

## Grade 3—Unit 9

# Peter

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Peter was one of Jesus' beloved disciples. He is probably the most well-known disciple. These lessons about Peter review his life before Jesus' arrest, and then show how Jesus' love and forgiveness changed Peter's weakness into a strength. Peter became an elder and leader in the early church.

### LESSONS

1. Called by Christ
2. Peter and His Promise
3. Feeding the Sheep

# Unit 9: Peter

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## Unit Information

### SUMMARY

In this unit, students will see Peter, the beloved disciple of Christ, growing and learning. Peter (as well as James and John) experienced the transfiguration of Christ. He also denied Jesus three times, but came to know Jesus' love and forgiveness. He later became a leader of the early church.

### KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Matthew 10:2-4

Matthew 14:25-33

**Matthew 14:26-29 (memory verses)**

**Matthew 14:30-31 (memory verses)**

Matthew 16:13-18

**Matthew 16:15-16 (memory verses)**

Matthew 17:1-8

Mark 1:14-18

Mark 14:27-41

John 13:31-38

**John 13: 34, 35 (main memory verses)**

John 18:15-18, 25-27

John 20:1-9

John 20:19-23

John 21:1-19

Acts 2:14-42

Acts 3-4, 5:17-41, and 10-12

**Acts 4:19, 20 (memory verses)**

### BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

#### Disciple of Christ

Peter, who became a disciple during the early days of Jesus' ministry, is probably the most well-known disciple. Perhaps it is because of his boldness in asking questions and in giving replies. Or maybe it is of his impulsive responses to new ideas and people. Regardless of our interpretation of Peter's characteristics, the scriptures identify Peter as a leader among the group of disciples. He often spoke or acted for the group.

Jesus gave Simon a new name. The new name, Cephas, meant *rock* in Aramaic. *Peter* is the Greek translation. The reason for the name change is not given directly, but the name indicated Peter's new role among the disciples. A rock symbolizes strength, endurance, and steadiness.

#### The Transfiguration

The transfiguration was a manifestation of the inner glory of Christ, and was accompanied by an audible voice from heaven. It revealed his future state of glory.

This event probably took place at night, because Jesus usually went to the mountains to spend the night in prayer. Christ was the central figure, the subject of transfiguration. Moses and Elijah appeared from the heavenly world, as representatives of the Old Testament. Moses represented the law, and Elijah represented prophecy. Christ fulfilled both of these. Jesus' closest disciples were also there: Peter, James, and John.

In his impulsive way, Peter wanted to build three shelters—one for Moses, one for Elijah, and one for Jesus. Peter saw the three men as equals. God responded by covering them with a cloud, and told the disciples that only Jesus was his Son. They should listen to him alone. Then Moses and Elijah were taken away. God wanted the disciples to realize Jesus was superior to the other two men.

The transfiguration of Christ confirmed the faith of the disciples, and prepared them for the trial that was coming, by showing them the real nature, glory, and power of Jesus.

### **Peter Learns the Hard Way**

During the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples that he would die and rise again. Peter pledged to give his life for Jesus. Jesus, in turn, predicted that Peter would deny knowing him. At Jesus' arrest, Peter chopped off the ear of the high priest's servant. Lawrence O. Richards, in *The Teacher's Commentary*, gives this account of Peter's actions.

Peter's act of resistance was a rash yet brave act. But what else can we expect? Hadn't Peter promised to follow Jesus even to death? Then Jesus was bound and dragged to the high priest . . . Peter followed the crowd, but in the darkness and among Jesus' enemies, his courage faded. When he was accused by servants of being one of Jesus' companions, Peter, shivering in the cold of the dark night, cursed angrily and denied his Lord. Peter had the courage for an impulsive act, but as the darkness deepened and pressed in around him, that courage drained away. (pp. 750-751)

Jesus showed that the love of God is indeed stronger than human hate, even stronger than death itself. Because of Christ's resurrection, there is new life. When Christ appeared to Peter, it gave him a new surge of courage and hope. Jesus' appearances to the disciples in the days following the resurrection helped them to understand more clearly the meaning of the resurrection.

### **Special Work to Do**

At the time of Jesus' arrest, Peter had denied even knowing Jesus. After the resurrection, however, Jesus reinstated Peter. He gave him an opportunity to confess his love and loyalty. The resurrection of Jesus offered a new chance—a new life—to Peter. Jesus wanted to show the disciples that Peter was forgiven and loved. In fact, Jesus had special work for him to do. As if to recall Peter's three denials, Jesus asked three times for an expression of Peter's love. He then asked Peter to feed his lambs, take care of his sheep, and feed his sheep. Peter, who had once denied knowing Jesus, was now entrusted with the work of nurturing Jesus' followers.

Jesus was raised from death into new life. New life came to each of the believers as God sent the Holy Spirit to live in each one. Now they had strength, courage, and enthusiasm to spread the good news, in spite of threats.

Peter played an important role in building the church that Jesus came to establish.

## ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Peter was a beloved disciple and close friend to Jesus.
- Peter, with James and John, experienced the transfiguration of Jesus.
- Peter denied Jesus out of fear and weakness. He learned a great deal as a result of his failure.
- Christ forgave Peter.
- Peter became the leader of the disciples after Jesus' resurrection.
- Awareness of our weaknesses becomes a source of strength.
- We can trust Jesus to love and teach us to walk in his ways.
- The Holy Spirit gives us the strength and courage to follow God's ways.

## WORSHIP

1. Read Matthew 16:13-18 and have students write who they think Jesus is on 3 x 5 cards. Place the cards in a box at the worship center, draw them out one at a time, and share them with the group. Are any two alike? Why do they think the cards are each a little different? Is there a common definition in the whole group? If so, what is it? Would it make any difference if Jesus himself asked the question? Discuss the importance of confessing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

2. The music we sing shows who we think Jesus is. Have students share their favorite song about Jesus and say why. If there is time, sing some of the songs and listen to the words, to see what they say about Jesus.

3. Jesus taught Peter to pray. Allow five minutes at the end of each worship time for students to talk and listen to God in prayer. What do students want to say to God? What do they hear God telling them? Encourage them to write down their thoughts.

4. Discuss: Have you ever been accused of something that made you ashamed? Have you ever lied to deny something? Can you imagine how Peter felt after denying Christ?

5. As the teacher, share a story about a time in your childhood when you felt rejected. Discuss: Have you felt rejected by someone you thought was your friend? Have friends ever made promises and then not kept them? Have you ever acted like you didn't know a friend? Have you ever let a friend down? How does it feel when these things happen? What should we do?

Reflect on the hurt or guilt felt in such a circumstance (from discussion above). Allow a few minutes for reflection and quiet prayer. Ask for God's forgiveness, for help to forgive another person or give praise that a broken relationship has been restored.

6. Jesus asked Peter to feed his sheep. Talk about ways a shepherd cares for sheep. Challenge the class to think of ways we can care for others.

7. Read Acts 3:1-16. Have students draw a picture of the lame man's face, showing his joy, or have them imagine they are the lame man and write a short prayer of praise thanking God for healing. Ask how they might have felt if they were walking on the street near the temple and heard the commotion being made by the healed man. What might they think or do?

8. Share a present-day story of someone who had the same courage and determination as Peter to share the good news, as in Acts 4:1-21.

9. Peter answered the high priest in Acts 5:17-41 by saying, “We must obey God rather than men!” Ask students if they have ever been asked to do something they did not think was right. How did they respond?

### **MEMORY PASSAGES**

This unit offers a main memory verse passage, plus several bonus passages to be used if desired. These passages are provided in large format on pages 236-240, to be used as posters or overheads.

### **ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING**

- Students’ participation in reading, completion of activities, discussions and writing activities is a useful tool for assessment.
- The symbols students draw on their Faith Hero T-shirts may also be used to assess their learning.



“But what about you?”

he asked.

“Who do you say I am?”

Simon Peter answered,

“You are the Christ,

the Son of the living God.”

Matthew 16:15-16



When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified.

“It’s a ghost,” they said,  
and cried out in fear.

But Jesus immediately said to them:

“Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me  
to come to you on the water.”

“Come,” he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat  
and walked on the water and  
came toward Jesus.

Matthew 14:26-29

But when he saw the wind, he  
was afraid and, beginning to sink,  
cried out, "Lord, save me!"

Immediately Jesus reached out his  
hand and caught him.

"You of little faith," he said,  
"why did you doubt?"

Matthew 14:30-31





A new command I give you:  
Love one another. As I have  
loved you, so you must love one  
another. By this all men will  
know that you are my disciples,  
if you love one another.

John 13:34-35





But Peter and John replied,  
“Judge for yourselves whether it is  
right in God’s sight to  
obey you rather than God.  
For we cannot help speaking about  
what we have seen and heard.”

Acts 4:19-20



# Peter

## LESSON 1: CALLED BY CHRIST

### Objective

Students will recognize Peter as a beloved disciple and close friend of Jesus.

### Key Concepts

- Peter was called by Christ to be his disciple.
- Peter was a close friend to Jesus.

**Texts:** Matthew 10:2-4; Matthew 14:25-33; Matthew 16:13-18; Matthew 17:1-8;  
Mark 1:14-18; Mark 14:27-31; Mark 14:32-41

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Bibles
- Chart paper, markers
- Bible reference strips for character study of Peter (see references under Lesson Step 1)
- “Character Sketch” worksheet (p. 243)
- *International Children’s Bible Dictionary*
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *God Sends His Son* by Eve B. MacMaster
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: *A Few Who Dared to Trust God*, American Bible Society
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Hall of Faith cards (1 set or several sets)
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: Faith Hero T-shirts, fabric markers/crayons
- For Extend the Lesson, option five: Bible memory journals, markers/crayons

### Teacher Preparation

- Have verses ready to hand out for the character study of Peter.
- Make copies of “Character Sketch” worksheet (one for each student).

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**God-given talents.** Ask students to each write down the talents or gifts they see in the classmate sitting next to them. Examples might be: speaking, being friendly with elderly people, friendship with all ages, sports, languages, computers, science, etc.

Then have the students give their papers to the classmates they described.

Students should choose one of the talents and write on it a way to use it to honor God and help others.

Tell students that God has given each one special talents. Say, “We can thank God for all of the talents in this room. We can use our different abilities and work together to help others and honor God.”

### LESSON STEPS

**1. Ask students what they know about Peter.** Record their responses on chart paper with Peter’s name written at the top.

**2. Learning more about Peter.** Divide the class into smaller groups and hand out strips of paper with the following scripture references:

- Matthew 10:2-4
- Matthew 14:25-33
- Matthew 16:13-18
- Matthew 17:1-8
- Mark 1:14-18
- Mark 14:27-31
- Mark 14:32-41

After the groups study their verses, add new information to the chart. Then hand out the “Character Sketch” worksheet and have students complete it, using the information on the chart.

**3. Look up “Peter”** in the *International Children’s Bible Dictionary*. Discuss the meaning of Peter’s name. Add this new information to the chart.

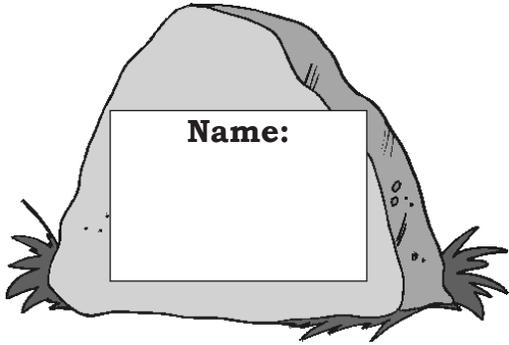
### **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Read stories of Jesus’ ministry** in *God Sends His Son* by Eve B. MacMaster.
- **Find additional information about Peter** in the book, *A Few Who Dared to Trust God*.
- **Mix up a set of Hall of Faith cards.** As a class (or individually), place the cards in chronological order. Just for fun, choose a hero and write a fictional account of what might happen if that hero came to life in your community today.
- **Work on Faith Hero T-shirts.** Have students add Peter’s name and a symbol from one of his stories to their Faith Hero T-shirts.
- **Read the story of Jesus’ transfiguration** from Matthew 17:1-8. The disciples knew Jesus in their everyday life and also transfigured on the mountain. Both were the real Jesus. In the same way, Christ comes to us in everyday, simple ways and in exciting moments. Ask students who they think Jesus is. How does he show himself in the ordinary and extraordinary?
- **Bible memory journals.** Give time for students to begin creating an entry for the John 13: 34-35 memory work. Ask them in what ways Jesus showed love to Peter and to the other disciples. In what ways did Peter show love to Jesus? How have the students shown love to one another in the classroom?

Name \_\_\_\_\_

# Character Sketch



**Personal information:**

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**Born:**

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**Residence:**

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**Family:**

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**Occupation:**

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**Strengths:**

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**Special talents:**

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**Weaknesses:**

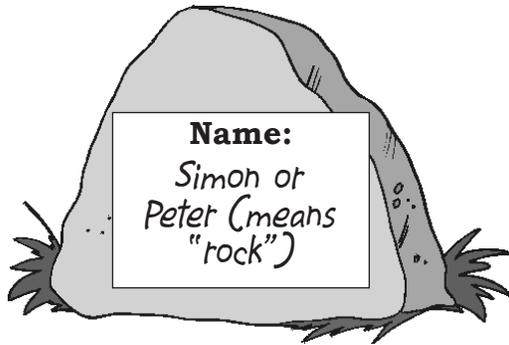
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(Answer Key)

## Sample Answers for Character Sketch



### Personal information:

Marrried

Became a missionary

Died as a martyr in Rome

### Born:

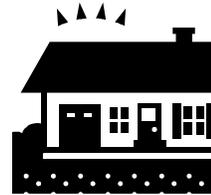
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### Residence:

A house in

Capernaum



### Family:

Brother-Andrew,

wife, mother-in-law

### Occupation:

Fisherman, like his father

Partner of James & John

Disciple of John the Baptist



### Strengths:

Bold

Willing to help



### Special talents:

Understanding who Jesus was

Preaching

Healing



### Weaknesses:

Impulsive (rushed ahead)

Spoke before thinking



# Peter

## LESSON 2: PETER AND HIS PROMISE

### Objective

Students will recognize that Peter denied Jesus out of fear and weakness.

### Key Concepts

- Peter lied because he was afraid to admit that he knew Jesus.
- Jesus appeared to his disciples after his death and resurrection.

**Texts:** John 13:33-38; John 18:15-18, 25-27; John 20:1-9; John 20:19-23

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- “Selected Passages from John” (p. 247)
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: Bible memory journals, markers/crayons
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: “Peter and His Promise” worksheet (p. 248)

### Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of “Selected Passages from John,” one for each student.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option four, make copies of the “Peter and His Promise” worksheet.

## INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Afraid to tell.** Have students share times when they were afraid to tell the truth or betrayed by friends. You might want to share a personal story to get the discussion started.

## LESSON STEPS

- 1. Distribute “Selected passages from John,”** one copy per student. Have them read the story silently or in pairs. Encourage children to put themselves in Peter’s place. How might Peter have felt when Jesus told the disciples he was going away and they couldn’t go with him? How might Peter’s voice have sounded the first time he denied knowing Christ? How might his voice have changed as he continued to be accused and continued to deny it?
- 2. Read John 20:1-9** aloud to the class. The disciples had seen the empty tomb. Jesus had indeed risen! The empty tomb is a symbol of Jesus’ resurrection.
- 3. Read John 20:19-23.** Encourage students to think about how Peter might have felt when Jesus came into the upper room. Remember: Peter had not seen or talked to Jesus since he denied knowing him three times. What might Peter have wanted to say to Jesus? What might he have been thinking, feeling, seeing, and hearing as he looked around the room? If you were Peter, what questions would you want to ask?

**4. Do a writing (or drawing) exercise,** inviting students to choose one of the following options:

- Pretend you are Peter. Describe how you are feeling and ask questions that come to mind.
- Pretend you are a reporter. Describe what you see, hear, and feel in the upper room.
- Pretend you are Peter. Write a letter to a friend, telling about the events of the last three days.
- Draw a picture of Jesus with the disciples in the upper room.

### **EXTEND THE LESSON**

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Readers' theater.** Using the sheet "Selected Passages from John," read the story again, this time with parts. Choose 4 readers for the narrator and three accusers. The rest of the class will read Peter's replies in unison. Try to make each response sound more and more agitated.
- **Act out the same passages,** using 5 students—narrator, 3 accusers, and Peter.
- **Bible memory journals.** Students may continue entering the John 13:34-35 memory passage in their journals. How did Jesus show love to Peter in the lesson today?
- **Complete the worksheet,** "Peter and His Promise." Answers are:

1. DENY
2. DISCIPLE
3. HOLY SPIRIT
4. JESUS
5. MARY
6. PEACE
7. PETER
8. PROMISE
9. ROOSTER
10. SHAME
11. STONE
12. THREE TIMES
13. TOMB

# Selected Passages from John

*(Good News Bible)*

## **John 13:36-38**

“Where are you going, Lord?” Simon Peter asked him.

“You cannot follow me now where I am going,” answered Jesus. “But later you will follow me.”

“Lord, why can’t I follow you now?” asked Peter. “I am ready to die for you!”

Jesus answered, “Are you really ready to die for me? I am telling you the truth: before the rooster crows you will say three times that you do not know me.”

## **John 18:15-18**

Simon Peter and another disciple followed Jesus. The other disciple was well known to the High Priest, so he went with Jesus into the courtyard of the High Priest’s house while Peter stayed outside by the gate. Then the other disciple went back out, spoke to the girl at the gate and brought Peter inside. The girl at the gate said to Peter, “Aren’t you also one of the disciples of that man?”

“No, I am not,” answered Peter.

It was cold, so the servants and guards had built a charcoal fire and were standing around it, warming themselves. So Peter went over and stood with them, warming himself.

## **John 18:25-27**

Peter was still standing there keeping himself warm. So the others said to him, “Aren’t you also one of the disciples of that man?”

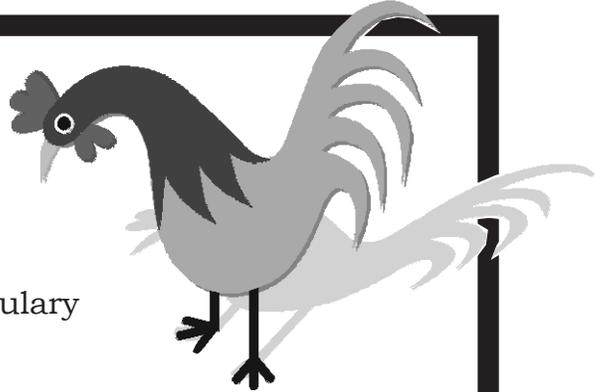
But Peter denied it. “No, I am not,” he said.

One of the High Priest’s slaves, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, spoke up. “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” he asked. Again Peter said, “No!”, and at once a rooster crowed.



Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Peter and His Promise



*Directions:* Unscramble the vocabulary words about Peter.

1. NYDE \_\_\_\_\_

2. CISDIPEL \_\_\_\_\_

3. YOHL SIIPRT \_\_\_\_\_

4. SSUJE \_\_\_\_\_

5. RAYM \_\_\_\_\_

6. APEEC \_\_\_\_\_

7. TEPRE \_\_\_\_\_

8. MORPSIE \_\_\_\_\_

9. SOOTERR \_\_\_\_\_

10. ASHEM \_\_\_\_\_

11. NSETO \_\_\_\_\_

12. RETEH METIS \_\_\_\_\_

13. BMTO \_\_\_\_\_

# Peter

## LESSON 3: FEEDING THE SHEEP

### Objective

Children will recognize that Jesus forgave Peter and gave him another chance to serve him.

### Key Concepts

- Jesus gave Peter another chance and asked him to take care of his people.
- God sent the Holy Spirit to be with the believers.
- The Holy Spirit lives in each of us and gives us strength and courage to follow God's ways.
- Jesus wants us to follow him and tell of our love for him.
- Jesus wants us to care for others, too.

**Texts:** John 21:1-19; Acts 2:14-42; Acts 3-4; Acts 5:17-41; Acts 10-12

**Estimated Lesson Time:** 45 minutes

### Materials

- Bible
- Readers' theaters: "A Lakeside Breakfast" (p. 251), "After Breakfast" (p. 252), "Arrested and Released" (pp. 253-254)
- *God Builds His Church* by Eve B. MacMaster
- Song, "Go Tell It on the Mountain" (old curriculum, p. 435, or copy from a hymnal or Christmas carol book) *OR* CD that includes the song
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: "The Man Who Could Not Yield" (pp. 255-256)
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: one set Hall of Faith cards per student
- For Extend the Lesson, option four: Bible memory journals, markers/crayons
- For Extend the Lesson, option five: Unit 9 Review (p. 257)

### Teacher Preparation

- Make copies of the readers' theaters, one for each reader/actor.
- Make a copy of the song "Go Tell It on the Mountain" for each student, *OR* find a CD that includes the song and sing along.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option five, make a copy of the unit review for each student.

### INTRODUCING THE LESSON

**Create a lakeside breakfast setting** for the readers' theaters "A Lakeside Breakfast" and "After Breakfast." Designate one area of the classroom as water and another as the seashore. Place a throw rug in the water (representing a boat) and blankets on the shore. Invite children who do not have a specific part to sit on the blankets scattered on the shore. Designate students to read parts. For "A Lakeside Breakfast" give each child a fish stick and piece of bread. Students can eat their food as volunteers act out the second play. Discuss what Jesus meant when he asked Peter to feed his sheep.

## LESSON STEPS

1. **Read “The Coming of the Holy Spirit”** from *God Builds His Church*.
2. **Review what happened at Pentecost.** This was an important time, because God sent the Holy Spirit that Jesus had promised to his followers.
3. **Read Acts 3:1-26.** Take questions from students as you read. Then assign parts for the readers’ theater “Arrested and Released” and have students read it.
4. **Read “Gamaliel’s Good Advice”** from *God Builds His Church*. Discuss the following questions:
  - Why did the religious leaders throw Peter and the other apostles in prison?
  - What was the angel’s message to Peter and the others?
  - When the apostles were asked by the high priest why they continued to teach, what was Peter’s answer?
  - What did the religious leaders want to do to Peter and the apostles?
  - Who had another idea? What was his idea?
5. **Sing “Go Tell It on the Mountain.”** Add verses with new endings to fit this story.

## EXTEND THE LESSON

*(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 45 minutes.)*

- **Read Peter’s sermon** from Acts 2:14-36. What gave Peter such courage to preach the good news?
- **Read “A Man Who Could Not Yield”** (pp. 255-256), the story of conscientious objector Maurice Hess. Talk about how Maurice’s story is similar to Peter’s.
- **Play a Hall of Faith game.** Give a set of Hall of Faith cards to each child. Read a statement about a character such as: “This hero wasn’t afraid to appear before King Xerxes in order to save the Jewish people.” Each child looks for the Hall of Faith card of that hero(ine) and holds it up. Check to see if the cards are correct. (Use several student helpers to make this go faster.) Note the number of correct responses by placing cards in a pile on the desk. Make sure students return the Hall of Faith cards to the appropriate storage area for use at a later date.
- **Bible memory journal.** Allow time for students to finish entering the memory passage in their journals. In what ways did Peter show love to others in today’s lesson?
- **Complete the Unit 9 review** from page 257. This may be used as an assessment.

# A Lakeside Breakfast

based on John 21:1-14

*Readers: Narrator, Jesus, Peter, John, and five other disciples*

**Narrator:** Afterward, Jesus appeared again to his disciples by the Sea of Tiberias. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.

**Peter:** I'm going out to fish.

**Disciples:** We'll go with you.

**Narrator:** So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was him. He called out to them:

**Jesus:** Friends, haven't you any fish?

**Disciples:** No.

**Jesus:** Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you'll find some.

**Narrator:** When they did this, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter:

**John:** It is the Lord!

**Narrator:** As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there, with fish on it and some bread. Jesus said to them:

**Jesus:** Bring some of the fish you have just caught.

**Narrator:** Simon Peter climbed aboard and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them:

**Jesus:** Come and have breakfast.

**Narrator:** None of the disciples dared asked him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

# After Breakfast

## based on John 21:15-19

*Readers: Jesus, Peter, Narrator*

**Narrator:** When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter:

**Jesus:** Simon, son of John, do you truly love me more than these?

**Peter:** Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

**Jesus:** Feed my lambs.

*(Pause)*

**Jesus:** Simon, son of John, do you truly love me?

**Peter:** Yes, Lord. You know that I love you.

**Jesus:** Take care of my sheep.

*(Pause)*

**Jesus:** Simon, son of John, do you love me?

**Narrator:** Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said:

**Peter:** Lord, you know all things. You know that I love you.

**Jesus:** Feed my sheep. I tell you the truth. When you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you are old you will stretch out your hands and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.

**Narrator:** Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him:

**Jesus:** Follow me!

# Arrested and Released

## based on Acts 4:1-21

*Readers: Two narrators, Annas, Caiaphas, John Alexander, two soldiers, Peter, John*

**Narrator 1:** While the apostles were still talking to the people, some priests, the captain of the temple guard, and some Sadducees arrived. They were angry, because the apostles were teaching the people that the dead would be raised to life, since Jesus had been raised from death. So they arrested Peter and John and put them in jail for the night, because it was already late in the afternoon. Many of those who had listened to the message believed, so that by that time there were about 5,000 men who were believers.

*(Four officials enter.)*

**Narrator 2:** The next morning, the leaders, the elders and the teachers of the Law of Moses met in Jerusalem. The high priest Annas was there, as well as Caiaphas, John, Alexander, and other members of the priestly family. They sent for Peter and John and made them stand in the middle while they questioned them.

*(Two soldiers bring in Peter and John. Soldiers step back and Annas, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander form a circle around Peter and John.)*

**Annas:** By what authority and by whose power have you done this?

**Narrator 2:** Then Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke to the leaders of the people and to the elders:

**Peter:** We are being questioned today about a kind deed in which a crippled man was healed. All of you, as well as everyone else in Israel, should know that this man stands completely well before you through the power of Jesus of Nazareth. You put Jesus to death on a cross, but God raised him from death. He is the stone which you builders thought was worthless, but which has now become the most important stone in the building. No one else can save us. He is the only one in all the world whom God has sent to save us.

**Narrator 2:** The officials saw how bold Peter and John were and they realized that they were ordinary men with little education. The officials were amazed and were certain that these men had been with Jesus. And they could not deny what had happened, since they had seen the man who had been healed.

**Narrator 1:** The officials then commanded them to leave the council room, while they said to one another:

**Caiaphas:** What shall we do with these men?

**John:** This miracle is well known to everybody in Jerusalem and we cannot say it didn't happen.

**Alexander:** But to keep this thing from spreading, we will have to warn them never again to speak to anyone in the name of Jesus.

**Narrator 1:** So they called the apostles back in and told them they must never again, for any reason, teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered:

**Peter, John:** Would God want us to obey you or to obey him? What do you think? We cannot keep silent about what we have seen or heard.

**Narrator 1:** So the officials threatened Peter and John and let them go, since they could find no reason to punish them. They did this because all the people were praising God for what had happened.

# A Man Who Could Not Yield

A new commander came to Fort Riley, Kansas. The news spread quickly through the stone barracks where the conscientious objectors stayed. Instantly the same thought flashed through the minds of the men: “What kind of commander will he be?”

Maurice Hess thought of the days they had only bread and water to eat, and of the times they were served sour potatoes. He thought of the long winter days at Camp Meade in unheated barracks. He thought, too, of one commander they had had who understood conscientious objectors. He understood that for them, working for the army in the camps at home was just as wrong as shooting the enemy in France. That commander had not asked the COs to wear uniforms or cook for the soldiers or work in the office. Maurice was grateful.

An officer once told him, “Maurice, the man who is running a typewriter for the army is in the war as much as the man who is running a machine gun.”

Maurice and his 149 friends who were living at Fort Riley during World War I didn’t need to wonder long about what kind of treatment they would get from the new commander. Soon the order came: “Today the men in the stone barracks will police the parade grounds.”

The COs didn’t know what the new commander would do if they didn’t obey. But they refused, as they had each time before, and waited for the commander’s answer.

“Search every man,” ordered the new commander. “Take everything from him and throw him in the guard house.”

Forty-one men were crowded into a dirty little cell that was only large enough for 22. There were no windows, and all the air and light there was came from the corridor above. Every day, the concrete floor was flooded with water and, at night, the men had to sleep on it—still damp. Within a week, many of them were sick with influenza. The days passed slowly in the crowded cell, and the prisoners received their greatest comfort from reading their Bibles.

For several weeks, the men endured the miserable conditions of the guard-house. Then, one day, a truck backed up to the building and took a load of them down the road to Camp Funston. Day after day, the truck returned for more, until it was Maurice’s turn. He and his friends were going to be tried in court because they could not do what the Bible and their consciences told them was wrong.

The truck entered the west gate of the camp and stopped in front of the trial barracks. When Maurice was ushered into the courtroom he found that all members of the jury and all the court attendants were military officers. False witnesses were ready to testify against him.

When his turn came, Maurice stood before the court. Turning to the officers, he spoke clearly and firmly:

“I am a young man and life looks good to me. I want to go out into the world and make use of what little talent I have.

“But I know that first of all, I must obey God. I know the teachings of Christ, my Savior. He taught us to love our enemies . . . He didn’t only teach this; Jesus showed that he loved his enemies when he died on the cross.

“We say that we are Christians. Only hypocrites would turn back because of taunts and jeers. I would rather go to prison or be tortured or put to death than take part in the war. We cannot yield or compromise; we must suffer.”

The room was still when Maurice paused. He continued, “Two hundred years ago, our people were persecuted in Germany. They came to America, where our Constitution says all may worship and obey God as the Bible teaches.

“If the authorities think this should be changed, then all we can do is endure persecution. I do not refuse to suffer or die. I pray God for strength to remain faithful.”

Maurice had made his defense and could only wait for the court to decide. Anxious moments followed, but the testimonies of Maurice and his friends seemed of no use. The COs were sentenced to 25 years at Fort Leavenworth Prison.

A heavy guard took the sober group of fellows to the military prison. There was no laughter or talking—only serious thoughts about what was waiting for them. Stories that had leaked out about Fort Leavenworth had always been dreadful.

On their arrival, the men were searched, and after a few days of prison routine were assigned to prison work. Once again Maurice refused, because as his friend said, “The work of the military prison is all military work, and this institution is used to discipline disobedient soldiers. If I could accept the work in this prison, I could have accepted the work of the army.”

Immediately they were taken to solitary confinement, where they received only bread and water for 14 days. The following two weeks they received full meals, then the diet was bread and water for 14 days. That’s the way it alternated. Maurice learned to pick out the crusts of bread and chew them well. He didn’t even throw away a third-hand turkey leg, because by long sucking he could taste a little fat.

For nine hours a day he stood by the gate of his cell, handcuffed to the iron bars. At nighttime there was only the cold concrete floor for a bed. The days were long and tiring. Night brought little rest.

One day, a colonel from Washington visited the “Hole,” as it was called, and hearing the pleas of the boys, ordered their Bibles returned. Then, during the long hours while he was chained to the bars, Maurice read the familiar passages that brought him comfort and peace.

After the war was over, 109 conscientious objectors were released from Fort Leavenworth. Among them was Maurice Hess. He left the prison for his home on January 27, 1919. Not long afterward, he was asked to teach in a Brethren college, and for years he helped the young people of his church. He wrote this to youth: “It is my hope and prayer that all of you will learn how many Christians suffered because they obeyed God. May the lives of all those who have died for Christ give you strength for the tests that will come to you.”

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Unit 9 Review—Peter

*Directions:* Fill in the blanks with the following words.

Jesus	Peter	Judas	Moses	Elijah	Andrew
slept	water	men	cloth	teach	

1. Jesus called Simon Peter and his brother \_\_\_\_\_ to be fishers of \_\_\_\_\_. They followed immediately.
2. Peter trusted Jesus enough to step out of the boat and walk on \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Peter saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain. He also saw Jesus talking to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
4. While Jesus prayed in the garden, his disciples \_\_\_\_\_. Then \_\_\_\_\_ appeared and betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
5. When \_\_\_\_\_ was questioned about Jesus, three times he denied knowing him.
6. When Peter went to the tomb he found only the folded strips of \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus was gone.
7. When the disciples were fishing and catching nothing, \_\_\_\_\_ told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. The nets were filled!
8. When Jesus told Peter to “feed my sheep,” he meant that Peter should \_\_\_\_\_ people about Jesus Christ.

*Directions:* Write the answer. Use the back of the paper if you need more space.

9. On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, describe what they saw and heard.
10. About how many people believed and were baptized on the day of Pentecost?

## Unit 9 Review Answer Key:

1. Jesus called Simon Peter and his brother Andrew to be fishers of men. They followed immediately.
2. Peter trusted Jesus enough to step out of the boat and walk on water.
3. Peter saw Jesus transfigured on the mountain. He also saw Jesus talking to Moses and Elijah.
4. While Jesus prayed in the garden, his disciples slept. Then Judas appeared and betrayed Jesus with a kiss.
5. When Peter was questioned about Jesus, three times he denied knowing him.
6. When Peter went to the tomb he found only the folded strips of cloth. Jesus was gone.
7. When the disciples were fishing and catching nothing, Jesus told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. The nets were filled!
8. When Jesus told Peter to “feed my sheep,” he meant that Peter should teach people about Jesus Christ.
9. On the day of Pentecost, when the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit, describe what they saw and heard. *The disciples heard a violent wind and saw tongues of fire resting on each person.*
10. About how many people believed and were baptized on the day of Pentecost?  
*3,000*