

11. Peter in Prison (Acts 12:1-17)

“As for us, we can’t stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.” (Acts 4:20)



PLAN

Supplies

Deep Blue Resources: One Room Sunday School® Kit: CD-ROM | Leader Guide | Reproducible Kids’ Book | Resource Pak

Additional Deep Blue Resources:

CEB Deep Blue Kids Bible | Deep Blue Bible Storybook | Deep Blue Adventure DVD | Deep Blue Bible Dictionary

Basic Supplies: DVD player | CD Player | Pencils | Crayons | Markers | Scissors | Tape | Glue | Stapler/staples | Paper lunch bags | Construction paper | Masking tape |

Gather: Googly eyes | Variety of decorations for crafts | Angel cookie cutter | Flour tortillas | Plastic knives | White icing | Shredded coconut

Explore: No additional supplies

Respond: World map

Bless: No additional supplies

Before You Teach

Herod Agrippa I ruled as king in Jerusalem during the time the disciples were spreading the good news of Jesus’ resurrection and the church was growing. His job was primarily to keep the peace among the Jewish population. King Herod used this as his reason for persecuting the church. Influenced by the Jewish leadership, Herod arrested some of the apostolic leaders. He said their messianic claims posed a political threat.

James, the son of Zebedee, was first to be killed. As the head of the church in Jerusalem, his death was a heavy assault on the church. This action seemed to please the Jewish leadership, so next he arrested Peter and left him in prison during the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Herod assigned a secure guard of four squads of four soldiers each to guard Peter. Herod’s power kept Peter in prison, but the church was calling on God’s power through prayer. The church interceded for Peter with continuous, fervent, and united prayer. On the night before Peter’s trial and probable execution, God answered the church’s prayers.

Peter was asleep in the jail securely chained to two guards. Suddenly an angel from the Lord appeared, and a bright light filled the prison cell. The angel nudged Peter and ordered him to get up quickly and prepare to leave. Miraculously, Peter’s chains fell off his wrists. Peter followed the angel, passing two guards, and reached the secured, iron gate leading to the city. Peter was awake enough to obey the angel’s orders, but he didn’t think it was real. He thought he was having a vision until the gate opened by itself and he was freed. At that point, the angel disappeared, and Peter, thinking clearly, made his way to the house where the church was gathered praying.

A servant named Rhoda answered the door when Peter knocked, but she was so excited that she forgot to let him in before she ran to share the good news with the church. Their first response was, “You’ve lost your mind!” But Rhoda was so insistent, they finally opened the door in the gate and saw Peter. They were astonished.

Peter quietly told them about his rescue and asked them to share it with the church leadership. Then Peter left for another place, and the guards were left clueless as to what had happened.

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GATHER

Greeting

Before class: Display the “Attendance Chart” (Resource Pak—pp. 2 and 23 or p. 3). Two different options for an attendance chart are given in the Resource Pak. Decide which is best for your class.

- Play the theme song, “All Are Welcome” (CD-ROM), as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings on the worship table.
- Have each child mark an attendance chart. For the “Community Attendance Chart,” the children can write their first names or initials on the building marked #11.

PRAY: Dear God, help us learn how to pray from the example of the first church; in Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

ASK: Can you share a story about a time when you prayed for something, and God answered that prayer?

Story Chain (Puzzle – Preschool)

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11b for each preschool child.

SAY: King Herod didn’t want Peter talking about Jesus, so he threw Peter in jail. Cut out the four strips. Put them in order of the story. Then connect them as a paper chain.

- Allow the children to cut out their strips.
 - Go over the sentences on the four strips, and ask the children what order they think they should be in. Have the children write 1 through 4 on the strips in the order of the story.
 - Show the children how to join the strips together to make a paper chain.
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Help Peter Escape (Puzzle – Younger Elementary)

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11c for each younger elementary child.

SAY: King Herod tried to stop Peter from talking about Jesus by putting Peter in jail. Help Peter make it through the maze to the church. The angels will help you, but beware of the guards.

ASK: Who helped Peter escape from the jail? (*angel*) What was the church doing? (*gathered together in a house, praying for Peter*)

- Allow the children time to work the maze.
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Word Scrambles (Puzzle – Older Elementary)

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11d for each older elementary child.

SAY: All of the scrambled words can be found in the Bible story in Acts 12:1-17. Unscramble the words and then fill in the correct words in the blanks at the bottom of the page.



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- Go over the words and the text at the bottom.

ASK: How do you think the church praying helped Peter?

Paper Bag Puppets (Craft)

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11e for each child. Set out the different craft items for the children to use.

- Give each child a copy of “Paper Bag Puppets.”

SAY: Choose the character from our story that you want to make your puppet look like. Design your puppet, and you can use it for the story. We would like to have at least one puppet of each character.

- Allow the children time to make their puppets. Offer help or suggestions as needed. Set the puppets aside until time for the story.
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Prisoners, Guards, and Angels (Game)

Before class: Make three large circles on the floor using masking tape. The smallest circle will be inside the middle-sized circle, and the middle-sized circle will be inside the large circle.

- Gather the children around the outside of the large circle.

SAY: King Herod didn’t like the disciples preaching about Jesus’ resurrection, so he began bullying the church leaders. He had Peter arrested and put in prison. Extra guards were assigned to keep watch on Peter, but an angel appeared and helped Peter escape. We’re going to play the game Prisoners, Guards, and Angels. The prisoners will be in the inside circle, the guard in the middle circle, and the angel in the outside circle. The angel needs to try and tag the prisoners, one at a time, and bring them to the outside circle before the guard tags the angel. The guard has to stay in the middle circle. If the guard moves into another circle, she or he will be replaced. If the angel is tagged, that person will become a prisoner, and the prisoner will become the angel. The goal is to help all of the prisoners escape from prison.

- Choose volunteers to be the guard and the angel. The rest of the children will be prisoners.
- Play until all of the prisoners have escaped.

SAY: When the angel appeared to Peter, he thought he was having a dream. He didn’t realize that it was real until the angel led him outside the gates into the city.

Angel (Snack)

Before class: Bring an angel cookie cutter, flour tortillas, white icing, and shredded coconut to class. The flour tortillas should be big enough to fit the cookie cutter.

- Have the children use the cookie cutter to cut their angels out of flour tortillas. They can use plastic knives to cut around the outside of the cookie cutter.
- Then they can decorate their angels. Use the knife to spread white icing on the angel shape and sprinkle it with shredded coconut. Enjoy your angel snack.

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Transition to Explore – Sacred Conversations

ASK: How do you think Peter felt when he realized the angel had helped him escape from prison? If you were part of the church that was praying for Peter, what would you have said when you saw Peter?

EXPLORE

Read the Bible Story

- Ask the children to find Acts 12:1-17 in their Bibles. Encourage them to bring their own Bibles and learn how to use them. Read the story from the *Deep Blue Bible Storybook* (pp. 484–8).

ASK: How did the people who had been praying for Peter respond when they saw Peter? (*amazed, surprised*) How do you think the guards felt when they realized Peter had escaped from prison?

Dictionary Search

- Allow the children to look up *Mark/John*, and *Rhoda* in the *Deep Blue Kids Bible Dictionary*.
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See the Bible Story

SAY: The Deep Blue Kids are meeting Edgar’s father, Benjie, at the zoo for a welcome back party. While they’re waiting, Asia tells the story of Peter escaping from prison and coming back to the church.

- Watch today’s episode from the Adventure DVD.

ASK: How do you feel when someone you love comes back?

Interact with the Bible Story

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11a for each child.

- Give each child a copy of the Bible story.

ASK: Which character did you make into a paper bag puppet?

SAY: All of the puppets of the same character get together: Peter, Guard, Angel, Rhoda, King Herod, person in the church. As I read the story, when I mention your character, act out what is happening in the story.

- Read the story and encourage the children to make their puppets act out what’s happening.
- If time permits, go through the story more than once so the children can practice what their puppets are doing in the story.

ASK: What do you call an event that shows the supernatural power of God at work? (*miracle*)

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Bible Verse (Activity)

- Our verse for Unit 1 is Acts 4:20.
- Say the verse without looking at the Bible verse poster.
- Go over the sign language for the Bible verse. Encourage all the children to sign and say the Bible verse with you.

TIP: Look on the Deep Blue Kids website, the Free Stuff tab, to see a video demonstrating the signs.

- Pair the children and have them say and sign the verse to each other.
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Transition to Respond

ASK: What did Peter say when he realized that he wasn’t having a dream and he was free? (“Now I’m certain that the Lord sent his angel and rescued me.”) How do you show praise to God?

- Allow the children to share their praise to God and have the group repeat the praise together.

RESPOND

Loving God, Loving Neighbor

Before class: If it has not been done yet, display the Mission Poster (Resource Pak—p. 7). Make copies of “Mission Letter” (Leader Guide—p. 91).

SAY: This month we are collecting a special mission offering for the John Wesley Community Centre in South Africa.

- Encourage children to find South Africa on a world map.

SAY: The John Wesley Centre has many different projects that help the people in the surrounding district of Etwatwa. One of their main purposes is to care for those infected and affected by the disease HIV. Many of the children they help are orphans because of the disease and live in impoverished areas.

- Give a mission letter to any child who hasn’t received one yet.
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Transition to Bless

ASK: How did Peter serve God in our story?

- Gather the children around the mural paper you placed on the wall in session 10.
- Talk about the responses that were added to the paper last week.

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BLESS

Inviting

Before class: If it hasn't been done yet, place a large piece of mural paper on the wall and write, A Disciple Is . . .

ASK: How would you finish the sentence, A Disciple Is . . ., in a way that would describe Peter in today's story?

- Write the responses on the paper. Talk about the different responses.
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Praising

SAY: Our song this month is “Changed.”

- Hand out the songbooks and have the children find the song.
 - Play this month's song and encourage the children to sing and dance to the song.
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Blessing

SAY: Each week before you leave, you will receive a blessing or a challenge. God shows you how special you are by being a part of your life.

- Gather the children in a circle. Go around the circle and offer a challenge to each child.

SAY: (Child's name), show your love for God by serving God.

PRAY: Dear God, show us how to serve you every day. Thank you for answering the church's prayers and helping Peter escape from prison; in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Loving God/Loving Neighbor at Home

Before class: Make a copy of Reproducible 11f for each child.

SAY: “Loving God/Loving Neighbor – Faith Family Devotional” is for you and your family to use at home.

ASK: Can you share the story of Peter in prison with your family?

- Send home a copy of Reproducible 11f with each child.

Peter in Prison – Bible Story

The disciples continued sharing the good news everywhere they traveled. Many people believed, and the church grew quickly.

King Herod didn't like what was happening. He started bullying the church leaders, and he arrested Peter to please the Jewish leaders. Herod threw Peter in prison and left sixteen guards to stand watch over him.

When the church heard about Peter's arrest, they prayed to God for him.

The night before Peter was to go to trial, he was asleep chained between two guards, and there were guards at the entrance of the prison.

Suddenly an angel appeared and nudged Peter to wake him. The angel said, "Quick! Get up!"

Peter's chains fell off, and he did what the angel told him, "Get dressed. Put on your sandals. Put on your coat and follow me."

The church was still gathered at a home praying for Peter's safety.

Peter followed the angel and left the prison, walking right by the guards through open gates.

He thought he was having a dream until he found himself a free man outside the prison.

When the angel disappeared, Peter realized it wasn't a dream. He said, "Now I'm certain that the Lord sent an angel to rescue me!"

Many believers had gathered at the house to pray. The church prayed asking God to deliver Peter.

When Peter reached the house, he knocked at the outer gate. A servant named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, she ran back in the house to tell the church, leaving Peter standing outside the gate.

The people didn't believe Rhoda at first, but finally they opened the gate. The church was so excited that God had delivered Peter safely back to them.

Peter shared how God had sent an angel who helped him escape. He told the church to share what God had done, and then Peter left and continued spreading the good news.

(Based on Acts 12:1-17)



HEROD'S
PRISON
-Come Back Soon-

11b Story Chain – Puzzle (Preschool)

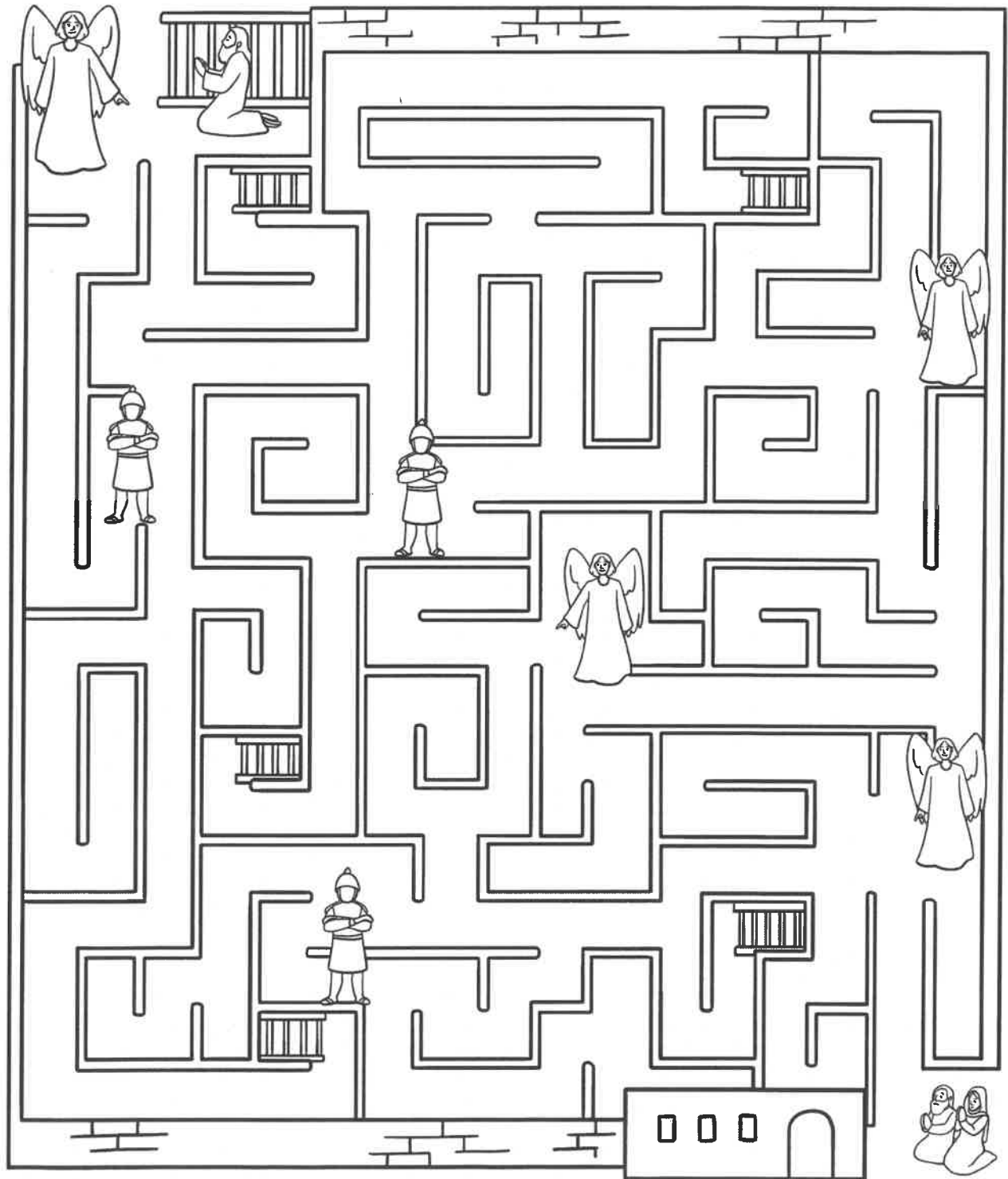
King Herod didn't want Peter talking about Jesus, so he threw Peter in jail. Cut out the four strips. Put them in order of the story. Then connect them as a paper chain.

<p>An angel helped Peter escape from the prison.</p>	<p>Peter went and told the church about his escape.</p>	<p>King Herod put Peter in jail for talking about Jesus.</p>	<p>The church met together to pray for Peter.</p>
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Help Peter Escape - Puzzle (Younger Elementary)

11c

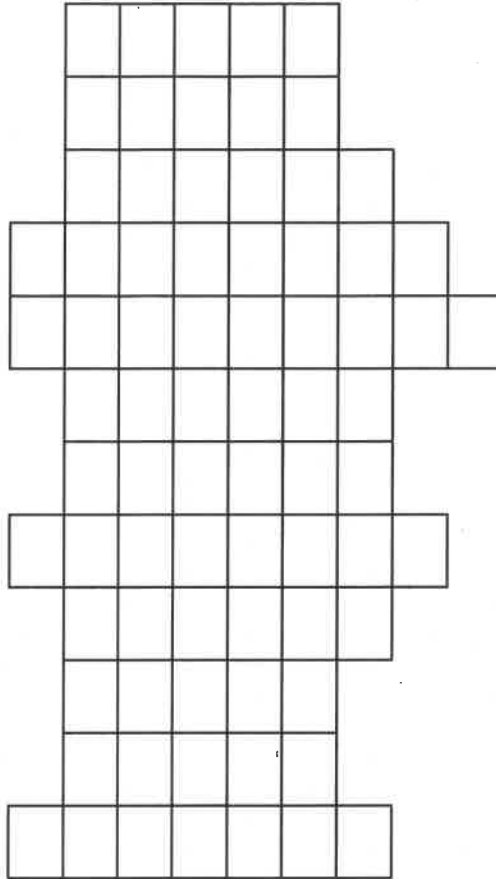
King Herod tried to stop Peter from talking about Jesus by putting Peter in jail. Help Peter make it through the maze to the church. The angels will help you, but beware of the guards.



11d Word Scrambles – Puzzle (Older Elementary)

All of these words can be found in the Bible story in Acts 12:1-17. Can you unscramble them?

1. REETP
2. LGEAN
3. RIPNOS
4. LLYBNGUI
5. OEIKHDRGN
6. HINSCA
7. RUDSAG
8. LOWOLFED
9. HHRUCC
10. EOUSH
11. DAHOR
12. YAPRING



Fill in the Blanks:

5. _____ didn't like the 9. _____, so he started 4. _____ the leaders. He put 1. _____ in 3. _____, but the church was gathered in a 10. _____ 12. _____ for Peter. An 2. _____ appeared in the prison. The angel woke up Peter and the 6. _____ fell off Peter's wrist. Peter 8. _____ the angel and escaped. Then he went to the house where the church was and knocked on the door. 11. _____ answered the door but left Peter standing outside. Peter told the church what had happened, and then he left. The next day the 7. _____ had no idea what happened to Peter.

Paper Bag Puppets – Craft

11e

Materials:

paper lunch bag
markers
construction paper
googly eyes
pom poms
yarn
ribbon
glue stick
scissors



Directions:

Choose which character in today's story you would like to make your paper bag puppet: Peter, Guard, Angel, Rhoda, King Herod, a person in the church.

Make your puppet's face on the square that's the bottom of the bag. You can make yarn hair, googly eyes, pom pom noses, or draw the face with markers. Draw half of the lips on the bottom square and the other half on the side just below it.

Use construction paper and ribbon to create some clothes or draw them with markers.

Put your hand in the open end of the bag, and move your hand up to the square with the face. Place your fingers in the square and your thumb on the side behind the bottom lip. You can use your fingers and thumbs to make the mouth open as if speaking.

11f Loving God/Loving Neighbor – Faith Family Devotional

Peter in Prison

Acts 12:1-17

King Herod didn't like the disciples talking about Jesus, so he started bullying the church leaders. He threw Peter in jail. But the church was together, praying for Peter. An angel came to Peter in the night and helped him escape. Peter went to the house where the church was praying. When he knocked on the gate, a servant named Rhoda answered. She was so excited that she forgot to open the gate. The church came out to see Peter, and he told them about the angel helping him escape. Peter told the church to share how God had taken care of him and keep praying. Then Peter left to continue sharing the good news.

Verse of the Month

"As for us, we can't stop speaking about what we have seen and heard." Acts 4:20

What Do You Think?

Peter thought the angel was a dream at first. How do you think he felt when he realized he was free?

How would you have felt if you had been with the church praying when Peter showed up?

Family Activity

Talk about how we can pray to God, and God hears and answers our prayers.

What do you want to pray about? Share these things with your family, and pray for these things together.

Prayer

Dear God, thank you for listening to our prayers and answering. Help us listen carefully for your answers; in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.