

A JAIL BAIL

Peter Escapes
Prison
Acts 12
AD 43

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God preserves us to serve Him.

BIBLE VERSE

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. James 1:2

LEARNER GOAL

I can share how God cares for me and leads me to serve Him.

LAW & GOSPEL

In this world of sin, I and the whole Church of God will be persecuted on account of Christ.

God works through His Word to break the chains of sin, relieve the suffering it causes, and sustain me and the rest of His Church.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

King Herod launches attacks on the Church, killing James, the brother of John. When Herod sees how much this pleases the Jews, he has Peter imprisoned. Peter is guarded by four squads of soldiers as the Church prays for him. That night, an angel appears and leads Peter past the guards and out of the prison. Peter knocks at the gate of the house where the others are gathered in prayer. A servant girl, Rhoda, answers. She is so excited that she runs to tell the others, leaving Peter to continue knocking. An angel of the Lord strikes Herod down for his pride.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Acts 12 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read “Apologetics Helps” on the back page in preparation for the “Live” section.

IN DEPTH Read the Seventh Petition of the Lord’s Prayer and its meaning in Luther’s Small Catechism.

SUPPLIES

FOR THIS LESSON

- ☐ Strips of paper, tape

FOR EVERY LESSON

- ☐ Student copies of *Defend Journal*
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Pens
- ☐ Shareable images from digital resource center
- ☐ Supplies for bonus activities
- ☐ cph.org/digitalcontent



LEADER NOTE

If you choose to do the “Prayer Chain” Bonus Activity later on, you can join the two prayer chains together. Keep them in your room as a reminder to pray for others.



DEFEND JOURNAL

Hand out journals and turn to Lesson 5.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Have youth get into this account with “Act It Out.”



LEADER NOTE

The final question is not in the *Defend Journal*. Discuss it together as a group.

LAUNCH

WALK-IN QUESTION

Who takes care of you?

PRAYER CHAIN

Hand out strips of paper and ask students to write a short prayer for a friend or family member on each strip. Then pray together for the people on the strips. After you pray, make the strips into a paper chain and hang it in your room.

SAY God has given us the command and privilege to pray for one another. Today, we'll hear how the early believers prayed for Peter in prison.

PRAY Heavenly Father, thank You for hearing our prayers. Thank You for your continual love and care for us. Help us trust in You. Amen.

LEARN

READ “THE BIG PICTURE” AND TALK IT OUT

► Imagine you are Peter. What are some of your thoughts throughout this event?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- Let youth share their thoughts. Peter may have thought that he would surely be killed next. He may have thought about Jesus' words to him that he would be carried to where he did not want to go (John 21:18–19). He may have been at peace, knowing God was with him.

LEARN ABOUT “A JAIL BAIL”

Read **Acts 12:1–5** or ask volunteers to read as others follow in their Bibles.

► What was happening to believers in Jesus at the time of this account? How did the believers respond?

- Christians were being persecuted for their faith. The disciple James was put to death.
- Believers responded by praying. They prayed for Peter, who was put into prison.

► Is there persecution of Christians today? How do we respond?

- There is persecution of Christians all around the world today. Some Christians are put to death for their faith; others are silenced or treated unjustly.
- We can also speak up for the faith and pray for those who are persecuted.

Read **Acts 12:6–19** or ask a volunteer to read.

► Talk about what happened to Peter. Why did Peter think it was a vision at first?

- The events were unbelievable—an angel freeing Peter and leading him through a heavily guarded prison to freedom.

► How does this event show God's care for His people then and now?

- God watches over and protects His Church and His people. He wants us to pray to Him and bring all our concerns and needs to Him.

Read **Acts 12:20–25**.

► What does the account of Herod's death tell us about our God?

- Our God is in control, not the rulers of this earth. We do not need to fear; God is with us and He will not abandon us.

LIVE

DISCUSS “FOR THE FAITH”

Begin with the discussion found in the Leader Note in the sidebar. We live in a fallen creation. Jesus told us that we will have troubles in this world, but not to despair, because He will always be with us. Discuss the question below with your group, using the discussion points and “Apologetics Helps” for support as you talk.

► Why do Christians suffer?

DISCUSSION POINTS

- **Romans 5:12:** “Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned . . .” Adam and Eve brought sin, death, and suffering into God’s perfect world when they disobeyed God. We now live with the effects of sin and death, and we also sin.
- **James 1:2–4:** “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.” God works in our suffering to strengthen our faith and trust in Him.
- **2 Corinthians 1:3–4:** “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.” God comforts us in our suffering, and so we can comfort others who suffer.
- **Revelation 21:4:** “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” One day we will be free from all suffering and evil, and we will live in joy with God.

CONSIDER “DELIVER US FROM EVIL”

In the Lord’s Prayer, we pray, “but deliver us from evil.” What does this mean? Let’s take a look at Luther’s explanation:

“We pray in this petition, in summary, that our Father in heaven would rescue us from every evil of body and soul, possessions and reputation, and finally, when our last hour comes, give us a blessed end, and graciously take us from this valley of sorrow to Himself in heaven.”

► What gives us hope, even when we are suffering from evil?

Remind youth that though we may suffer in this world, God will always be with us, doing what is best for us. We have the hope of eternal life with Him!

CHECK FOR UNDERSTANDING

Check for understanding by asking youth, **How does God care for you?**

LEAVE

Read the Bible Verse, written in the *Defend Journal*:

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds. James 1:2

Ask for prayer requests. Offer to pray, or invite a student to pray for everyone.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Even when we suffer evil, God’s promises in Jesus Christ remain true. He saves us and leads us to eternal life in Him.



LEADER NOTE

Ask if youth have ever heard of “prosperity preachers” or “prosperity sermons.” Some false teachers claim that if a person has enough “faith” or prays the right prayer, they will get rich, have no problems, and be healed of all their sicknesses. But that is false.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Explore more about angels in the Bible with “Angel Assistance.”



SHAREABLE DOWNLOAD

Connect with youth before and after the lesson by using the shareable images from the digital resource center.

APOLOGETICS HELPS

DEFEND THE FAITH

Angels are not humans who have gone to heaven. Angels were created by God. They serve God and do what He directs them to do. Angels praise God and give glory to Him. In the Bible, God often sent angels as messengers to His people, such as to Isaiah, Daniel, Zechariah, Joseph, and Mary. God sent angels to protect and fight for His people (see 2 Kings 19:32–35). Angels announced Jesus' birth. They ministered to Jesus after He was tempted and as He prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane. We can't usually see angels like Peter did, but we know that God sends His angels to watch over us (Psalm 91:10–11; Matthew 18:10).

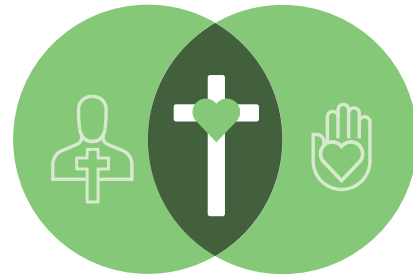
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

► Will I suffer for being a Christian?

Just before Jesus went to the cross, He told His disciples, "In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33). Christians may suffer for their faith physically, socially, or emotionally. But we can take comfort in knowing that God is always with us, caring for us. He will never leave us or forsake us.

► How can I feel joy when I am having troubles?

It is not easy to be joyful when we are having troubles and problems. Hard times can make us feel sad, stressed, and anxious. We have troubles because of sin in the world. We don't have to take joy in the troubles themselves. But God helps us to have joy in Him in spite of the troubles we have. We can thank God for His continual love and help and care in the midst of our troubles. And we can find joy in God's promise that one day, we will be free from all our troubles (Revelation 21:1–3).



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God sets me free from sin and death through His Son.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I can trust God to free me so that I can share His message with others.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on previous learning for each age.

ADULT

I can express how God works to preserve His people, even in the midst of persecution and great difficulty.

YOUTH

I can share how God cares for me and leads me to serve Him.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God keeps us safe and helps us to serve Him.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God hears my prayers and helps me in my troubles.

★ BONUS ACTIVITIES

ACT IT OUT

5–10 minutes

This narrative is a good one to act out. Ask for volunteers to be Peter, guards, the angel, Rhoda, and the group of believers. After reading the text, have the remaining youth retell the account while volunteers act it out.

ANGEL ASSISTANCE

10–15 minutes

Have youth use digital devices or Bible concordances to look up angels in the Bible. What are the angels doing? How are they serving God? How are they helping God's people? For examples, see Exodus 23:20; Isaiah 6; 2 Kings 19:32–35; Matthew 4:11; and Acts 8:26.

PRAYER CHAIN

15–20 minutes

Ask youth, "How do people try to silence Christians today?" Hand out strips of paper and ask everyone to write their thoughts on a strip. Pray for the people, groups, or situations that learners mentioned. Make the strips into a prayer chain as a reminder to keep them in prayer.