



An Angel Frees Peter From Jail

Acts 12:1-18


It is very likely that the children in your class have some ideas about angels that are not completely biblical. For example, children may think that people become angels when they die or that people should ask angels for help when they're in trouble. When children express misunderstood ideas about angels, gently steer them back to what the Bible says about what angels are and what they do.



► Bible Point
God's angels help us.

Key Verse
"Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Weaving Faith Into Life
Children will thank God for sending angels to help them.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started <i>about 10 min.</i>	Welcoming Song Sing a song welcoming all their classroom friends.	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
2 Key Verse Activity <i>about 10 min.</i>	Believe Play a game that helps them understand how Jesus saves us.	Bible, 1 inflatable water ring, permanent marker, masking tape	Inflate the water ring and write "Jesus" on it with a permanent marker. Use masking tape to make a line on the floor that divides the room in half.
3 Bible Exploration <i>about 20 min.</i>	Theo's News Find out what a lock and key has to do with the Bible story.	CD player, Surprise Box, Theo puppet Teacher Pack: CD, lock and key	Place the lock and key in the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.
	Bible Time Learn how God used an angel to free Peter from prison.	Bible, 1 percussion instrument per child, 3 glitter glue pens Teacher Pack: "An Angel Frees Peter" poster (from the Big Bible Poster Pack) 	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.



LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Weaving Faith Into Life <i>about 20 min.</i></p>	<p>Center 1: A Special Appearance Watch an angel appear on their student pages.</p>	My Bible Playground, lemon juice, bowl, cotton swabs, lamp, pencils	Remove the Lesson 9 pages from each My Bible Playground student book.
	<p>Center 2: Angel Food Snacks Make angel shapes out of cake.</p>	angel food cake, food coloring, bowls, paintbrushes, angel-shaped cookie cutter, plastic tablecloth	
	<p>Center 3: Unlocking the Jail Open a lock, and remember the Bible story.</p>	CD player, box, assorted keys Teacher Pack: CD, lock and key	Put the lock and key and the assorted keys in a small box.
	<p>Center 4: Prison Story Puppets Create puppets to use in retelling the Bible story.</p>	2 plastic spoons, two 3-inch felt squares, and 4 chenille wires per child; permanent markers	
<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lasting Impressions <i>about 5 min.</i></p>	<p>Daily Challenges Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	My Bible Playground	
	<p>"Thank You, God, for Angels" Prayer Sing a song about angels.</p>	CD player Teacher Pack: CD	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home 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

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS

Herod Imprisons Peter and Intends to Kill Him

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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

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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

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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

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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.





Welcoming Song Supplies

CD player

Teacher Pack

CD: "We Welcome You
to Church Today"
(track 15)

Believe Supplies

Bible

1 inflatable water ring
permanent marker
masking tape

Believe Easy Prep

Inflate the water ring
and write "Jesus" on
it with a permanent
marker. Use masking
tape to make a line on
the floor that divides the
room in half.

1 GETTING STARTED


Welcoming Song

Tip Consistently use the same signal to announce a transition to the next activity. You could flip the lights off and on, use a train whistle, have a puppet rustling inside a bag, or sing cleanup songs. Keep it simple, consistent, and fun.

What You'll Do

As the children arrive, greet each child and welcome him or her with a smile. When it's time to begin, use your signal to bring the children together in a circle.

Play "We Welcome You to Church Today" (track 15 on the CD) to the tune of "When Johnny Comes Marching Home." Tell the children to stand up and greet each other as they sing and march around the room. Encourage the children to shake hands with one another when they sing the words "We welcome you to church today."

 **We welcome you to church today, hurrah, hurrah!**
We welcome you to church today, hurrah, hurrah!
We welcome you to church today.
We're here to worship and to pray
As we sing together,
Learning about God's love.
(Repeat 2x.)

2 KEY VERSE ACTIVITY

Believe

What You'll Do

Have all the children stand on one side of the masking tape line.

Say: **When we do something wrong, we're usually punished. And because we all do wrong things, we all need to be saved from being punished by God. The only one who can save us is Jesus.** Open your Bible to Acts 16:31, and show children the words. **Our Key Verse from the Bible is Acts 16:31, which says, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved." This means that when we believe in Jesus, he saves us from that punishment.** Lead the children in saying the Key Verse together.





When someone is swimming and is having trouble, the lifeguard might help the swimmer by tossing him or her a lifesaving ring like this. Show children the inflatable ring. This ring helps the swimmer stay afloat and saves the swimmer. Let's use this ring and play a game to help us remember that when we believe in Jesus, he saves us.

Let the children pretend that one side of the classroom is a lake or the ocean and the other side is the shore. Have them all "swim" around in the "water." After a moment call out, "The water's getting rough!" When you say this, children should call out, "I believe in Jesus!" Respond by saying, "Then you are saved!" and tossing the ring to one of the children. That child may swim to shore and toss the ring back to another child. Play until each child has safely reached shore.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **Have you ever needed someone to save you from a dangerous situation? If so, what happened?**
- **How does Jesus save us?**

Say: **When we believe in Jesus, we are saved.** Lead children in repeating the Key Verse one more time.

3 BIBLE EXPLORATION

Theo's News

What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **Friends, it's time for Theo's News!** Have the children sit in a circle. Then begin "Here, Theo" (track 3 on the CD). When the CD segment ends, bring out the Surprise Box, and put the Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet on your hand. Then follow along with the script.

Theo: Hi, everybody!

Teacher: Hello, Theo! Tell us what interesting news you've dug up about our Bible story.

Theo: I found something I think you'll like! I hid it in the Surprise Box.

Teacher: Let's look inside to see what Theo dug up for us today.

(Choose a child to open the Surprise Box, and have kids pass the lock around the circle. Give the children time to guess what the Bible story might be about.)

Teacher: How do you get a lock to open?

(Pause to allow children to answer. Then have the kids attempt to open the lock.)

Teacher: Theo, why did you hide a lock and key in our Surprise Box?

Theo: Our Bible story today is about a very special messenger who came to help unlock a jail for one of God's people.



Theo's News Supplies

- CD player
- Surprise Box (any box will do)
- Theo puppet
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Here, Theo" (track 3)
- lock and key

Theo's News Easy Prep

Place the lock and key in the Surprise Box, and hide the box where it's easily accessible.





Bible Time Supplies

Bible

1 percussion instrument
per child

3 glitter glue pens

Teacher Pack

“An Angel Frees Peter”
poster (from the Big
Bible Poster Pack)

Teacher: Let’s hear our story and find out who unlocked the jail.

Theo: Have a good time today, boys and girls!

Teacher: Let’s say goodbye to Theo.

Encourage the children to wave or say goodbye to Theo. Then put Theo away in a safe place for next week’s use.

Bible Time

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

Pass out cymbals, triangles, maracas, and other percussion instruments to the children. When the angel is mentioned in the story, have the children use the percussion instruments to make sounds of praise. Ask an adult or teenage volunteer to wait outside the door of your classroom so the children can’t see him or her. Tell the volunteer to enter the room when the children play the instruments while you’re telling the story. Have your volunteer act out the angel’s part of the story, including touching Peter to wake him, repeating the words spoken by the angel, and disappearing at the end.

Open your Bible to Acts 12:1-18, and show the children the words.

Say: **Today’s Bible story tells us that ► GOD’S ANGELS HELP US. Back when the disciples were telling people the wonderful news about Jesus, King Herod had many Christians arrested and thrown into jail. But Peter wasn’t afraid, and he kept telling people about Jesus. Soon Peter was arrested, locked up in a jail cell, and guarded by soldiers.**

Pick one child to be Peter, and tell the other children that they will pretend to be the Guards. Have the Guards lock arms and stand in a circle with Peter in the center. Have Peter try to get out of the circle without running, jumping, or crawling.

Ask:

- **How do you think you might escape from a locked room with guards watching you?**
- **How do you think Peter felt when he was locked in jail?**

Have the children sit in the circle. Have Peter remain in the center of the circle with the other children as the Guards.

Say: **God’s people prayed for Peter. They believed that God was powerful enough to free Peter from jail.**

The night before he was supposed to go to trial for believing in Jesus, Peter was chained up, sleeping between two soldiers. Have Peter pretend to be asleep.

Suddenly an angel appeared. Have kids play their instruments. The volunteer should enter the room and stand near the door. **And a bright light shone in the cell.**





The angel (have kids play their instruments) **touched Peter on the side, woke him up, and said to him, “Peter, get up, put on your clothes and sandals, and follow me.”** Have the person playing the angel repeat the words and act this out with Peter.

The chains fell away, and Peter followed the angel (have children play their instruments) **right out of the prison!** Have the volunteer bring Peter out from the center of the Guards. **When Peter and the angel got to the end of the street, the angel** (have children play their instruments) **left.** Have the person playing the angel disappear.

Show children the poster, and let them tell you what they see happening in the picture.

Say: **Let’s add some glitter to this angel to make him really shine!** Let children take turns adding a squiggle of the glitter glue to the angel; then set the poster aside to dry. When the glue is dry, hang the poster where children can easily see it.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **How did you feel when the surprise angel came into our room?**
- **How do you think Peter felt when the angel set him free?**

Say: **When God’s people pray, he hears them. And ► GOD’S ANGELS HELP US.**



4 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Choose at least two of the learning centers to help reinforce today’s Bible lesson. Gather the needed materials, and put the supplies in an out-of-sight area until you’re ready for them. Allow the children to choose which center they’d like to explore first. Then circulate among the children as they create and explore. Encourage them to make connections between their activities and the Bible by asking them the questions included with each center’s description.

■ CENTER 1: A Special Appearance

What You’ll Do ■■■■

Distribute the Lesson 9 My Bible Playground student pages and have kids write their names on their pages. Pour lemon juice into a bowl, and give each child a cotton swab. Show children how to dip the cotton swabs into the lemon juice and use the swabs to draw angels on their student pages. When the pictures have dried, show kids what happens when they hold their pictures about a half-inch away from a warm (100 watt) bulb. Move the paper over a bare bulb for about one minute, and then the picture will start to appear.

Center 1: A Special Appearance Supplies

- My Bible Playground
- lemon juice
- bowl
- cotton swabs
- lamp
- pencils

Center 1: A Special Appearance Easy Prep

Remove the Lesson 9 pages from each My Bible Playground student book.





Center 2: Angel Food Snacks

angel food cake
food coloring
bowls
paintbrushes
angel-shaped
cookie cutter
plastic tablecloth

! ALLERGY ALERT

Center 3: Unlocking the Jail

CD player
box
assorted keys
Teacher Pack:
CD: "Got a Reason for Livin' Again" (track 4)
lock and key

Center 3: Unlocking the Jail

Easy Prep

Put the lock and key and the assorted keys in a small box.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- How did you feel when the angel appeared on your paper?
- How is this like God surprising us with angels to help us?

Say: **God's angels are a little like the pictures you made—you can't always see angels, but they're still there. And ► GOD'S ANGELS HELP US by bringing God's protection and hope.**

CENTER 2:

Angel Food Snacks

What You'll Do

Have children wash their hands. Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth, and place small amounts of food coloring in bowls on the table.

Give each child a piece of angel food cake. Let kids take turns using an angel-shaped cookie cutter to cut out angel shapes from the pieces of cake. Then have kids each use a clean paintbrush and food coloring to paint a face on the angel.

Ask:

- Why do you think God sends angels?

Say: **When we're scared, we can remember that God is with us. When we need help, ► GOD'S ANGELS HELP US.** When kids have finished making their snacks, ask a volunteer to pray for the snack.

CENTER 3:

Unlocking the Jail

What You'll Do

Cue the CD to "Got a Reason for Livin' Again" (track 4 on the CD). Show a child how to start and pause the CD player, and have the child periodically pause the music during this activity.

Have everyone sit in a circle, and tell kids to pass the box around while the music is playing. When the music stops, have the child holding the box choose one key and try to open the lock with it. If the child opens the lock with that key, start the game over. If not, continue play until someone is able to open the lock with the correct key. Encourage children to sing along with the CD as they play.



Got a reason for livin' again, oh, oh, oh.
Got a reason for laughin' again, oh, oh, oh.
Got a reason for lovin' again.
I got the love of God in my heart!

No reason to cry anymore, oh, oh, oh.
No reason to sigh anymore, oh, oh, oh.
No reason to die anymore.
I got the love of God in my heart!

Monday, I was all alone.
Tuesday, I had my sins to atone.
Wednesday, I cried and I cried.
Thursday, Lord, I thought I would die.
Friday, I started to pray.
Saturday, I read my Bible today.
Sunday, Lord, the heavens did part.
I got the love of God in my heart!

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Got a reason for livin' again, oh, oh, oh.
Got a reason for laughin' again, oh, oh, oh.
Got a reason for lovin' again.
I got the love of God in my heart!

No reason to cry anymore, oh, oh, oh.
No reason to sigh anymore, oh, oh, oh.
No reason to die anymore.
I got the love of God in my heart!
I got the love of God in my heart!
I got the love of God in my heart!

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why was it so amazing that the angel helped Peter escape?
- How does it feel to know that God's angels help us?

Say: **We had a tough time opening the lock. Peter had guards all around him, and the key to his chains wasn't anywhere nearby. But God sent an angel to help Peter, and ► GOD'S ANGELS HELP US, too.**





Center 4: Prison Story Puppets Supplies

2 plastic spoons, two
3-inch felt squares,
and 4 chenille wires
per child
permanent markers

CENTER 4:

Prison Story Puppets

What You'll Do



Give each child two plastic spoons. Show children how to wrap a square of felt around the handle of a spoon and wrap a chenille wire around this to hold the “clothing” on the puppet. Children may use additional wires to make arms or other features. Let them use the markers to draw faces on their puppets. Encourage each child to make a Peter puppet and an angel puppet; then let them retell the story with their puppets.

Talk With Kids

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why do you think God used an angel to help Peter?
- How do you think God’s angels might help you?

Say: Use your puppets to tell someone at home the story we learned today. Be sure to share that ► **GOD’S ANGELS HELP US.**

5 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do

After the children have cleaned up the centers, sit with kids in a circle on the floor. Review the lesson activities and the Bible Point, and then encourage the children to share what they enjoyed learning from the Bible today.

Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Playground



Also use this time to challenge kids in their faith. Encourage them to choose a Daily Challenge for applying today's lesson to their lives this week. Use this challenge to encourage your children's growing relationships with Jesus.

Talk With Kids

Say: Today we learned that ► **GOD'S ANGELS HELP US.** I'd like each of you to choose one of these Daily Challenges to remember that God's angels help us.

Give kids these three Daily Challenge ideas to choose from:


1. **Ask your mom or dad to take you on a walk to a place you've never been before. Pray together before you go, asking God's angels to protect you on your walk.**
2. **Help your mom or dad set the table for dinner, and then thank God for giving you angels to help you!**
3. **Say a prayer for each of your family members, and then remind them that God's angels are there to help them!**

Say: **If you want to take a walk, circle choice number 1. If you want to help set the table, circle choice number 2. If you want to say a prayer, circle choice number 3.** Check that each child circled a choice on his or her My Bible Playground page. Make sure you tell kids the challenge you choose. Your commitment will inspire children and will give them an opportunity to see God at work in your life as well as in theirs!

“Thank You, God, for Angels” Prayer

What You'll Do

Have the kids stand and form a circle, and then lead them in singing “Angels” (track 17 on the CD) to the tune of “Jesus in the Morning.”

 **Angels, angels,
Angels up above us.
Angels all around us.
Angels, angels,
God's angels help us all day long.**
(Repeat 2x.)

When the track ends, have kids sit down to close in prayer.

Say: **God, thank you for sending your angels to help us and to keep us safe. In Jesus' name, amen.**



“Thank You, God, for Angels” Prayer Supplies

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- CD player
 - Teacher Pack**
 - CD: “Angels” (track 17)





Weaving Faith at Home

Have children take home their My Bible Playground pages whether they worked on them or not. Have children tell their parents the challenge they committed to in the “Daily Challenges” activity. Encourage parents to help their kids fulfill this commitment during the week. By working together and focusing on the same goals, you and parents can help children weave faith into their lives!

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

