



## LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Hears Our Prayers for Others

**SCRIPTURE:** Acts 12

**WORD OF WONDER:** From Psalm 66:19–20

Take a few moments to read Acts 12:1–16.

I know it sounds strange, but this is almost my favorite passage in Scripture. Why? Because you couldn't make this stuff up if you tried.

A huddle of desperate Christians is deep in prayer for their imprisoned friend, Peter.

Peter, who they love, and who might be executed the following day.

Then, a knock at the door.

It's Peter, whose miraculous release now means he needs someplace safe to shelter. But those praying can't quite believe their prayers have been answered in this way and figure it must be an angel at the door, not Peter himself. It takes a brave servant girl to insist it really is Peter until finally they crack open the door and get him inside.

Sound familiar? Like those believers, we sometimes pray without much expectation that God will answer. We don't want to get our hopes up, don't want to risk disappointment.

But God hears our prayers, including our prayers for others. And when our prayers align with His purposes, remarkable things happen.

So pray your kids come to know and love Him. That the diagnosis is reversed, the crisis calmed, the relationship healed. Pray boldly and specifically for God to act in the lives of people you love.

Do that now—pray for a Peter in your life you'd like to see set free from some sort of captivity. If you take that risk, what might happen?

And then keep listening for a knock at the door.

—Mikal Keefer

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#### DID YOU KNOW?

#### FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

##### WHO?

The book of Acts and the Gospel of Luke were written by the same author. While the Gospel is focused on the life and ministry of Jesus, Acts focuses on the growth of the church and spread of the good news after Jesus' ascension.

##### WHAT?

[Acts 12](#) is part of a longer series of stories beginning in [Acts 8](#) about the rise of persecution against the church and how God protected His people through it all. In fact, God used the persecution against the church to help spread the gospel.

##### WHERE?

The story takes place in Judea, where Herod Agrippa, the grandson of the Herod who tried to have Jesus killed ([Matthew 2:16](#)), reigned.

##### WHEN?

[Acts 12](#) places the story of Peter's imprisonment and rescue by an angel around the same time that Paul began his ministry with Barnabas in Antioch. Persecution against the church in Judea increased as the gospel began to go forth to the Gentiles.

##### CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Luke says that his Gospel is about what "Jesus began to do and to teach [emphasis added]" ([Acts 1:1, NIV](#)). Acts is about what Jesus continued to do and teach through the Holy Spirit in the apostles. Jesus continues to work in us by His Spirit today!



## Curiosity

### LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.*

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#### Curiosity Activity: Testing Strength

**SUPPLIES:** paper towels or tissue paper (5), strips of paper (5), craft sticks (5), pieces of string or yarn (5), heavy metal chain or similar object

Ahead of time, set out the various objects on a table or the floor for kids to see the types of objects.

**Today, we're going to test your strength. Who thinks you are strong enough to break one of these objects?** Hold up each type of object and describe it. **Do you want to test your strength today?** Invite kids one at a time to choose an object and try to break it. Hold up paper towels or tissue paper, strips of paper, craft sticks, pieces of string or yarn, and a heavy metal chain. Let each child choose one thing to try and break or tear apart.

**You are strong! You were able to break some of these things. But what about this metal chain? Could anyone break that? What do you think it would take to break the metal chain?** Allow kids to respond. **It would probably take someone with extreme power and strength to break that chain!**

**Today, we're going to learn how prayer is powerful and strong. Our prayers are powerful because God hears our prayers, and He is all-powerful! We'll learn about a time when God heard the prayers of others and broke some chains so a follower of Jesus could escape prison! We'll learn that God hears our prayers for others!**

**Leader Tip:** If kids are hesitant to volunteer, invite them to guess which items can and can't be broken.



## Belief

### LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.*

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#### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God’s big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, we know You hear us when we pray for others, and You answer our prayers. So we come to You today, excited to learn about Your truth and to see how our prayers have power because of You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

#### God’s Big Story

**\*\*Note to leaders:** This story is not in any of our picture Bibles. To aid in telling the story, you can use the puppet figures included in the Belief bag for this week.

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God’s word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

#### TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read Acts 12:3-16 NiRV from the text below:

Herod saw that the death of James pleased some Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the Feast of Unleavened Bread. Her<sup>3</sup> Herod saw that the death of James pleased some Jews. So he arrested Peter also. This happened during the

## 10:45 Service

Feast of Unleavened Bread.<sup>4</sup> After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in prison. Peter was placed under guard. He was watched by four groups of four soldiers each. Herod planned to put Peter on public trial. It would take place after the Passover Feast.

<sup>5</sup> So Peter was kept in prison. But the church prayed hard to God for him.

<sup>6</sup> It was the night before Herod was going to bring him to trial. Peter was sleeping between two soldiers. Two chains held him there. Lookouts stood guard at the entrance. <sup>7</sup> Suddenly an angel of the Lord appeared. A light shone in the prison cell. The angel struck Peter on his side. Peter woke up. "Quick!" the angel said. "Get up!" The chains fell off Peter's wrists.

<sup>8</sup> Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals." Peter did so. "Put on your coat," the angel told him. "Follow me." <sup>9</sup> Peter followed him out of the prison. But he had no idea that what the angel was doing was really happening. He thought he was seeing a vision. <sup>10</sup> They passed the first and second guards. Then they came to the iron gate leading to the city. It opened for them by itself. They went through it. They walked the length of one street. Suddenly the angel left Peter.

<sup>11</sup> Then Peter realized what had happened. He said, "Now I know for sure that the Lord has sent his angel. He set me free from Herod's power. He saved me from everything the Jewish people were hoping would happen."

<sup>12</sup> When Peter understood what had happened, he went to Mary's house. Mary was the mother of John Mark. Many people had gathered in her home. They were praying there. <sup>13</sup> Peter knocked at the outer entrance. A servant named Rhoda came to answer the door. <sup>14</sup> She recognized Peter's voice. She was so excited that she ran back without opening the door. "Peter is at the door!" she exclaimed.

<sup>15</sup> "You're out of your mind," they said to her. But she kept telling them it was true. So they said, "It must be his angel."

<sup>16</sup> Peter kept on knocking. When they opened the door and saw him, they were amazed.

### WORD OF WONDER

**But God has surely listened. He has heard  
my prayer. Give praise to God.**

— Psalm 66:19–20a

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **Who can you pray for this week?**
- **How do you know God hears you?**



## Faith

### LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.*

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**Game:** Guess My Voice or **Craft:** Mother's Day Flower

**Note to Leaders:** If children did not attend the 9:00 service, they can make a Mother's Day card to give their mom. Students who made the card during first service can play the Guess My Voice Game instead.

**CRAFT SUPPLIES:** cardstock cards, paper muffin cups, buttons, green paper strips

**We're going to make cards to tell our moms how much we love them!**

Allow children to assemble the flower using paper muffin cups, buttons and paper. Inside the card, children can write or draw a message to their moms or create another flower.



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### **GAME SUPPLIES:** blindfold

**In God's big story today, Rhoda knew it was Peter standing outside the door just by hearing his voice! I wonder who can guess someone else's voice in our room. In this game, we will have one person pretend to be Rhoda. The person playing Rhoda will wear a blindfold (or close her eyes) and guess who is talking. If I tap your shoulder, you can knock on a table or door and say, "God hears me!"**

Choose one person to be Rhoda and blindfold that kid. One at a time, tap a kid on the shoulder and encourage him to knock on a table or door and say, "God hears me!" Be sure to choose in random order so it's hard to guess. The kid with the blindfold should guess who is speaking by pointing to or saying the kid's name. Continue playing with other kids volunteering to guess. If kids don't all know one another's names, go around the room and let the kids share their names before you play.

**Leader Tip:** Some kids might not be comfortable with wearing a blindfold. Kids can also close their eyes or cover their eyes with their hands.



## Identity

### LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

*Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.*

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#### Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for hearing their prayers.

**God, You love when Your kids talk to You in prayer. And You hear us, God. Thank You that we can come to You in prayer and that our prayers have power because of You. We pray for the people we know. Please remind us of Your presence and Your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** May you go out this week with the knowledge that God made you, He knows you, and He loves you. He will hear your prayers for others!

#### Closing Activity: Knock, Knock!

**SUPPLIES:** paper (1 sheet per kid), marker or pen

Before the kids arrive, fold each sheet of paper in half; you'll need one sheet for each kid. You could make the papers look like doors by drawing a doorknob and window on the outside. Inside the folded papers, write a discussion question or a silly action (such as "Jump up high!" or "Spin in a circle!" or "Run in place!"). When you're ready to begin this activity, set the paper doors on the floor. You need one paper door for each kid (or the kids can share). Instead of writing the full



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question, you can write a number corresponding with the questions below.

**When we talk to God in prayer, He hears us—just like He heard Peter’s friends when they prayed for Peter while Peter was in prison. Let’s pretend that we are knocking on a door like Peter did. When it’s your turn, choose a door to knock on and we’ll see what’s inside!**

Call on kids to choose a paper door and pretend to knock on it. Then open the paper door and read what’s inside. The kid will either do the silly action or answer the question inside. The kids could also knock on a door (without leaving your room) and another leader could stand behind the door and hand out a paper with a question on it.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **How did Peter get out of prison?** *(God broke the chains; an angel led him out.)*
- **What were Peter’s friends doing while he was in prison?** *(praying for him)*
- **Where did Peter go when he got out of prison?** *(to a house where his friends were praying)*
- **What did Rhoda do when Peter knocked on the door?** *(In her excitement to tell the people Peter was there, she accidentally left him outside.)*
- **How might you have felt if you were Rhoda answering the door?**
- **What do you think Peter’s friends felt when he entered the house?**
- **Why do you think the people were praying for Peter?**
- **Share about a time when you prayed for someone else.**

**God hears our prayers when we pray for other people. We can pray for family members, friends from church or school, and our neighbors. Let’s talk to God now in prayer!**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That’s OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for hearing their prayers for others.

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