Newspaper, markers, scissors, tape	
	Pick Up Our Toys —Sing a song as they pick up toys, and gather for Bible Story Time.	CD player	
Bible Story Time 	Setting the Stage —Sing an action song, and escape from paper chains.	Paper chains from Option 3 or crepe paper	
	Bible Song and Prayer Time —Sing a song, bring out the Bible, and pray together.	Bible, construction paper, scissors, CD player, basket or box	
	Hear and Tell the Bible Story —Listen to a story from Acts 12:4-17, and learn how an angel freed Peter from jail.	Bible; CD player; photocopies of “Today I Learned...” from Lessons 10, 11, and 12; tape; jail from Option 2	
	Do the Bible Story —Act out Peter’s miraculous rescue.	Bible	
Closing 	All Tied Up —Help untangle Pockets, and teach her there are different ways to serve Jesus.	Shoelace	
	Link Up to Serve —Form a human chain, and tell ways to serve Jesus this week.		

*See the end of this lesson for extra-time ideas and supplies.

Welcome Time

SUPPLIES: “Cross Name Tags” (p. 14), markers, safety pins or tape

- Bend down and make eye contact with children as they arrive.
- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s “Today I Learned...” discussion. Use questions such as “How did you help someone who wasn’t feeling well last week?” or “How did you serve Jesus at home?”
- Say: **Today we’re going to learn that ► Jesus helps us serve him.**
- Hand out the cross name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If any of the name tags were damaged or if some of the children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopyable handout.
- Direct children to the Let’s Get Started activities you’ve set up.



Let’s Get Started

Set up one or more of the following activities for children to do as they arrive. After you greet each child, invite him or her to choose an activity.

Circulate among children to offer help as needed and to direct their conversation toward today’s lesson. Ask questions such as “What would it be like to be in jail?” and “What would you say if an angel rescued you from danger?”

■ Option 1: Peter-in-the-Box

SUPPLIES: two or three large boxes

Set out two or three large boxes. As children arrive, invite each one to find a partner. Decide who will be Peter and who will be the Angel. Have Peter sit in the box like a jack-in-the-box. Direct the Angel to tap the box, and have Peter jump up and say, “I’m free to serve Jesus!” Then have the children switch places.

As children are playing, make comments such as “It wouldn’t be fun to be stuck in jail” and “My, you look happy as you leap to freedom!” Tell children that they’ll hear an amazing story about a time Peter was in jail and how he got free. Remind children that ► Jesus helps us serve him and that he helped Peter when Peter was in danger.



■ Option 2: In Jail

SUPPLIES: crepe paper or newspaper, scissors, tape, building blocks

Before class cut 18-inch strips of crepe paper or newspaper to use as jail bars. Cut at least 12 strips.

Place a table in the center of the room. Tape strips of crepe paper around the edges to create a jail cell. Encourage children to use building blocks to build a wall surrounding the jail. Let children crawl in and out of the jail cell and around the block


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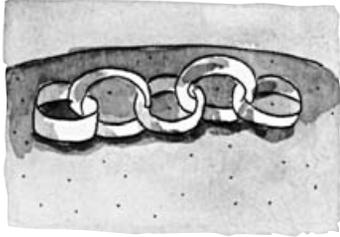
walls. As they play, ask children questions such as “How would it feel to be put in jail for telling others about Jesus?” and “What do you think it would be like in jail?” Tell children that they’ll hear a story about a time Peter was put in jail for talking about Jesus. Explain that Jesus helped Peter get free in an amazing way and that **▶ Jesus helps us serve him.**

■ Option 3: Chain Gang

SUPPLIES: grocery bags or newspaper, scissors, markers, tape

Before class cut 2x6-inch strips from grocery bags or newspaper. Cut five strips for each child.

Set out markers, paper strips, and tape. Invite children to draw on each link one way they can serve Jesus such as praying, helping someone who’s sick, or telling people about Jesus. Then have them work together to make two long paper chains. Explain that the chains will be used in a later activity. As you work, ask the children if they’ve ever held big chains. Point out that in Jesus’ time, chains were used to hold prisoners. The chains were heavy and impossible to break through. Mention that in today’s Bible story they’ll hear how Peter was miraculously freed from two chains. Tell children that **▶ Jesus helps us serve him** and that even strong chains didn’t stop Peter from serving Jesus.


BIBLE POINT

When everyone has arrived and you’re ready to move on to the Bible Story Time, encourage the children to finish what they’re doing and get ready to clean up.



To really motivate children for today’s exciting Bible story, bring in an assortment of real chains and locks. Let children touch them and work the locks if you have keys.

■ Pick Up Our Toys

SUPPLIES: CD player



Lead children in singing “Pick Up Our Toys” (track 2) with the CD to the tune of “Skip to My Lou.” Encourage children to sing along as they help clean up the room.

If you want to include the names of all the children in the class, sing the song without the CD, and repeat the naming section. If you choose to use the CD, vary the names you use each week.



**We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys.
We will pick up our toys,
And put them all away.**

**There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys.
There’s [name] picking up toys,
Putting them all away.**

(Repeat.)

Bible Story Time

■ Setting the Stage

SUPPLIES: paper chains from Option 3 (or crepe paper)

Tell the children you'll clap your hands to get their attention. Explain that when you clap, children are to stop what they're doing, raise their hands, and focus on you. Encourage children to respond quickly so you'll have time for all the fun activities you've planned.

Hold the paper chains made in Option 3. If you chose not to do Option 3, use two 4-foot lengths of crepe paper as the chains. Say: **We'll sing an action song to help us get ready for the Bible story. But first we need two groups. Help children get into two groups. I'll choose a pretend Prisoner in each group. The rest of you can be the Chain Gang. As we sing the first verse of our song, each Chain Gang will wrap a paper chain around the Prisoner in their group. While we sing the second verse, the Prisoners will wiggle to get free.**

Lead children in singing the following song, "Peter's Free," without the *CD* to the tune of "The Mulberry Bush."



SING

**Lock Peter up and hold him tight,
Hold him tight,
Hold him tight.
Lock Peter up and hold him tight.
Don't let him out of jail.**

**These chains will never stay on him,
Stay on him,
Stay on him.
These chains will never stay on him,
'Cause God will set him free.**

Sing the song a second time, and choose two new Prisoners. Use transparent tape if the chains need a quick repair. Continue until each child has been in "chains." Then set the paper chains aside and ask:

- **What would it be like to be wrapped up in heavy chains?** (I wouldn't like it; you couldn't walk; I'd want to break them.)
- **What if you'd been put in jail for no reason?** (I'd be mad; it wouldn't be fair; I'd be upset.)

Say: **Peter was arrested and put in jail because he talked about Jesus. Imagine! Peter was locked in chains and put in jail because he wanted others to know Jesus. But we'll see how Jesus helped Peter get free so Peter could keep on serving Jesus. ► *Jesus helps us serve him* wherever we are—even in prison like Peter. Let's listen to our exciting story and see how Peter gets free.**



◀ BIBLE POINT

■ Bible Song and Prayer Time

SUPPLIES: Bible, construction paper, scissors, CD player, basket or box



Before class, make surprise cards for this activity by cutting construction paper into 2x6-inch strips. Prepare a surprise card for each child plus a few extras for visitors.

Fold the cards in half, and stamp the *servicing stamp* inside one of the surprise cards. Place a marker at **Acts 12:4-17** in the Bible you'll be using.

Have children sit in a circle. Say: **Now it's time to choose a Bible person to bring me the Bible marked with today's Bible story. As we sing our Bible song, I'll pass out the surprise cards. Don't look inside your card until the song is over.**

Lead children in singing "Read God's Book" (track 3) with the CD to the tune of "The Muffin Man." As you sing, hand out the folded surprise cards.



**Now it's time to read God's book,
Read God's book, read God's book.
Now it's time to read God's book.
Let's hear a Bible story.**

(Repeat 3x.)

After the song, say: **You may look inside your surprise cards. The person who has the hand and heart stamped inside his or her card will be our Bible person for today.**

Identify the Bible person. Ask the Bible person to bring you the Bible. Lead the class in clapping for the Bible person, cheering, and making fun applause sound effects by slapping your thighs with your palms. Help the Bible person open the Bible to the marked place, and show children where your story comes from. Then have the Bible person sit down.

Say: [Name] **was our special Bible person today. Each week we'll have only one special Bible person, but each one of you is a special part of our class! Today we're all learning that ► Jesus helps us serve him.**

Let's say a special prayer now and ask God to help us learn that ► Jesus helps us serve him. I'll pass around this basket. When the basket comes to you, put your surprise card in it and say, "Jesus, please help me serve you."

Pass around the basket or box. After you've collected all the surprise cards, set the basket aside, and pick up the Bible. Lead children in this prayer: **God, thank you for the Bible and for all the stories in it. Teach us today that ► Jesus helps us serve him. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.**



BIBLE POINT ►



BIBLE POINT ►

■ Hear and Tell the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible; CD player; tape; photocopies of the "Today I Learned..." story pictures from Lessons 10, 11, and 12; pretend jail from Option 2



Before class, make a photocopy of each story picture from Lessons 10, 11, and 12, found on the "Today I Learned..." handouts. Tape each of the three pictures to a different wall.

Say: **We've been learning that ► *Jesus helps us serve him*. Let's review the ways Peter served Jesus in the Bible stories we've heard. I'll read a sentence. Hop to the picture that tells about the story I mention.** Read the following sentences and give kids time to hop to the appropriate pictures.

- **Jesus helped Peter bring Tabitha back to life.**
- **Peter and John preached at the Temple.**
- **Peter and John met a man who couldn't walk.**
- **Tabitha was a woman who served Jesus by helping others.**
- **The man was healed, and he jumped and praised God.**
- **The Temple leaders warned Peter and John to stop telling others about Jesus.**

Say: **Good job! You can hop to the *Bible Big Book*, and we'll hear the exciting story of how Jesus helped Peter keep on serving him.** When children are seated, hold up the Bible and say: **Our Bible story comes from the book of Acts in the Bible.** Hold up the *Bible Big Book*. **Our *Bible Big Book* shows us pictures of the story. Our story today is amazing and exciting. Listen carefully to the story about a time Peter was in jail. Let's pretend we're in jail, too—just like Peter!**

Have children climb under the table “jail” you created in Option 2. If you didn't choose Option 2, simply designate a corner of the room as the jail.

Say: **Stay in your pretend jail while you listen to the story. When you hear how Peter was set free from jail, hurry out of jail and come sit by me.**

Open the *Bible Big Book: How Peter Served Jesus* to the double illustration on pages 6 and 7. Turn on the CD, and listen to “How Peter Served Jesus, Part 2” (track 17), turning the page at the chime. After page 8, close the *Bible Big Book* and turn off the CD player.

Ask: • **Why was Peter put in jail?** (For teaching about Jesus; for telling others about Jesus.)

- **How do you think Peter felt as he was sitting in that jail?** (Scared; mad; all alone.)
- **What did Peter's friends do while Peter was in jail?** (They prayed for him; they thought about him; they talked to God about him.)
- **How do you know that God heard their prayers?** (Because an angel came; because Peter was set free; because God always hears our prayers.)

Say: **Jesus wanted Peter to keep serving him. So he sent an angel to set Peter free. It's important to remember that we're never alone, and that Jesus is always ready to help us just as he helped Peter.**

Ask: • **Why did Peter go see his friends after the angel set him free?** (He wanted his friends to know he was OK; he wanted to let them know Jesus had helped him.)

• **What would you have said to Peter when you saw him at the door?** (Hey, I thought you were in jail; I'm glad to see you; how'd you get out?)

Say: **Peter's friends were happy and excited to find out that an angel had set him free from jail. Now Peter could tell even more people about Jesus! After seeing his friends, that's just what Peter did. He left to tell even more people about Jesus. We can tell others about Jesus, too. And just like Peter, we can be sure that ► *Jesus helps us serve him*. What an exciting story! Let's play a game to help us remember how Jesus helped Peter serve him and how ► *Jesus helps us serve him*.**

◀ BIBLE POINT



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◀ BIBLE POINT



■ Do the Bible Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Say: **Think back to the Bible story we just heard, and let's see if you remember who was in the story.** Help children recall the following characters: Peter, the guards, the angel, Rhoda, and Peter's friends. Use *Bible Big Book* pages 6-8 if children need clues.

Say: **Let's act out the exciting story of Peter's release from jail. Follow along as I retell the story, and do what I do.**

Peter had been put in jail for teaching others about Jesus. He was chained between two strong guards.

(Put your hands at your sides as if bound by chains.)

He fell asleep with the chains on him.

(Lie on the floor with your hands at your sides.)

Suddenly, Peter felt someone touch his side.

(Sit up and look surprised.)

It was an angel of the Lord! The angel said, "Get dressed quickly. Then follow me." The chains fell off of Peter, and he was free!

(Wiggle your arms.)

Peter put on his coat.

(Act as if you're getting dressed.)

He thought he must be dreaming, but Peter quietly followed the angel.

(Tiptoe around the room, leading children past chairs and around tables.)

They went past the guards, and the guards never saw them! But wait. Peter looked up ahead.

(Point in front of you.)

There was a gate! How would it ever open?

(Shake your head.)

Then an amazing thing happened. The gate opened by itself, and Peter and the angel went through.

(Step through the "gate.")

When they were on the street, the angel suddenly left Peter.

(Wave goodbye.)

Peter ran to Mary's house, where his friends were staying.

(Jog around the room, and stop by a closet door or wall.)

Peter knocked at Mary's door.

(Knock on the door or wall.)

Rhoda, the servant girl, came to the door and heard Peter's voice. She was so happy to hear him that she forgot to open the door. As Rhoda ran to get Peter's friends, Peter knocked again.

(Knock on the door.)

When Peter's friends opened the door, they were so happy to see Peter. But Peter hushed them.

(Put your finger to your lips.)

Peter told them how Jesus had sent an angel to free him. And now Peter could continue to serve Jesus because he was free!

(Jump up and down and cheer.)

Sit with children on the floor.

Ask: • **Do you think Peter stopped telling people about Jesus? Why or why not?** (No, he wanted to serve Jesus; no, because he knew that Jesus would help him.)



• **Who can you tell about Jesus this week?** (My cousin; my friend at school; my teacher.)

• **What will you say about Jesus?** (That Jesus loves us; that Jesus died for our sins; that Jesus is God's Son.)

Open your Bible to **Ephesians 2:10**, and show children the words. Say: **The Bible is God's Word. It says in Ephesians 2:10, ►“For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”** God sent his Son, Jesus, to be our friend. When we believe in Jesus, we can live with him forever in heaven some day. One of the good things he wants us to do is tell our friends about Jesus, so they can have a friendship with him and live with him in heaven, too.

Say: **Peter never stopped serving Jesus. Peter wanted everyone to know Jesus and to know that Jesus is our Lord. He knew that ►*Jesus helps us serve him*, and Peter wanted to serve Jesus more than anything else. We want to serve Jesus more than anything, too. Telling others about Jesus and helping people are good ways to serve. Let's see if Pockets knows any other ways.**

◀ **BIBLE VERSE**

◀ **BIBLE POINT**



Closing

■ *all Tied Up*

SUPPLIES: shoelace

Before class, tangle a long shoelace around Pockets.

Bring out Pockets the Kangaroo. Go through the following script. After you finish the script, put Pockets out of sight.

-
- **Pockets:** *(Wiggling and tangled in the shoelace)* Ummph... uhh...mmph...
 - **Teacher:** Hello, Pockets. Do you need some help?
 - **Pockets:** Well...umphh...sort of. I'm a little tied up at the moment.
 - **Teacher:** We can see that. What happened?
 - **Pockets:** Well, you know how we've been talking about serving Jesus by helping others?



- Teacher:** Yes. That's very important.
- Pockets:** I was trying to serve my friend Sarah by tying her new shoes...but...well, I kinda got tangled up.
- Teacher:** Children, let's help Pockets get free. (*Choose a few children to untie Pockets.*) There. Is that better?
- Pockets:** Oh, much better! I feel free! Wheee! (*Leaps around.*) I was beginning to feel like I was in jail.
- Teacher:** We learned about a time Peter was put in jail when he served Jesus. Children, let's tell Pockets about that exciting story and how Peter was set free. (*Have children retell the Bible story. Encourage them to point out that Jesus helped Peter get free because he wanted Peter to go on serving him. Have children tell Pockets the Bible Point.*) So Peter was free to continue serving Jesus. And now you're free to keep serving, too, Pockets.
- Pockets:** But how? I'm not much good at tying shoes.
- Teacher:** ► *Jesus helps us serve him.* And we can serve Jesus in many ways. Children, maybe we can help Pockets think of other ways to serve. (*Let children tell their ideas.*)
- Pockets:** I know! Sarah's new shoes had scuff marks. I can polish them. I'm good at polishing things with my fuzzy tail. (*Turns around and wags her tail.*)
- Teacher:** That's the idea, Pockets. We never want to stop serving, and ► *Jesus helps us serve him* in lots of ways.
- Pockets:** Thanks for telling me that exciting story, kids. And thanks for helping me learn that ► *Jesus helps us serve him.* 'Bye!

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■ Link Up to Serve

SUPPLIES: none

Say: **We've been learning that ► *Jesus helps us serve him.* We heard today how chains and jail couldn't keep Peter from serving Jesus. Let's make a human chain to remind us that we can serve in many ways. I'll start by telling one way I can serve Jesus this week, such as helping a friend or caring for someone who's sick or by praying. Then another person can tell a way to serve and link his or her arm through my arm. We'll continue until we have a long human chain.**

When you've made a chain, lead children once around the room. Then form a circle with arms still linked. Say: **While our arms are linked together, let's link our hearts and say a prayer. Pray: Dear God, thank you for helping us learn about serving Jesus. We want to serve him forever. In Jesus' name, amen.**



BIBLE POINT ►



Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the "Today I Learned..." handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage parents to use the handout to plan meaningful family activities to reinforce this week's topic.



For Extra Time

If you have a long class time or want to add additional elements to your lesson, try one of the following activities.

Lively Learning: Listening Center

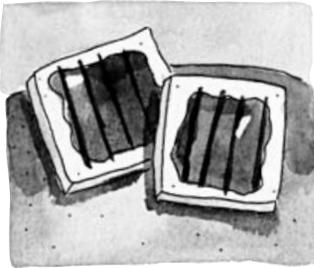


For a fun review of this module's Bible stories, invite children to listen to the entire *Bible Big Book: How Peter Served Jesus* with the CD. Choose two children to hold the *Bible Big Book* and turn the pages at the chimes. Help children begin at page 1, and listen along to help them turn the pages at the appropriate times. The entire story is track 18 on the CD.

Make to Take: Chain Links

Invite children to make chains from aluminum foil. Tear off narrow strips from a roll of aluminum foil. Let children crumple each piece lengthwise. Then show them how to twist the ends together to form a circle. Loop the next piece through the circle, and twist the ends to make a link in a chain. Have children each make five or six links in their chains. As they work, point out how we can have faith as strong as a chain that no one can break. Explain that serving is one way to strengthen our faith and that ► Jesus helps us serve him. Encourage children to hang their chains on their walls at home.

Treat to Eat: Jailhouse Crackers



Form an assembly line to make jailhouse crackers. Set out graham crackers, canned icing, plastic knives, and thin strips of licorice. Some of the children can be Jail Breakers and break the crackers in half. Other children can be the Spreaders and spread icing on each cracker. The rest of the children can be the Jailers and lay licorice-strip bars on the crackers. As you enjoy eating your treats, talk about how Jesus helped Peter when he was in jail. Remind children that ► Jesus helps us serve him.



Story Picture: Peter Is Set Free From Prison

Hand each child a photocopy of the "Today I Learned..." handout. Set out markers, glue, and Cheerios. Have the children color their pictures. Then let them glue Cheerios to the chains falling from Peter. As they work, ask children to retell the Bible story. Point out that ► Jesus helps us serve him and that Peter was set free to continue serving Jesus.

Today I learned...

Jesus helps us
serve him.

Today your child learned that Jesus helps us serve him. Children learned that an angel led Peter to freedom. They learned that Jesus can help them serve him in any situation.

Verse to Learn

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" (Ephesians 2:10).

Ask Me...

- How was Peter set free from jail?
- Why do we want to serve Jesus?
- What's one way our family can serve Jesus this week?

Family Fun

- For family prayer time, create a prayer chain. Help your child cut a 2x5-inch paper strip for each family member. Hand each person a paper strip. As each person adds a sentence to a prayer, have him or her tape a link to the chain. When you're finished praying, hang the prayer chain on a door as a reminder that even chains couldn't keep Peter from serving Jesus.

Peter Is Set Free From Prison (Acts 12:4-17)

