

# An Angel Frees Peter From Jail

Acts 12:1-18


An interesting transition takes place somewhere between third and fourth grade. Although third-graders still depend on their parents for assurance and care, fourth-graders more readily assert their independence. As a result, you'll probably notice less confidence in the younger children who aren't yet taking those first timid steps toward autonomy. Use this lesson to help kids learn that they each have an important role in serving God and one another. As you teach, assure both age groups that God cares for them so much that he assigns his angels to watch over them. What a comforting thought for children who are striving to grow up!



► **Bible Point**  
Angels protect and help God's people.

**Key Verse**  
"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).


**Weaving Faith Into Life**  
Kids will thank God for his angels.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<b>1</b> Getting Started	<b>Stand Guard</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Play a game to guess which of them is the "angel" who frees Peter.	paper, scissors, pen, paper bag	Cut enough 1x2-inch slips of paper for each child to have one. On one slip, write "angel." On all the other strips, write "Peter." Place all of the strips in a paper bag. Designate an area in your room to be the "free area."
<b>2</b> Bible Exploration	<b>Peter's Rescuer</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Hear from the angel's perspective the story of Peter's escape.	Bible, CD player <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD, Bible Timeline 	
	<b>Who's There?</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Play a game to learn how Rhoda knew Peter was the person at the door.	Bible	
	<b>Flashlights</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Learn the Key Verse and make reminders of how the angel served God.	Bibles, cardboard tubes, construction paper, markers, yellow construction paper, scissors, glue	Cut out enough yellow circles, approximately 3 inches in diameter, for each child.

*Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.*





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p><b>3</b> Weaving Faith Into Life</p>	<p><b>How Can I Serve?</b> <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Come up with solutions as to how they can serve others in specific situations.</p>	<p>CD player, paper, markers, copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson) <b>Teacher Pack:</b> CD, “How Can I Serve?” cards</p> 	
	<p><b>I Can Serve, Too</b> <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Examine ways they can serve God and others.</p>	Bible Truth Sleuth, markers	Tear out the Lesson 9 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
<p><b>4</b> Lasting Impressions</p>	<p><b>Daily Challenges</b> <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God’s Word.</p>	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	<p><b>Weaving Faith at Home</b> <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

***Bold text** within the lesson is spoken text.*





# An Angel Frees Peter From Jail

Acts 12:1-18

## **Herod Imprisons Peter and Intends to Kill Him**

.....

Herod wanted to make sure that Christian sympathizers would not be able to release Peter. Herod assigned four groups of four soldiers each to take turns guarding Peter—one soldier on each side of Peter and two at his cell door. These measures were extraordinary for such a prisoner.

Acts 12:5 describes something of a competition: Peter was securely in prison, guarded by 16 of Rome’s finest, handcuffed to a guard on each side of him. But on the other hand, God’s people were praying earnestly for Peter on the night that Herod intended to be Peter’s last night on earth.

## **An Angel Helps Peter Escape**

.....

From the text, we know that Peter thought he was having a vision as he was released from prison. He had been awakened from sleep and suspected that he was only dreaming. Only after Peter’s chains had fallen off, after he and the angel had walked through the gates to the street, and after the angel had led him down the first street, did Peter come to the realization that he was really free and that God had worked a series of miracles to free him.

## **Peter Surprises Those Praying for Him**

.....

The scene that unfolded when Peter arrived at Mark’s mother’s house is somewhat comical. Rhoda, the servant girl, came to see who was knocking at the door in the middle of the night. When she realized it was Peter, she was so excited that she ran back to tell the others without unlocking the door! And then the people who had been earnestly praying for Peter refused to believe that he could really be at the gate. Instead, they may have jumped to the conclusion that

Peter was already dead and that his guardian angel had come to tell them the news. And all the while, Peter was standing outside knocking. When they went to the door to see for themselves, they were astonished by the truth.

## **The Jesus Connection**

.....

Find courage. You’re in a relationship with Jesus, a great defender who knows all and cannot be conquered.

Flex your muscle—your prayer muscle. God moves and works miracles for those who pray in accordance with his will. What do you need to pray about right now? You can write your prayer here.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

BIBLE BACKGROUND  
FOR LEADERS





### Stand Guard Supplies

paper  
scissors  
pen  
paper bag

### Stand Guard Easy Prep

Cut enough 1x2-inch slips of paper for each child to have one. On one slip, write “angel.” On all the other strips, write “Peter.” Place all of the strips in a paper bag. Designate an area in your room to be the “free area.”

## 1 GETTING STARTED

### Stand Guard

#### What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went. Have each child draw one of the slips from the bag, but keep secret what the word is on the strip.

Say: **Don’t tell anyone what’s written on your slip. We’re going to play a game, and you’ll have to guess which one of you is the “angel.” You must walk around the room and watch carefully. If you draw the piece of paper with the word angel written on it, you must walk up to people and whisper “free” without anyone noticing you. If you’ve been freed, go to the free area. But don’t say who the angel is! Only people who haven’t been freed yet can make guesses.**

Have kids play for several minutes or until someone guesses correctly who the angel is. Encourage the angel to make guesses, too. That way other kids won’t guess who the angel is because he or she is the only one not guessing! If you have time, play several rounds, letting a different child be the angel each time.

After kids have finished playing, have them sit together in a large group.

#### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Was it difficult to figure out which one of you was the angel? Why or why not?
- How did you feel when the angel freed you?
- If you were the angel, how did it feel to free someone?

Say: **In today’s lesson, we’ll take a look at how an angel obeyed God’s command and what happened as a result. Then we’ll learn that ► ANGELS PROTECT AND HELP GOD’S PEOPLE.**





## 2 BIBLE EXPLORATION

# Peter's Rescuer

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Designate an area of your room as a jail. Set up chairs as walls. Make sure you have at least one chair per child because the chairs will be used later in the activity.

Have kids tell two or three other kids in class something they know about Jesus.

After kids have shared something they know about Jesus with two or three other kids, "arrest" them and place them in the area you've designated as the jail. Walk up to each child and ask, "Have you been telling people about Jesus?" When kids answer "yes," tell them they are under arrest and lead them to the jail.

Say: **Peter had been telling all the people he could about Jesus. A lot of people were praying for Peter. King Herod had arrested him for telling people about Jesus.**

Read aloud Acts 12:1-6.

Say: **The night before Peter was supposed to go to trial, he slept bound in chains between two guards. Let's pretend we're bound in chains, too.**

Have all of the kids hold their wrists together as if they were all chained together. Then have everyone place one arm on a chair and put his or her head down, pretending to sleep. Each child's other arm will be on the chair next to him or her as kids pretend to be chained to the people next to them.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- How do you think Peter felt when Herod put him in jail?
- How would you feel if you were really thrown in jail for telling people about Jesus?
- What do you think would've helped Peter at that time?

Say: **Here's where the angel comes into the story. Let's hear what he has to say about what happened.**

Cue your CD to "An Angel's Tale" (track 13), and play the segment. As the track plays, hold up the Bible Timeline and show kids the "An Angel Frees Peter" picture.



### Peter's Rescuer Supplies

- 
- Bible
  - CD player
  - Teacher Pack**
  - CD: "An Angel's Tale"  
(track 13)
  - Bible Timeline





## Who's There? Supplies

Bible

## Flashlights Supplies

Bibles  
cardboard tubes  
construction paper  
markers  
yellow construction  
paper  
scissors  
glue

## Flashlights Easy Prep

Cut out enough yellow circles, approximately 3 inches in diameter, for each child.

Ask:

- How did God help Peter?
- What do angels do?

Say: **Let's read on and find out what happened to Peter next.**

## Who's There?

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Read aloud Acts 12:11-18.

Have all the kids close their eyes. Explain that you will gently tap the shoulder of one child, and he or she should say, "Knock, knock." The rest of the class will then say, "Who's there?" Then the knocker will say, "It's me!" The rest of the kids may then open their eyes and guess who the knocker was. Play several rounds.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Was it easy to figure out who knocked? Why or why not?
- Why do you think Rhoda knew right away that Peter was the person at the door?

Say: **When Peter went to Mary's house where people were gathered to pray, Rhoda, the servant girl, came to the door. She was so excited when she heard Peter's voice that she ran back to tell everyone and forgot to open the door!**

Ask:

- Why was Rhoda so happy that Peter was there?
- What did Peter's arrival show the people in the house?

Say: **The rescue let God's people know that he knew of their troubles and cared. God's angel saved Peter and encouraged the church people, too. ► ANGELS PROTECT AND HELP GOD'S PEOPLE.**

## Flashlights

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Our Key Verse for today tells us what angels do. Let's take a look at it.**

Have kids turn to Psalm 91:11, and ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud. Then have kids repeat the verse two or three times: **"For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11).**





Say: **In our story today, an angel shined a light on Peter to wake him up so he could be freed. We're going to make flashlight reminders of what the angel did for Peter.**

Give each child a cardboard tube, approximately 6 inches in length; a yellow circle; a piece of construction paper; markers; and scissors.

Have kids cut the construction paper so that it fits around the cardboard tubes. Then have each child write the Key Verse on the construction paper and glue it around the cardboard tube. Then have kids place glue around the edge of one end of their cardboard tubes and place them on their yellow circles.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do angels do?

Say: **Our Key Verse tells us "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways" (Psalm 91:11). Use your flashlight as a reminder of how ► ANGELS PROTECT AND HELP GOD'S PEOPLE.**



## 3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

### How Can I Serve?

#### What You'll Do ■■■■

Pull out the "How Can I Serve?" cards from your Teacher Pack.

Say: **Today we've learned about how one angel served God by freeing Peter from jail. We're very different from angels, but we're like them in one way: We can serve God. We need to set ourselves apart from the world to love and serve God with all our hearts. Let's sing "If We Confess" (1 John 1:9) and ask God to set us apart to do his will.**

Pass out copies of the lyrics, and play "If We Confess" (1 John 1:9) (track 6) and have the kids sing, referring to the copies of the lyrics. Sing the song through two or three times.



**If we confess, if we confess our sins,  
He's faithful and just and will forgive us our sins  
And purify us from all unrighteousness.  
If we confess, if we confess our sins.**

#### How Can I Serve? Supplies

- CD player
- paper
- markers
- copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson)
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "If We Confess" (1 John 1:9) (track 6)
- "How Can I Serve?" cards





**God says he will set us free if we confess our sins**  
**God says he will set us free if we confess our sins**

*(Repeat verse.)*

**If we confess, if we confess our sins.**

"If We Confess" (1 John 1:9) by Carol Smith. © 2003, 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

When kids have finished singing, have them form six groups and give each group a "How Can I Serve?" card.

Say: **Look at your card, and discuss ways you can think of to serve the person on your card who needs help. Then I want you to present your solution. You may act out your solution, make up a song, draw a picture, or something else as long as it lets the rest of the class know what your solution is.**

Give kids several minutes to discuss what they want to do. Each group should show the rest of the class the picture on its card and read what's written on the card. Then have groups present their solutions.

### **Talk With Kids** ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- How did you decide what you should do in each of your situations?
- How do you feel when you can serve someone?

## **I Can Serve, Too**

### **What You'll Do** ■■■■■■

Distribute the Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have kids turn to the "I Can Serve, Too!" activity.

Say: **On your Bible Truth Sleuth page, you'll see two boxes. In the box that says, "I Can Serve God By:" list ways you think you can serve God. Then if you wish, draw a picture of yourself doing one of those things. For example, you may write, "I can serve God by singing a song with the preschoolers in Sunday school." You could then draw a picture of yourself leading a group of little kids in singing.**

**In the other box that says, "I Can Serve Others By:" list ways you can serve other people. You may draw a picture in that box, too, if you like. For example, you may write, "I can serve others by helping my dad with the yard work." Then you could draw a picture of yourself pulling weeds while your dad trims the bushes.**

Give kids several minutes to complete the activity. When everyone has finished writing and drawing, have kids form pairs and show their answers to their partners. Invite volunteers to share their answers with everyone.

### **I Can Serve, Too Supplies**

Bible Truth Sleuth  
markers

### **I Can Serve, Too Easy Prep**

Tear out the Lesson 9  
pages from each Bible  
Truth Sleuth student  
book.







# 4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

## Daily Challenges

### What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's each choose a Daily Challenge for the week to help us remember that ► ANGELS PROTECT AND HELP GOD'S PEOPLE.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on the Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Tell a friend about a time you felt protected by God's angels.**
- **Watch the sunrise or sunset and thank God for sending his angels to help you.**
- **Have someone read Acts 12:1-18 with you. Praise God for the gift of angels.**

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

### Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **► ANGELS PROTECT AND HELP GOD'S PEOPLE. Let's think about angels by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.**

## Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about angels. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at [group.com/digital](http://group.com/digital).

Close in prayer.

Pray: **Thank you, God, for angels who serve you so gladly. Thank you for commanding them to guard us in all our ways. Help us serve you in our lives. Show us how we can serve other people, too. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.**



### Daily Challenges Supplies

.....  
Bible Truth Sleuth



**Lyrics** ■■■■**If We Confess (1 John 1:9)***(Verse)*

**If we confess, if we confess our sins,  
He's faithful and just and will forgive us our sins  
And purify us from all unrighteousness.  
If we confess, if we confess our sins.**

**God says he will set us free if we confess our sins  
God says he will set us free if we confess our sins**

*(Repeat verse.)*

**If we confess, if we confess our sins.**

"If We Confess" (1 John 1:9) by Carol Smith. © 2003, 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

**! OK  
■ TO COPY**

