

LESSON



In and Out of Prison

COMMUNITY

We treat each other with love.

References

Acts 12:1-19; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 143-154.

Memory Verse

“The church kept on praying to God for him” (Acts 12:5, ICB).

Objectives

The children will:

Know that God hears our prayers for those who are in trouble.

Feel sympathy for those who are in trouble.

Respond by praying for those who are in trouble and by believing that God will answer their prayer.

The Message

In God’s family we pray for one another.

Getting Ready to Teach

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Peter is put in prison for teaching about Jesus. His friends pray for him. God hears their prayers and sends an angel to lead him out of prison in a wonderful way. When he goes to see his friends, they are surprised and very happy. They pray again—to thank God for bringing Peter back to them.

This is a lesson about community.

Peter’s friends cared about him. They prayed together for his safety. When we pray for others, we are caring about them. People in God’s family pray for one another.

Teacher Enrichment

“The members of the church had time for deep searching of heart and earnest

FOUR

Program Outline			
LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Thrown Into Prison</i> B. <i>Praying</i>	beanbag or wadded paper, "jail," recorded music or musical instrument praying pictures (see p. 153), paper, crayons
* Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	See page 43. *Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story	chains, flashlight, Bible-times costumes (optional)
		Bible Study	Bible
		Memory Verse	Bible
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Answered Prayer</i>	none
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Praying Hands</i>	paper, pencils, scissors, crayons, stickers or craft materials

prayer. They prayed without ceasing for Peter, for they felt that he could not be spared from the cause. They realized that they had reached a place where, without the special help of God, the church of Christ would be destroyed. . . .

"The day of Peter's execution was at last appointed, but still the prayers of the believers ascended to heaven; and while all their energies and sympathies were called out in fervent appeals for help, angels of God were watching over the imprisoned apostle" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 145).

Are you praying with deep searching of heart and earnest prayer as these Christians did for Peter?

Room Decorations

Add jail bars to the house, or make a separate jail out of a table. Tape strips of masking tape from the top of the table to the floor about two inches apart, and add an angel. Or place a window shape on a wall with cardboard bars over the window and a bedroll on the floor. An old jug and chains would complete the scene.

Teaching the Lesson

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Thrown Into Prison

You Need:

- beanbag or wadded paper
- recorded music or a musical instrument
- "jail"

Prepare a "jail" area in one corner of the room. (If you added a jail for decorations, use it now.) Have the children sit in a circle on the floor. Explain that you are going to play a game called "thrown into prison." Give the beanbag or wadded paper to the first child, and ask them to pass it to the child next to them as soon as the music begins. When the music stops, have two "soldiers" (adult helpers) lift up the child holding the beanbag and put them in the prison. Continue until all the children are in prison. If you have a small group, you may want to repeat the game again.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **What was it like to be lifted up and put in prison? Why are people usually put in prison? What wrong things have they done? What had you done wrong?** (nothing) **Does it sometimes happen that people who love Jesus are put in prison without having done anything wrong? If they are put in prison, does that mean that God is not taking care of them anymore?** (no) **In our story today someone who had done nothing wrong was put in prison. But many people were praying for him, and God heard their prayers. Today's message is:**



In God's family we pray for one another.

Say that with me.

B. Praying

In advance, prepare a copy of the Praying Pictures for each child. (See page 153.) Ask the children to color the pictures of people or things they can pray about.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **What pictures did you**

You Need:

- Praying Pictures (see p. 153)
- paper
- crayons

color? Have you ever prayed about any of these? Our Bible story is about many people praying for someone who was in prison. And God heard their prayers. God likes it when we pray for others. Today's message is:



In God's family we pray for one another.

Say that with me.

PRAYER AND PRAISE



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study and review the memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

- "Talk to God" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, No. 16)
- "Thank God for Angels Bright" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, No. 50)
- "Something Nice" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, No. 261)
- "Care for One Another" (*Little Voices Praise Him*, No. 262)

Mission

Say: **There are people all around the world for whom we can pray. Let's listen to a story about someone we can add to the list of people we pray for.** Use a story from *Children's Mission*.

Offering

Say: **Praying is one way to show that we care about others. Another way is to give our money to help other people in God's family.**

Prayer

List names of some people in your church who have asked for or need your prayers. If you have pictures, show them to the children.

Have the children say the names of people they will pray for. If they need help, have them repeat after you, **"Jesus, please be with (name)."** When all who want to have prayed, thank God for hearing your prayers.

*Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

You Need:

- short lengths of chain
- flashlight
- Bible-times costumes (optional)

*Before starting the story, let the children have turns. Wrap the chains around their wrists so they can see how heavy they are. Allow responses as you ask: **How do the chains feel? How would you feel if you had to wear these all the time, even when you eat and sleep? Our story today is about Peter and a time he was thrown in prison and fastened with chains to keep him from moving around. We are going to act out the Bible story.***

Choose a few children to be soldiers standing guard over the jail, others to pray for Peter's rescue, Peter, an angel, and Rhoda (who comes to the door at the house). Position the prayers in or by the "house." Place Peter in one corner (the table with masking tape bars—see Room Decorations). Have the angel stand near the jail. Tell the children to listen closely to the story and to do the actions as you tell it.

Read or tell the story.

King Herod was a bad king. He wanted to make the Jewish leaders happy, and killing people who believed in Jesus did that. So King Herod decided he would put Peter in jail so the Jewish leaders would like him. King Herod shouted to the guards, "Find that preacher Peter and put him in jail!" *[Make sure the soldiers put Peter in jail.]*

In jail Peter was chained to two soldiers. *[Have two soldiers join Peter in jail, one on either side of him.]* Guards were everywhere around the jail. They did not want Peter to get out!

Soon Peter's friends heard that Peter was in jail. They all got together at one house and decided to pray. They prayed all night long. *[Have the friends kneel down and act as if they are praying.]* They

prayed and prayed and prayed.

Back at the prison a bright light suddenly appeared in Peter's cell. *[Shine a flashlight on the angel.]* It was an angel!

Peter was sleeping. The angel touched Peter to wake him up. *[Have the angel pretend to wake Peter.]* The angel said, "Get up, Peter." The chains dropped off. Peter thought he must be dreaming. "Put on your shoes," the angel said, "and come with me." The angel led Peter past all the soldiers. *[Have them walk out of "jail" and go toward the house.]* And a big iron gate opened for them all by itself. After that the angel disappeared.

Peter walked to the house where he thought his friends would be. He knocked on the door. *[Have Peter go to the house and pretend to knock.]*

Rhoda, the servant girl, came to the door. *[Have "Rhoda" answer the door, but not open it. Peter calls to her, "I'm Peter."]* When she heard Peter's voice, she was so happy that she ran to tell the others, and forgot to let him in. "Peter is outside!" she told the people who were in the house praying. They did not believe her.

Peter kept knocking. Finally, some of the people went to the door and saw Peter for themselves. They grabbed him and took him inside. There Peter told them all that God had done for him.

Now their prayers changed! They praised God and thanked Him for sending the angel and for bringing Peter back to them. God was with Peter all the time. And He is with you all the time, too.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **What do you think it was like for Peter while he was in prison? How do you think his friends who were praying felt?**

How did Peter get out of jail? What do you think his friends were praying for? Do you think they expected God to answer? Do you remember our message? Let's say it together:



In God's family we pray for one another.

Bible Study

You Need:

Bible

Open your Bible to Acts 12:1-19. Point to the text and say: **This is where today's**

story is found in the Bible. Read selected verses aloud, paraphrasing as necessary.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask:

Who put Peter in jail? (King Herod)

Who was praying for Peter? (people in the church)

Whom did God send to get Peter out of jail? (an angel) **What happened to Peter's chains?** (They fell off.)

Where did Peter go? (to a house where people were praying for him) **What do you think about praying for our church friends? Remember . . .**



In God's family we pray for one another.

Memory Verse

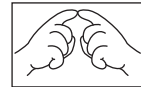
Turn to Acts 12:5 and say: **This is where we find our memory verse in God's Word, the Bible.** Read the verse aloud. **"The church kept on praying to God for him."** Then proceed to teach the memory verse as outlined below.

You Need:

Bible

The church

Fingertips together as if a pointed church roof.



kept on praying

Fold hands as if in prayer.



to God

Point upward.



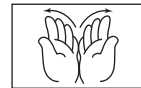
for him.

Point to others.



Acts 12:5

Palms together, then open.



3

Applying the Lesson

Answered Prayer

Allow responses as you ask: **Do you think God's people should pray for one another as Peter's friends prayed for him? In some places in the world God's people cannot go to church. In some places they have no church. Should we pray for them?** Invite the children to say a short prayer. Let each child pray if they wish.

Ask: **Who can share about a time when you prayed for someone and your prayer was answered? What happened?** Be ready to tell a story from your experience also.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you ask: **What do families do for each other? What do mommies do for chil-**

dren? What do daddies do for children? What do daddies and mommies do to help each other? What do children do for parents?

God loves us, and we belong to His family. Christians in other countries are part of God's family too. What do we do in God's family?

People in God's family pray for each other! And God hears our prayers. Let's pray again for God's people in other parts of the world. (Offer a brief prayer.) Let's say our message together again:



In God's family we pray
for one another.

4

Sharing the Lesson**Praying Hands****You Need:**

- paper
- pencils
- scissors
- crayons
- stickers or craft materials

Help each child trace their hands on a piece of paper with their thumbs right next to each other. Then help them cut out these hands, but don't cut the thumbs apart. Then write "I'm Praying for You" on

their hands.

The children may color and decorate their praying hands. Show the children how they can fold their hands together (as if praying) at the thumbs.

Debriefing

Allow responses as you say: **Think of someone you would like to share your praying hands with this week. Tell them about Peter and how many people were praying for him while he was in jail.**

Whoever you choose, remember to pray for them every day this week. Will God listen to your prayers? God loves to hear your prayers for others. Remember:



In God's family we pray for one another.

Closing

Ask God to help the children remember to pray for someone every day this week.

STUDENT LESSON

In and Out of Prison

References

Acts 12:1-19; *The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 143-154

Memory Verse

“The church kept on praying to God for him” (Acts 12:5, ICB).

The Message

In God’s family we pray for one another.

Have you ever known someone who was in trouble? How could you help them? Peter’s friends prayed and prayed and prayed for him, and something amazing happened.

Wicked King Herod rubbed his hands together and made plans. He would do away with the people who believed in Jesus! He would take care of that preacher Peter next. “Guards!” King Herod shouted. “Guards!”

Peter went quietly with the soldiers who came to arrest him. When they arrived at the prison, Peter was chained to two soldiers—one on each side of him.

The chains pinched Peter’s arms. But Peter didn’t complain. He sat down on the cold stone floor and leaned against the wall. He closed his eyes and went to sleep.

The news about Peter’s arrest spread quickly through the city. Many of the believers hurried to John Mark’s mother’s house. They often went there to pray together, so it seemed like the right place to pray for Peter. The believers prayed and prayed. They prayed late into the night.

Back in the prison a bright light suddenly shone in Peter’s cell. An angel tapped Peter on the shoulder. “Quick! Get up!” the angel said, and the chains fell off of Peter’s wrists.

“Put on your sandals. Put on your coat and follow me.”

Peter did as he was told. He felt as if

he were dreaming.

Peter and the angel passed between two groups of soldiers and came to the iron gate that led to the street. The gate opened by itself, and Peter and the angel walked out of the prison together! Then the angel disappeared.

Peter closed his eyes and opened them again. He really was on the street! “It’s true!” he whispered to himself. “The Lord sent an angel to help me!”

Peter hurried to John Mark’s mother’s house and knocked at the door. Rhoda, a servant girl, came. She heard his voice, and ran right back into the house. “Peter is at the door!” she shouted.

Peter’s friends looked at Rhoda. “That’s crazy!” they said. “It’s not possible.”

“It’s true! It’s true!” Rhoda insisted.

Peter began knocking again.

When the people finally opened the door, they were astonished! Someone grabbed Peter and quickly pulled him into the house. They listened eagerly as Peter told how the Lord had sent an angel to lead him out of prison. The believers laughed and cried with joy. And then they prayed some more. They praised the Lord for hearing and answering their prayers.



Do and Say

Sabbath

Each day this week, read the lesson story, and re-view the memory verse:

The churchFingertips together as if a pointed church roof.

kept on praying . . .Fold hands as if in prayer.

to GodPoint upward.

for him.Point to others.

Acts 12:5Palms together, then open.

Sunday

Encourage your child to share the praying hands made in Sabbath School with someone and to pray for that person every day. (Or trace around your child's hands with their thumbs together, cut them out [do not cut thumbs apart], and write "I'm Praying for You" on them.)

Monday

Ask your child: Whom (or what) are you praying about today? How many times have you prayed about them (or it) today? Have them count on their fingers.

Help your child trace their hands on a piece of paper. Put it in a place where they will see it often to remind them that they have praying hands.

Tuesday

Read and discuss together Acts 12:1-19. Ask: Why do you think God sent an angel to Peter?

Help your child begin to make a prayer chain. Cut two-inch strips of paper. Write on them names of people or situations to pray for. Each day this week, add a paper link to the chain.



Wednesday

Let your child pretend to be Peter, knocking on the door of the home where friends are praying for him. Call out his or her name, but do not open the door right away. When you open the door, ask: What do you think Peter thought when the servant girl did not let him in?

Thursday

Count the links on the prayer chain started on Tuesday. Pray for the names on the chain again. Look for answers to the prayers.

Share with your child about a time when you prayed earnestly for someone.

Friday

Help your child act out the lesson story for family worship. Let your child dress up. Use a chair or roped off area for the jail. Shine a flashlight when the angel appears.

Sing a prayer song; then thank God for hearing your prayers.

