



Grace Church Elementary

Camp Grace

LESSON 75

1st and 2nd Grade

Principle: Live for Christ in spite of persecution.

Bible Character(s): Peter, John

Scripture Reference: Acts 4:1-22



PERSONAL PREPARATION:

Before this weekend, read through Acts 4:1-22 and

Matthew 28:16-20. Following the healing of the lame beggar, Peter and John have an opportunity to preach to the crowd that surrounded them. They proclaim Jesus' name in healing the lame man, and consequently are put in jail for preaching that "through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead." (4:2) Peter and John stand before the Sanhedrin, the council of all the rulers, elders, and teachers of religious law (71 members total), under trial and testify to their cause. They boldly and courageously stand firm in their faith, proclaiming, "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (4:12)

Peter and John risked their lives before the powerful Sanhedrin in order to share their faith and stay true to the purpose of Christ. Think about why trusting in Christ is worthwhile. Why is it worth risking everything to share Christ with others? Where do you place your hope? What shapes your daily response to those around you – your desire for others' acceptance, or a desire for them to know the love of Christ? Spend some time thinking about how Jesus has impacted you, and God's desire for you to be faithful to Him in all circumstances.

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Boldness



The purpose of this activity is to introduce the concept of boldness in Christ.

Supplies:

Paper sandwich bags (3 per bin)

Small food storage container with “gross to-to-the-touch” food* (3 per bin)

Hand wipes

* Foods that are “gross to-the-touch” may include: baby food, honey, canned peaches, cooked oatmeal, cooked pasta, mashed banana, etc.

(The containers of food will be placed in the sandwich bags, and the bags folded closed. Classroom leaders should remove the lids before class begins and put them back on at the end of class to prevent spoilage, spills, and smells.)

As your campers arrive, ask them about their favorite and least favorite foods. Be sure to share your favorite foods, too! Then have campers share the weirdest things they’ve ever eaten and why they chose to eat them. Take a poll and find out who has eaten the grossest thing. The child with the most votes will be the first volunteer.

Place the bags on the table and let campers know you have three gross things hidden inside the bags. Three brave kids (or you can allow multiple to participate) will reach inside to touch each item and guess what it is. Your first volunteer can choose any bag; while closing their eyes have them reach inside the bag and guess the item. You might want to act grossed out by what they are touching. Hand them a wipe to clean up after their guess. Reveal the item before going on to the next bag. Be sure to acknowledge the boldness of each volunteer for taking the challenge.

Tie It Together

 What was it like reaching inside the bag, not knowing what you were about to touch? Today we’ll hear more about Peter and John who were really bold in real-life situations. Their boldness didn’t come from being tough. The Holy Spirit filled them with boldness to speak the truth about Jesus!



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts – fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will continue our study of Peter and John in Acts. We will see how they kept teaching others about Jesus. They suffered persecution for preaching about Jesus, but they stayed faithful to follow and obey God.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? What did the Safety Inspector not want to allow all of you to do? (Tell others about Jesus.) Why? (Because they could be laughed at or mocked.) Why did the Safety

Inspector change his mind? (He was reminded that Jesus was arrested, laughed at, mocked, and nailed to a cross for us; if He can give up His life for us, we can take risks in our life to share Him with others.)

Last week what did God use Peter and John to do? (Heal a lame beggar.) **What did the beggar think he needed?** (He thought that money was what he needed most in his life, but Peter and John showed him that what he needed most was Jesus.) **Through God's power, Peter and John healed the lame beggar so he was able to walk.** **What did the beggar do when he was healed?** (He got up and praised God for healing him.) **Everyone who saw what happened was amazed.**

Today we are going to continue learning about Peter and John. They kept telling others that Jesus died and rose again. The religious leaders, who had wanted to kill Jesus, did not want Peter and John to teach about Jesus. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. Do you think this stopped Peter and John from telling others about Jesus? (Allow responses.)

Let's read in Acts 4 [NLT] to see how Peter and John respond to these religious leaders.

Acts 4:1-4

¹ While Peter and John were speaking to the people, they were confronted by the priests, the captain of the Temple guard, and some of the Sadducees. ² These leaders were very disturbed that Peter and John were teaching the people that through Jesus there is a resurrection of the dead. ³ They arrested them and, since it was already evening, put them in jail until morning. ⁴ But many of the people who heard their message believed it, so the number of believers now totaled about 5,000 men, not counting women and children.

Why were Peter and John arrested? (Allow responses.) They were obeying Jesus' instructions and telling others about Christ. They knew that living for Christ was worth it because their lives were changed by Jesus. They wanted to share this with others, even if it meant suffering. They risked their lives to tell others about Jesus.

The next morning, Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin ("san-hee-drin"). The Sanhedrin was the council of all the rulers, elders, and teachers of religious law; 71 members. The members of this council were the same people who had Jesus arrested and crucified. They were powerful. Peter and John had to stand in front of this large group of powerful people and answer the question, "By what power, or in whose name, have you done this?" (v. 7) They had to explain why they were preaching about Jesus. How would you feel if you had to answer this question, knowing the people you were speaking to were the ones who had Jesus crucified? (Allow responses.) Do you think Peter and John were afraid? (Allow responses.) Let's see how they respond.

Voice of Peter



The purpose of this activity is to emphasize the truth spoken by Peter in response to the council's question.

Supplies:

Recording of Acts 4:8-12 – on CD or MP3 via phones (1 per bin)
CD player if CD being used (1 per bin)

Have the campers listen to the recording of Acts 4:8-12.

Tie It Together

 Peter answered the council with boldness and power. He did not back down even though he knew they could have him killed. Do you think you would be able to respond like Peter? (Allow responses.) Verse 8 says that Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gave him the words to say and the strength to say them. We can also respond this way, not because of who we are or how strong we are, but because of the power of the Holy Spirit. If you believe and trust in Jesus, you also have the Holy Spirit. You can boldly speak about what God has done in your life because of the Holy Spirit in you.

Cornerstone

 The purpose of this activity is to focus on verse 12 and the message of The Gospel.

Supplies:

Pictures of cornerstones (1 set per bin)
Building blocks (10-12 per bin)

Show the campers the pictures of the different cornerstone examples to give them an idea of what a cornerstone is. Use the blocks to build two adjoining walls, being sure to have a “cornerstone.” Show the campers that if the cornerstone is removed, the structure isn’t as stable – it might even collapse. If time allows, you can let the campers have a turn building the walls and removing the cornerstone.

Tie It Together

 A cornerstone is the main stone used in the foundation of a building. If a cornerstone was not used, the building would not be very stable; it might fall down. Jesus is the cornerstone of Christianity. Verse 12 says, “There is salvation in no one else.” Jesus is the key; without Him, no one can be saved. There is no other way. Our own good works or good behavior will not save us. Jesus is the way, the truth and light, and no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Let’s see how the religious leaders respond to Peter and John.

Acts 4:13-18

¹³ *The members of the council were amazed when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, for they could see that they were ordinary men with no special training in the Scriptures. They also recognized them as men who had been with Jesus.* ¹⁴ *But since they could see the man who had been healed standing right there among them, there was nothing the council could say.* ¹⁵ *So they ordered Peter and John out of the council chamber and conferred among themselves.*

¹⁶ *“What should we do with these men?” they asked each other. “We can’t deny that they have performed a miraculous sign, and everybody in Jerusalem knows about it.* ¹⁷ *But to keep them from spreading their propaganda any further, we must warn them not to speak to anyone in*

Jesus' name again." ¹⁸ So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

Were Peter and John special men with special powers? (Allow responses.) No, verse 13 said they were ordinary people, just like you and me. They could heal the lame beggar through the power of the Holy Spirit in their lives. The council knew the beggar had been healed. But the council did not want Peter and John to keep sharing about Jesus. They told Peter and John to never speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

Do you think Peter and John continued to obey Jesus, or agreed to the council's warning? (Allow responses.)

Acts 4:19-20

¹⁹ But Peter and John replied, "Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him? ²⁰ We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard."

Peter and John chose to obey Jesus. Even with the possibility of being arrested, they chose to obey Him. We can learn a lot about being bold and courageous from Peter and John. They did not stop telling about what they have seen and heard. Do you choose to obey Jesus? Do you tell others about Jesus, or are you afraid of what others might say or think? (Allow responses.)

Have you seen God do something amazing in your life? Has God met a need for you or your family? Has God changed your heart? If so, you have something that you can share with others. This can be called a testimony. You can "testify" about how God has changed you. You can also tell others about what you have heard and what you have learned. You have been learning about God's love for you, and Jesus' great love and power. If you believe and trust in Jesus as your Savior, you have the Holy Spirit in you at all times. You can be bold like Peter and John and tell others about God's love and forgiveness, with the help of the Holy Spirit.

My Act of Testimony



The purpose of this activity is to give the campers the opportunity to write down part of their story so they can tell others about Christ.

Supplies:

Worksheet – "My Testimony" section (1 per camper)

Give each camper a worksheet. Help them think of ways that God has changed their hearts. Talk through what it looks like to have God change your heart; conviction, repentance, forgiveness, resulting fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). Have them draw a picture about what Jesus has done in their lives. (Examples: helped them to love others, helped them not get mad at their brother/sister, helped them befriend the weird kid in their class, helped them get baptized when they used to be scared to do it, etc.)

Tie It Together



How has God changed your heart? (Allow responses.) You can boldly share these things

with the people around you. Your friends might ask you why you act a certain way or make certain choices. Is it worth telling them about Jesus? Look back at the blessings God has given you. Think about your sin and how Jesus has taken the punishment for your sin. Who told you about Jesus? Are you thankful that someone told you how you can be saved? Who can you tell?

Let's read the final verses and see what happened to Peter and John.

Acts 4:21-22

²¹ The council then threatened them further, but they finally let them go because they didn't know how to punish them without starting a riot. For everyone was praising God ²² for this miraculous sign—the healing of a man who had been lame for more than forty years.

Peter and John were released and everyone began praising God. They had seen God do amazing things in the life of the man who had been lame, and they saw God's protection of Peter and John. The people responded with praise. We are to praise God also. We may not have seen people healed from physical pain in such a miraculous way, but we can see people's lives changed through the power of Jesus in their life. For this we should give God praise.

Is It Worth It?



The purpose of this activity is to remind the campers that it *is* worth it.

Supplies:

Teachers Guide – “Situations” side (1 per bin)

Read through the situations, asking the campers if the consequences of the actions were “worth it.” Use the following questions to help them think through each situation:

Is it worth it?
Is it worth it to believe?
Is it worth it to tell?
Is it worth it to suffer?
Is it worth it for Peter and John?
Is it worth it for ourselves?

Tie It Together

When you believe and trust in Jesus, it does not mean that you will not suffer or go through hard times. People might make fun of you or even hurt you because you believe in Jesus. When it is hard, is it worth it to follow Christ? (Allow responses.) Jesus offers us a new life of joy no matter what our circumstances are around us. God gives us joy and power that we cannot get from anyone or anything else. The suffering and persecution we experience is nothing compared to the love and power that God gives us. Is it worth it to you? (Allow responses.)

As Americans, we live in a country that has freedom of religion. That means we are free to choose any religion we want without getting in trouble with the police. We may have people laugh at us or think we are wrong, but in America people are not put in jail for telling others about Jesus. In other countries, people can lose their families and belongings because of their faith. There are missionaries

who have died because they were telling others about Jesus. There are people who are in prison because they are telling others in their countries about Jesus. They have experienced something similar to Peter and John.

Pray for the Persecuted



The purpose of this activity is to raise the awareness of the campers of Christian persecution and involve them in praying for them.

Supplies:

Prisoner Alert (1 per bin)

Worksheet – “Pray for the Persecuted” section (1 per camper)

Read the Prisoner Alert story of Alireza Seyyedian to the campers. (If your campers have been in Camp Grace for two or more years, ask them if they remember talking about Alireza before.) Talk about what his time in prison was like for him, his family, etc.) Discuss how we can intercede for people around the world as they experience persecution. Have the campers write or draw ways they can intercede and pray for others on the right side of their worksheets. (Alireza was released from prison in 2015.)

Tie It Together



Here is someone who was persecuted for his belief and faith in Jesus. He was in prison in a foreign country for many years. Can you imagine being in prison for that long for teaching others about Jesus? Many other people are in similar situations. Let's spend some time praying for this man and thanking God that we can worship God freely here. Take this worksheet home to remind you to pray for Alireza and others who are persecuted for loving Jesus.

Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to give each of us strength to live for Him, even when it's hard.



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