

Apostle Peter

Matthew 16:18-19; John 21:15-17; Luke 22:32; Acts 10; Acts 11:16-18; Acts 15: 10-11, 22-29

Learning Objectives

1. The children will explore Apostle Peter's (leading) role in the formation and spreading of the first church.
2. The children will examine how our pre-conceived judgements of outsiders might affect our ability to share the love and grace of Jesus with others.

Memory Verse:

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they." --Acts 15:11

Getting Started

Choose One Activity

Eliminator Game

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Games → "Eliminator"

Sit your group in a circle. (Recruit other "players" i.e. youth or adults as needed.) Assign someone as the leader. The job of everyone else in the group is to follow the leader. However, the last person to do what the leader does is eliminated. Please see the above website for detailed instructions.

"Pick the Leader" Game

See: www.teensundayschool.com → games → "Pick the Leader"

Ask one of the children to volunteer to leave the room until called. Then, the rest of the class selects one person to be a leader. The class follows and does whatever the leader does. For example, the leader may pat the top of his or her head. All the other children will do the same. After about 10 seconds, the leader should do something else, such as clap his or her hands together. The rest of the class will do the same. Please see the above website for more detailed instructions.

After the game, explain to the class how many people in this world are in a leadership role. Sometimes leaders do wrong things. Just because they are leaders, does not mean they are perfect. We would not want to do everything they do, like in the game just played. But we do have a perfect leader, Jesus. The right choice is to do what Jesus would do. He will guide us down the right path every step of the way. Then, when others see us doing something, they may also see Jesus.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions

Message:

God's word and grace are for everyone.

Peter, the Rock

¹⁸"Here is what I tell you. You are Peter. On this rock I will build my church. The gates of hell will not be strong enough to destroy it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven. What you lock on earth will be locked in heaven. What you unlock on earth will be unlocked in heaven." (Matthew 16: 18-19)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Peter's Commission

¹⁵ When Jesus and the disciples had finished eating, Jesus spoke to Simon Peter. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me more than these others do?"

"Yes, Lord," he answered. "You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

¹⁶ Again Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you really love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

¹⁷ Jesus spoke to him a third time. He asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love me?"

Peter felt bad because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He answered, "Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. (John 21: 15-17)

³² But I have prayed for you, Simon. I have prayed that your faith will not fail. When you have turned back, help your brothers to be strong." (Luke 22:32)

Peter's Missionary Work Among the Gentiles

The missionary work among the Gentiles

³⁹ The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose."

Visiting Cornelius (Acts 10)

Cornelius Calls for Peter

¹ A man named Cornelius lived in Caesarea. He was a Roman commander in the Italian Regiment. ² Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped God. He gave freely to people who were in need. He prayed to God regularly.

³ One day about three o'clock in the afternoon he had a vision. He saw an angel of God clearly. The angel came to him and said, "Cornelius!"

⁴ Cornelius was afraid. He stared at the angel. "What is it, Lord?" he asked.

The angel answered, "Your prayers and gifts to poor people have come up like an offering to God. So he has remembered you. ⁵ Now send men to Joppa. Have them bring back a man named Simon. He is also called Peter. ⁶ He is staying with another Simon, a man who works with leather. His house is by the sea."

⁷ The angel who spoke to him left. Then Cornelius called two of his servants. He also called a godly soldier who was one of his attendants. ⁸ He told them everything that had happened. Then he sent them to Joppa.

Peter Has a Vision

⁹ It was about noon the next day. The men were on their journey and were approaching the city. Peter went up on the roof to pray. ¹⁰ He became hungry. He wanted something to eat. While the meal was being prepared, Peter had a vision. ¹¹ He saw heaven open up. There he saw something that looked like a large sheet. It was being let down to earth by its four corners. ¹² It had all kinds of four-footed animals in it. It also had reptiles of the earth and birds of the air. ¹³ Then a voice told him, "Get up, Peter. Kill and eat."

¹⁴ "No, Lord! I will not!" Peter replied. "I have never eaten anything that is not pure and 'clean.' "

¹⁵ The voice spoke to him a second time. "Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean,' " it said.

¹⁶ This happened three times. Right away the sheet was taken back up to heaven.

¹⁷ Peter was wondering what the vision meant. At that very moment the men sent by Cornelius found Simon's house. They stopped at the gate ¹⁸ and called out. They asked if Simon Peter was staying there.

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

¹⁹ Peter was still thinking about the vision. The Holy Spirit spoke to him. "Simon," he said, "three men are looking for you. ²⁰ Get up and go downstairs. Don't let anything keep you from going with them. I have sent them."

²¹ Peter went down and spoke to the men. "I'm the one you're looking for," he said. "Why have you come?"

²² The men replied, "We have come from Cornelius, the Roman commander. He is a good man who worships God. All the Jewish people respect him. A holy angel told him to invite you to his house. Cornelius wants to hear what you have to say." ²³ Then Peter invited the men into the house to be his guests.

Peter Goes to the House of Cornelius

The next day Peter went with the three men. Some of the believers from Joppa went along. ²⁴ The following day he arrived in Caesarea. Cornelius was expecting them. He had called together his relatives and close friends.

²⁵ When Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him. As a sign of respect, he fell at Peter's feet. ²⁶ But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said. "I am only a man myself."

²⁷ Talking with Cornelius, Peter went inside. There he found a large group of people. ²⁸ He said to them, "You know that it is against our law for a Jew to have anything to do with those who aren't Jews. But God has shown me that I should not say anyone is not pure and 'clean.' ²⁹ So when you sent for me, I came without asking any questions. May I ask why you sent for me?"

³⁰ Cornelius answered, "Four days ago at this very hour I was in my house praying. It was three o'clock in the afternoon. Suddenly a man in shining clothes stood in front of me. ³¹ He said, 'Cornelius, God has heard your prayer. He has remembered your gifts to poor people. ³² Send someone to Joppa to get Simon Peter. He is a guest in the home of another Simon, who works with leather. He lives by the sea.' ³³ So I sent for you right away. It was good of you to come. Now we are all here. And God is here with us. We are ready to listen to everything the Lord has commanded you to tell us."

³⁴ Then Peter began to speak. "I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same," he said. ³⁵ "He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for him and do what is right.

³⁶ "You know the message God sent to the people of Israel. It is the good news of peace through Jesus Christ. He is Lord of all. ³⁷ You know what has happened all through Judea. It started in Galilee after John preached about baptism. ³⁸ You know how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Jesus went around doing good. He healed all who were under the devil's power. God was with him.

³⁹ "We are witnesses of everything he did in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They killed him by nailing him to a cross. ⁴⁰ But on the third day God raised him from the dead. God allowed Jesus to be seen. ⁴¹ But he wasn't seen by all the people. He was seen only by us. We are witnesses whom God had already chosen. We ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴² "He commanded us to preach to the people. He told us to give witness that he is the one appointed by God to judge the living and the dead. ⁴³ All the prophets give witness about him. They say that all who believe in him have their sins forgiven through his name."

⁴⁴ While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. ⁴⁵ Some Jewish believers had come with Peter. They were amazed because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on those who weren't Jews. ⁴⁶ They heard them speaking in languages they had not known before. They also heard them praising God.

Then Peter said, ⁴⁷ "Can anyone keep these people from being baptized with water? They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have." ⁴⁸ So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.



Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – *continued*

Discussion Questions:

1. What are some of the responsibilities of the apostle ministry that we learned from the last lesson? (*Ambassadors for Christ, those who seek the bride, Light of the Gentiles, Ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God, God's laborers, and master builders of God's spiritual temple.*)
2. Peter is the first leader of the Apostles. What did Jesus say to Peter that would indicate this? Hint: look in Matthew 16:18 (*Jesus calls Peter the rock on which He will build His church.*)
3. How many names did Peter have? Look in John 1:42 to find out. (*Simon Bar-Jonah, Peter, and Cephas.*)
4. Peter is translated as "rock." All of the following words mean "rock" in different languages: *kepa* - Aramaic (close to Cephas), *Petros* – Greek and *Petrus* – Latin (both close to Peter).
5. What kind of person was Peter? (*Impulsive – cut off soldier's ear (John 18:1-11); insisted on not having Jesus wash his feet; scolds Jesus for telling the other disciples that He will be killed and rise again. Strong faith – declared that Jesus was the Son of God in Matthew 16:16 and John 6:69. Aware of his weaknesses – penitent when he denied Jesus three times.*)
6. Read John 21: 15-17.
 - a. What did Jesus ask Peter? (*Do you love me?*)
 - b. What was Peter's final response? (*Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.*)
 - c. Why do you think that Jesus kept asking Peter these questions (*listen to answers – probe for answers and clarity*)
 - d. What was the job that Jesus just gave Apostle Peter? (*He wanted Peter to take care of all that He would establish; lead His flock*)
7. Today, our Chief Apostle is the visible head of the apostles. What do you think are some of the unique responsibilities that he has to care for? (*explain Jesus' teachings, promoting the revelations that was granted out of the power of the Holy Spirit, keeping the doctrine pure and intact, guiding Christ's church and keeping it in unity*)
8. Now, let's jump ahead to the feast of Pentecost when we know that the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the Apostles. Who first stood up and acted as the "spokesperson" of the apostles? (*Peter*)
9. As review, how many souls were sealed that day? (*about 3000*)
10. Near the end of Peter's Pentecost sermon, he said "The promise is for you and your children. It is also for all who are far away. It is for all whom the Lord our God will choose." What did Peter mean by this? (*God's word is not just for the people of that time and place. It is for all who will and ever will believe. Also, the word was not just for Jews but also for Gentiles (non-Jews).*)
11. Discuss the events from Acts 10.
 - a. Who was Cornelius? Describe him and his family? (*He was a Roman commander in the Italian Regiment. ² Cornelius and all his family were faithful and worshiped God. He gave to charity. He prayed to God regularly.*)
 - b. One afternoon, Cornelius had a dream, describe the details of the dream he had. (*see Acts 10:3-8*)
 - c. The very next day, Peter had a vision. What was his vision? (*See Acts 10: 10-16*)
 - d. What happened the moment Peter's vision was over? (*See Acts 10: 17-23*)
 - e. As a Jew, was Peter allowed to eat anything "unclean?" (*No. The Jewish people strictly obeyed the Mosaic Law which forbade them to eat anything they considered "unclean."*)
 - f. Was Peter allowed to go into a Gentiles (again, non-Jew) house? (*No, the Mosaic Law forbade it.*)

Bible Lesson with Discussion Questions – continued

Note: The Mosaic Law or “Law of Moses” started when God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. It extends to roughly 613 laws or commandments that the Israelites would follow to live an ethical, moral life. The Mosaic Law is or simple The Law is given the first five books of the Bible, otherwise known as the Pentateuch (to Christians) and the Torah (to Jews). Jesus put down the old law and replaced it with one of love cf Acts 10: 28.

- g. What does Peter realize about the differences in people? (*“I now realize how true it is that God treats everyone the same,” he said. “He accepts people from every nation. He accepts all who have respect for him and do what is right.”*)
- h. Peter talked with Cornelius’ family and friends and in the end, all received the Holy Spirit. How is this like the events at Pentecost after the gift of the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles? (*Listen to answers. Probe for clarity.*)
- i. Peter learned a valuable lesson: Everyone is entitled to God’s Word and grace through the sacraments. Read Acts 11: 16-18. What did Peter do with his new-found knowledge? (*He immediately passed it on to the other apostles.*)

Application to Real Life

Discriminatory Behavior

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Discriminatory Behavior”

We should always act in a way that is witness to what we learn/hear from God’s Word. Give each student a discrimination handout (see attached at the end of this lesson plan). Have them read the scenarios (or read them together) and then select the answer that best matches what THEY would do.

Discuss together as a group the following questions:

- As you answered the questions did you find that you had any discriminatory thoughts about these types of people?
- Out of the 3 groups were there certain types of people that you would be more willing to talk with and those that you would quickly dismiss? Why?
- How would your behavior toward these groups of people measure up to how Jesus would treat them?

Gifts of Ministry - Evangelism

The gift of evangelism is the divine enablement to effectively communicate the gospel to unbelievers, so they respond in faith and move toward discipleship in Christ. Individuals with the gift of evangelism contribute testimony.

In Acts 10, we can read about the story of Cornelius, a Gentile, and Peter. Cornelius received a vision from God telling him to send for Peter, even though Gentiles were not supposed to associate with Jews. At this time, Peter also received a vision from God, showing him that God accepts all people who love Him, even Gentiles. When Peter comes to Caesarea to visit Cornelius and the family and friends he had gathered, he tells them about Jesus Christ. Peter speaks of Jesus’ miracles, of His death, of His resurrection, and of His command to the disciples to testify of Him and share the good news that all who believe in Christ will have their sins forgiven. The Holy Spirit then fell on Cornelius and the others who gathered, and Peter commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.

Application to Real Life - continued

In this chapter, we see that Peter displays evangelism through his sharing of the gospel. Through his words, Cornelius and his family and friends recognized Christ as their Savior. Though Peter was hesitant at first to testify to the Gentiles, he used this opportunity to share the love of Christ with others.

Memory Work Suggestions

5 minutes

1. Recite the memory verse.
2. Practice finding the memory verse and/or Bible text in their Bible!
3. Play a game to review an article of faith.
4. Allow a volunteer (child) to lead the class in an opening/closing prayer.
5. Retell the story of Good Friday in your own words.

Activity Ideas

Bums or Angels

See: www.teensundayschool.com → Activities → “Bums or Angels”

Invite someone to attend your class that the students wouldn't know. If possible, make it someone their age. Have them come early, in plenty of time to meet the children. Instruct the “stand-in” to use a fake name and have a story ready to answer their questions. Don't do any introducing for them, though. Make your students deal with him/her on their own initiative. At this point in the lesson, reveal the stand-in and deal with the accompanying issues.

Reveal Your Special Guest

I want to introduce you guys to someone this morning. If you did more than say hi to (name) this morning, I want you to raise your hand. That means you introduced yourself, asked him how he was doing, where she was from, etc. A hi as you passed doesn't count. But if you did more than that, raise your hand. Okay, you can sit down now. I invited (name) here today to see how our group would do concerning favoritism. (name), let me ask you some questions.

Special Guest Questions

1. First, what is your real name? Where are you from?
2. What did it feel like when you walked in this morning? How did you feel?
3. How many people said anything to you?
4. Did you feel at any point like you weren't wanted, didn't belong, etc.?
5. If you were a high school student, would you ever return to our class based on the way you were treated today?

Discussion Questions:

1. How do you think our group handles outsiders?
2. What could our class do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people coming in for the first time?
3. What could our class do differently that would keep us from showing favoritism to people who have been around for a while?
4. In your own life, do you play favorites? Why do you think you do it?

Look up in your Bibles: Hebrews 13:2 (The following is from the NIV translation.) *“Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.”*

Journal

Choose One

Have you ever been made fun of for any reason? Or have you been picked last for a team? Describe how you felt when someone treated you this way. If Jesus is our example, does it ever give us the right to treat others this way? Write about it.

Apostle Peter was chosen to be the foundation of His church. We all need a foundation to build on too. What can we do to build a strong spiritual foundation? What do you think you should start with? Prayer? Going to church? Why did you pick this? Write about it.

Homework Ideas

- Look up the lesson: "**Apostle Paul**" at [www. www.nac-usa.org](http://www.nac-usa.org). Look over the notes with your parent(s). Ask them if they know any facts about Apostle Paul. Quiz them.
- Learn the Memory Verse:
*"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God."
--Romans 12:2 (NKJV)*
- Learn the _____ Article of Faith

Discrimination Handout

Read the scenarios below and then select the answer that best matches what you would do.

While sitting in the lunch room at school, the “new kid” walks in looking for a place to sit and eat. He wears bright red glasses and his clothes are not exactly stylish. What do you do?

- A) Quickly look the other way and pretend you didn't see him.
- B) Roll your eyes as you laugh with your friends and wonder why anyone in their right mind would wear such clothes.
- C) Wave to him and offer him a seat at your table. Then, start a conversation to make him feel welcome and at ease.
- D) Offer him a seat at your table but then quickly eat and leave without saying too much.

A friend at church introduces you to a guest that he has been testifying to for a number of months. The guest is still pretty rough around the edges. Your friend asks if you would like to join the both of them for pizza after the church service. What do you do?

- A) Politely excuse yourself and move to a different seat.
- B) Inform the guest that his behavior is offending and you won't be seen hanging out with people like that.
- C) Do your duty and sit with them during the service, but then avoid future contact.
- D) Gladly accept the offer to meet them for lunch and try to make the visitor feel welcome.

Someone of another faith moves into your neighborhood and is very vocal about their religious beliefs. What do you do?

- A) Shout them down in a militant manner when you enter into spiritual discussions.
- B) Ignore the new neighbor or make small talk about the weather, as you don't want to get into a spiritual debate.
- C) Do your homework on how best to testify to people who practice other religions and then make an attempt to share the gospel with your neighbor.
- D) Freak out and worry yourself silly about what to say if the new neighbor invites you to his church.

Take Home Page: Apostle Peter

Today I learned...

Today your child was reminded that **God's word and His grace are for everyone**. The children explored Apostle Peter's role in the formation and spreading of the first church. They also examined how our pre-conceived judgements of outsiders might affect our ability to share the love and grace of Jesus with others.

Help me learn my memory verse...

"But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved in the same manner as they."
--Acts 15:11

Ask me...

1. What kind of person was Peter?
2. Why do you think Jesus chose him to lead His church?
3. Do you believe that every person is entitled to God's word and grace? Why or why not?

Live Your Faith...

How can your family help spread the word of God and share the love of Jesus this week? Brainstorm and come up with a plan together, as well as how you will execute your plan as a family. Try to find ways to involve everyone and talk about how important it is as a Christian to share your faith and love for the Lord with others.