

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



AN ANGEL MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Acts 12:6-11 Peter leaves the jail

This week, we continue travelling with Peter who has been seeing the power of the Holy Spirit before his own eyes. We explore if believing in God can sometimes make life more challenging.

Each child will need:

- A balloon
- Story outline sheet

You will need:

- A balloon pump and a bucket
- Resources to re-tell the story – see Action It section

Start It

Play a target game with balloons. Use a balloon pump and give each child an un-tied balloon filled with air to hold tight. Ask the children to imagine they are filled with the Holy Spirit, just like the balloon is filled with air. The game is to let your balloon go and aim for the bucket. The winner is the person whose balloon goes inside. If you have a large group, perhaps do this in rounds.

Play this several times. It's likely that no one is successful, but there is a lot of chaos and fun trying.

💡 **Say:** We all kept trying to aim for the bucket, but the balloon had very different ideas about where it wanted to go. That's a bit like how the Holy Spirit might work in us. We may have very firm ideas about where we think we should be heading, but it's important to listen and let the Holy Spirit lead us too. Although, unlike the balloon, his directions have purpose.

Ask: Who can remember this month's Bible verse?

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— (Romans 8:14 ICB)

💡 **Say:** Just like our balloons, we may not know the end destination, but it will hopefully be fun and exciting getting there!

Sing It

💡 **Say:** Throughout the Bible God regularly sends his angels to be with his people. Although we can learn lots from the Bible about angels, they still seem very mysterious.

💡 **Say:** Today's song gives us a sneak preview of the story we will be looking at later. It will be tricky to join in with the verses as they tell the story, but you'll soon pick up the chorus. Here are the words:

Angels watching over me, every move I make,
Angels watching over me,
Angels watching over me, every step I take,
Angels watching over me.

(Amy Grant)

'Angels' by Amy Grant (3 mins 38 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koGOTI48DcY>

Tell It

● **Say:** In the past two sessions we have discovered that the Holy Spirit gives Christians the power to make an amazing difference in the lives of others. The disciples were able to communicate in lots of different languages and Peter and John healed a beggar on the side of the road. The only problem was that there were many people who were angry about what the disciples were doing and saying.

● **Say:** In our Bible verse we meet someone called King Herod. He is not King Herod from the Nativity story, King Herod the Great who met the wise men and killed the babies in Bethlehem. He is King Herod Agrippa, his grandson.

Read Acts 12:1-5 (ICB).

'During that same time King Herod began to do terrible things to some who belonged to the church. He ordered James, the brother of John, to be killed by the sword. Herod saw that the Jews liked this, so he decided to arrest Peter, too. (This happened during the time of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)

'After Herod arrested Peter, he put him in jail and handed him over to be guarded by 16 soldiers. Herod planned to bring Peter before the people for trial after the Passover Feast. So Peter was kept in jail. But the church kept on praying to God for him.'

Ask: Why do you think King Herod Agrippa was so angry about what the disciples were doing?

● **Say:** We discovered in last week's session that there are Christians today who face the same persecution (bad treatment) as Peter and the other disciples did.

Ask:

→ What did the Church do while Peter was in prison?

→ How did we support persecuted Christians in the last session?

● **Say:** In the United Kingdom and Ireland we are able to worship freely without the fear that we will be thrown into prison, but being a Christian can still be challenging.

Ask: We may not be in prison, but do you ever feel that believing in God has made your life more difficult? Explain your answer.

● **Say:** When we are facing challenges because of our beliefs, we can sometimes feel like we are alone. The stories in the Bible may have happened many years ago but we can still relate to them today. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can find the strength to live as Jesus wants us to and make a difference in the lives of those who are being persecuted for their faith.

● **Say:** As Peter sat in the prison, he was chained to two soldiers.

Ask: What do you think happened next?

Video

Slapstick theater (Peter escapes from prison) by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 12 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zzM9aFqkw6s>

● **Say:** In the story an angel came to Peter just at the right moment. In this case it was an angel sent by God to make a difference in Peter's life, but God often sends people into our lives who lift us up when we need help.

Ask:

- Have you, like Peter, ever felt that God has sent somebody into your life who has helped you?
- Who was it?

● **Say:** Today's story reminds us that, just like Peter, we are not alone, and God is always with us.

Action It

Ask the children to recreate their own version of the story. Use the story outline sheet as a starting point. Depending on your group, and their interests, a number of different options are available. Here are some suggestions:

- use finger puppets created by the children to tell the story <https://artsphere.org/blog/family-finger-puppet-handout>
- create a stop motion video of a section of the story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0Lj3ha3XF8>
- create a storyboard for a scene from a film – don't forget to cast your main characters
- act out the story, film it and share it with the rest of your church

Once the children have created their version of the story, share it together and discuss the difference the angel made in Peter's life.

● **Say:** Peter was protected by God when he sent an angel to be with him. The angel made a huge difference in Peter's life.

Pray It

● **Say:** For our time of prayer, we are going to think about all the people in the world who are in prison because they believe in Jesus. Just as the Church prayed for Peter, we are going to pray for those locked away because of their beliefs.

Give the children a few moments to write a short prayer. Ask the children to read out their prayers and then bring the time of reflection to a close.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

FOR ME



Create

What do you think an angel looks like?

Instead of relying on pictures you have already seen in books or on the TV, try to think about what an angel looks like to you.

Create a picture to show your angel and stick it up in your room as a reminder that God is always with you. It could go next to the Holy Spirit picture that you created last week.

TOGETHER



Watch

In this week's session we created our own version of the story of Peter's miraculous escape from prison. This story has been turned into a song for the musical 'Risen'. Watch the clip with someone at home to discover a Bible story brought to life through musical theatre.

If you could turn any Bible story into a musical, which one would you choose? Ask someone else at home for their ideas as well.

Acts – the musical - Peter's miraculous escape from prison by Risen the musical

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pQVfxVND3Aw>



Song for the week

'Angels' by Amy Grant

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koGOTI48DcY>



Memory verse

'The true children of God are those who let God's Spirit lead them.'

— Romans 8:14 (ICB)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

