



Grace Church Elementary

Camp Grace

LESSON 81

1st and 2nd Grade

Principle: Prayer is powerful. God protects His people.

Bible Character(s): Peter

Scripture Reference: Acts 12:1-19



PERSONAL PREPARATION:

Before this weekend, read through Acts 12:1-19. Peter is imprisoned by King Herod, and the church earnestly prayed for Peter. Earnest is defined as, “serious in intention, purpose or effort; seriously zealous; showing depth and sincerity of feeling; seriously important; demanding or receiving serious attention.” (Dictionary.com) The ESV study Bible notes that “the mention of earnest prayer continues Luke’s emphasis that every step in building the church is due to God’s blessing and supernatural intervention.” We see in the rest of the Acts 12 passage that God’s blessing and supernatural intervention is essential to Peter being freed from prison. The church prayed for Peter, and God protected him from death through His intervention. God is not in need of our prayers, but He desires complete dependence on Him to provide for and protect His church.

How central is prayer in your life? How often do you spend time praying with others? Is prayer your first response to a difficult situation? Do you fully believe in the power of prayer? Does the word “earnest” describe your prayer life? The focus of this lesson will be to see how God answers prayers, how it is important to pray for those in need, and to pray expecting God to answer. Be prepared to share with your class how God has answered a prayer of yours in the past. This lesson provides a great opportunity to pray together as a class.

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!

Peter Is Freed From Prison Maze



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 focus on prayer. We will talk about how powerful prayer is, that God hears our prayers, and the value in praying together.

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 servant girl, Rhoda, share? (She was at Mary's house with a group gathered to pray for Peter when Peter appeared at the door; God answered their prayer and showed His power by freeing Peter.)

A few weeks ago, we read a passage from Acts 10, about Peter and a man named Cornelius. Who did we learn can be saved? Everyone can be saved from their sin, even those who we think are different from us. Peter learned this after he saw a vision. Does anyone remember what that vision was? ("Unclean" food on a sheet, the food represented the Gentiles.) God showed that Peter understood salvation is for all people, not just the Jews. Jesus died for everyone and God wants us to share His Good News with everyone. Peter continued talking to everyone around him about who Jesus was and what He did on the cross.

This week, we will continue studying in Acts about Peter. We will see what happens as Peter keeps telling others that Jesus is the true King.

In Acts 12, we learn that King Herod Agrippa was persecuting some believers. This King Herod was the nephew of the king who had been in power when Jesus was crucified. Like his uncle, he wanted all the power. He did not want anyone teaching that Jesus was the true King, as James and Peter were doing. Herod had James killed, and put Peter in prison.

Let's read in Acts 12 to see what happens to Peter.

Acts 12:4

⁴ Then he (King Herod) imprisoned him, placing him under the guard of four squads of four soldiers each. Herod intended to bring Peter out for public trial after the Passover.

Guards and Swords



The purpose is to emphasize the security around Peter.

Supplies:

Sword on cardstock (1 per camper)

Have the campers color and cut out their swords.

Tie It Together



King Herod made sure Peter could not escape. There were probably two guards in prison with Peter, and two guards at the gates. Peter was chained in the cell. King Herod did not take any chances. Do you think there was any way for Peter to escape?

Let's continue reading to see what happens.

Acts 12:5

⁵ *But while Peter was in prison, the church prayed very earnestly for him.*

The people in the church knew that Peter would probably be killed once he had his trial. They began to pray "earnestly" for him; this means they prayed very seriously and with great purpose. The people did not know how God would answer their prayer, but they continued to pray for Peter and believed God would answer.

Swords or Prayer?



The purpose is to show that prayer is more powerful than swords.

Supplies:

Swords (from previous activity)

Chains (1 set per bin)

Have the campers set up the scene by having one camper as Peter, in chains, four campers as guards with their swords and the other campers on the other side of the room praying.

Tie It Together



Let's look at this scene we just set up. Here is a group of people with swords. Peter is chained up. This other group has nothing; no tools to remove the chains, no swords to fight the guards. Which group looks more powerful? (The group with the swords/chains.) The swords seem a lot more powerful than these people that are praying. Do you think prayer is powerful? (Allow responses.) Does God hears your prayers and answers them? (Allow responses.) Does God protect us? (Allow responses.)

Let's see what happens to Peter.

Acts 12:6-11

⁶ The night before Peter was to be placed on trial, he was asleep, fastened with two chains between two soldiers. Others stood guard at the prison gate. ⁷ Suddenly, there was a bright light in the cell, and an angel of the Lord stood before Peter. The angel struck him on the side to awaken him and said, "Quick! Get up!" And the chains fell off his wrists. ⁸ Then the angel told him, "Get dressed and put on your sandals." And he did. "Now put on your coat and follow me," the angel ordered.

⁹ So Peter left the cell, following the angel. But all the time he thought it was a vision. He didn't realize it was actually happening. ¹⁰ They passed the first and second guard posts and came to the iron gate leading to the city, and this opened for them all by itself. So they passed through and started walking down the street, and then the angel suddenly left him.

¹¹ Peter finally came to his senses. "It's really true!" he said. "The Lord has sent his angel and saved me from Herod and from what the Jewish leaders had planned to do to me!"

If you were Peter, how would you have responded to all of this? (Allow responses.) Would you have been sleeping if you had been in prison? (Allow responses.) The angel had to hit Peter to wake him up. Would you have thought you were dreaming? (Allow responses.)

Prayer is powerful. Swords and chains seem powerful, but prayer was more powerful than both of these strong things. God answered the prayers of the church in an amazing way. How does this make you feel about prayer? (Allow responses.)

Let's continue reading.

Acts 12:12-18

¹² When he realized this, he went to the home of Mary, the mother of John Mark, where many were gathered for prayer. ¹³ He knocked at the door in the gate, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to open it. ¹⁴ When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed that, instead of opening the door, she ran back inside and told everyone, "Peter is standing at the door!"

¹⁵ "You're out of your mind!" they said. When she insisted, they decided, "It must be his angel."

¹⁶ Meanwhile, Peter continued knocking. When they finally opened the door and saw him, they were amazed. ¹⁷ He motioned for them to quiet down and told them how the Lord had led him out of prison. "Tell James and the other brothers what happened," he said. And then he went to another place.

¹⁸ At dawn there was a great commotion among the soldiers about what had happened to Peter.

These people were praying for Peter when he knocked on the door. If you were a part of that church praying for Peter in prison, how would you have responded if you found Peter outside the door? Would you have been surprised to see him? (Allow responses.) Everyone was excited to see him, but also amazed that he was there. God answered their prayers.

Do you have anything that we can pray for today? What is it that you would like God to do? (Allow responses.)

Prayer Chains



The purpose is to remember the power of prayer.

Supplies:

Acts 12 verse strips on gray paper (1 per camper)

Write the campers' prayer requests on the Acts 12:5 strips of paper. Connect the strips to make a prayer chain to hang in the room.

Tie It Together



Prayer is powerful! God answered the prayers of the church in Acts, and freed Peter from prison. They prayed earnestly for Peter, yet were still amazed to see the power of God at work! Can you think of any prayer requests that God has answered in your life? (Allow responses. Leaders, this is a great time to talk about how God has answered of your prayers.) We can pray to God for our own needs and for the needs of others. We can also praise Him for who He is. We need to pray for each other's requests. This chain will help us remember to spend time praying together, and for each other.

Musical Prayers



The purpose of this activity is to help the campers become comfortable with prayer.

Supplies:

Paper

Scissors

Tape

Crayons/Markers

Ask the campers to give ideas of different general topics of prayer. They could be some of their prayer requests from the previous activity. Other examples are soldiers, people who are sick, family members, the church (Grace Church, and the church throughout the world), people in need, etc. Come up with one topic for each camper in the room. Write these topics down on paper. Next, rearrange the chairs in a circle away from the table (one chair per camper). Tape the topics to the backs of the chairs. Play "Musical Prayers" by having the campers walk around in a circle, singing a song, and when the teacher says "Stop!" all of the campers should sit in a chair. Then have the campers look at the topic on the back of their chair, and say a short, silent prayer concerning that topic. Continue for five rounds. (Keep all chairs in the circle each round).

Tie It Together



It is important for us to pray not just for ourselves and our family, but for our church and for the world. Prayer helps us to depend not on ourselves, but on God. There are believers all over

the world, and we are all connected as one body of Christ. It is important to remember that everyone in the body of Christ needs prayer, and also everyone in the world who does not know Christ needs prayer.

Prayer Time

 The purpose is to pray together, just as the church did for Peter.

Spend some time praying with your campers. Have campers pray out loud for each other.

Tie It Together

 It is important for us to pray together, but it is also important for us to pray on our own. Prayer should become a central part of our life. We can pray when we are at home, at school, or in church for example. It does not have to be a long, involved prayer; it can be a quick prayer asking for help before you take a test, or thanking God for something He did for you. You could hear of a friend that is sick and you might spend a few minutes praying for him or her before you go outside to play. You can pray anytime, anywhere. Prayer is powerful.



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