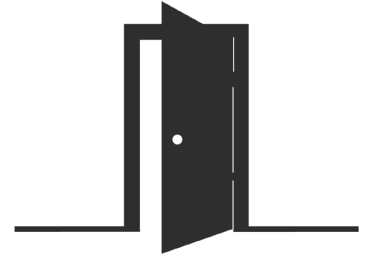


WORDS THAT OPEN DOORS

INTRODUCTION

In the fictional world of the J.K. Rowling *Harry Potter* books, the word 'Alohamora', accompanied by the wave of a magic wand, unlocks and opens doors. In the real world we need keys and passwords to open locked things.

A word cannot open a door, but what if the door might not be made of wood or glass, but be a door to new ideas, thoughts or stories? 'Discover' is one of those words. How we discover a relationship with God is through prayer. The Bible tells how words of prayer opened some doors for Peter in quite dramatic and humorous ways.



PREPARATION

✦ Make sure you have been given a copy of the *Prayer Journal Template* and the *Door Hanger sheet*.

BIBLE READING/THOUGHT

Knock Knock! Who's There? It's Peter!

Read Acts 12:5-17



This is a great story of discovery – a discovery that prayer works.

This event happens during a time of persecution for the new Christian Church. Peter is in prison waiting for his execution, and so the church gathered together in the home of a patron, to pray for him.

I wonder what they were praying for: his release? a respite? peace in his heart as he waited? a sense of God's presence? As they pray, Peter is released from the jail, not by a local magistrate, but by an angel of the Lord! Peter runs past guards and through opened doors, along the streets to the house where he knows he will find refuge, only to discover that door is locked.

Peter knocks. A voice says: 'Who's there?' Peter replies: 'It's Peter!' But then he is left waiting, as the person on door duty is so amazed that the man they are praying for is actually knocking at the door that she doesn't open it! Instead she runs to tell everyone inside! Should we be surprised that they don't believe her?

Eventually, the door is opened and everyone is astonished to discover Peter standing there.

Some things to think about:

- 🗨️ Did this community believe that their prayers could open doors?
- 🗨️ Would they believe that they could in the future?

Is it possible that prayer can open 'doors' that are currently closed for you or your family?

Rhoda, the girl on door duty, did believe it was Peter knocking at the door. She recognised his voice as she had heard it many times when he taught their little community. But she didn't act on what she knew to be true at first, though – she ran to get some confirmation.

- 🗨️ How can you tell if your prayer has been answered?
- 🗨️ Who could you ask for confirmation or reassurance?



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

CHALLENGE

Think about the last time you discovered something new... or rediscovered something you had forgotten about. Try and challenge yourself or everyone in your family to discover a new fact or idea to share over the next few days. Maybe you could have themes – Science, Nature, People, Maths, Spellings. The ideas are endless!

PLAY 'STEAL THE KEYS'

This is a game of stealth and patience. The 'Keeper of the Keys', who is wearing a blindfold, sits on a chair. Place a bunch of keys under the chair. Keys are very jangly; the idea is to steal the keys from under the chair without the Keeper hearing you. If they do, and point accurately to you, then you become the Keeper. How many ways can you discover of stealing the keys?

KEEP A FAMILY PRAYER JOURNAL OR DIARY

Spend time together reflecting and praying each day. Keep a note in your prayer journal of all your prayers and look out for answers.

JUST FOR FUN

'Knock Knock' jokes – here are some to share:
www.funology.com/knock-knock-jokes

Can you make up your own?

PRAYER WALK

As you walk to school, work or the shops, chat to God about the people who live in the houses along your street. You might not know them all, you may never have been invited into their homes, but I wonder what you might discover about your community. Or, if you aren't able to walk so much, stick a map of your neighbourhood on your fridge door and pray over the roads around yours.

SAY GRACE

Another great way to pray together as a family is before meals. What might sharing a grace together help you discover about God and your family?

Here are some ideas:

'We love our bread, we love our butter, but most of all we love each other – Amen.'

'Thank you God for giving us food,
thank you God for giving us food,
we're ever so grateful, for every plateful,
So thank you God for giving us food'

(sing to the theme tune from the Superman movies.)

Good food, Good meat,
Good God, Let's eat.
Amen.

– AUTHOR UNKNOWN

Dear Lord, bless this bunch,
As we munch on our lunch.
Amen.

– AUTHOR UNKNOWN

As you are eating your meal, each family member could take turns asking the following questions – or you could make up your own:

What are you grateful for? What do you want to ask God for?
What are you sorry for today? Who did you help today?

DOOR HANGER

Complete a *Door Hanger* from the take-home sheet to hang on a door in your home. While you are completing this, listen to some worship music and think about what doors you would like Jesus to help you open.

SONG TIME

Spend time listening to, reflecting with, or singing along to...

♪ 'They shall come from the east' by Kevin Larsson

♪ 'Breathe... and be still' by Andrew Maycock

♪ 'King of Heaven' by Daniel Elson

Visit www.salvationarmy.org.uk/faith-at-home

REFLECT

Family life might be very busy and time to reflect is the last thing on the 'to do' list; or maybe you find yourself reflecting a lot. How can thinking back over things that have happened help you be more confident in what you might discover in the future?

SHARE

Share some of your discoveries with each other and with the person who gave your family the Faith@Home Challenge and ask them any questions you have.