

Finding Forgiveness

STEP 1 **Life Need** (5–10 minutes)

- Roleplay situations involving betrayal.
 - “Betrayal” Teaching Aid
 - Scissors

STEP 2 **Bible Learning** (15–20 minutes)

- **Bible Study:** Discuss Peter’s denial and what he discovered about Jesus’ love.
 - Bible Adventures* pp. 2–3
 - Bibles
 - “Jesus’ Victory” and “Heroes-of-the-Bible—Peter” Teaching Aids
 - Butcher paper
- **Bible Review:** Talk about the ways God helped other Bible characters who failed Him.

STEP 3 **Bible Application** (5–10 minutes)

- Complete a maze to match situations with promises of God’s help in overcoming failures.
 - Bible Adventures* p. 1
 - Bibles
 - Pencils

STEP 4 **Life Response** (about 5 minutes)

- **Memory Work:** Complete a prayer that asks for God’s help in overcoming discouragement and failure.
 - Bible Adventures* p. 4
 - Pencils
- **Optional Activity:** Prayer journal assignment

Memory Verse

I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.
—Isaiah 41:10

Bible Basis:

Peter repents his denial and discovers that the risen Jesus still loves him and has work for him to do (Matthew 26:23-25, 31-35, 57-75; John 21:15-17).

Bible Truth:

Jesus’ love continues even when we doubt or fail Him.

Lesson Aim:

That your students will know that Jesus can help them overcome failure and discouragement.

Understanding the Bible

In our lesson this week, we see the risen Lord forgiving Peter for his denial.

When Peter repented his denial, he discovered how much the risen Lord loved him. Earlier, Peter had boasted loudly of his loyalty to Jesus while overestimating his own strength to fight spiritual battles. Christ’s response to Peter’s assertions foreshadows the actual event: “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers” (Luke 22:31-32).

Peter did not have to wait long for Jesus’ prediction to be fulfilled. After Jesus’ arrest, Peter followed behind the crowd to the courtyard of the high priest’s house. Peter’s resolve began to weaken when a servant girl recognized him as a follower of Jesus. When he moved to the gateway, he was accused again. With an oath, Peter denied knowing Jesus. This oath was not cursing or swearing as in profanity, but a curse on Peter if what he was saying was not true. A little later, Peter’s accent gave him away and he was accused for a third time. Then the rooster crowed and Peter recalled Jesus’ prediction. Luke records that Jesus was taken out through the courtyard and that He looked at Peter (Luke 22:61)—and

—continued on next page

indicates items you will need to prepare before class

Understanding the Bible —cont'd

Peter wept bitterly at the realization of his denial.

About two weeks after the Resurrection, the disciples and Jesus had breakfast together on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. There Jesus gave Peter the opportunity to reaffirm his love. Jesus indicated that He still loved Peter and was not going to cast him aside.

Jesus asked Peter three times, “Do you love Me?” and Peter answered, “Yes, Lord, You know that I love you”—three times. Even as Peter had previously denied the Lord three times, now the apostle declared his love. From this point on we see a marked change in Peter’s life. With a renewed love for the Lord, Peter would go on to face greater challenges.

TIPS

Classroom

Here are some suggestions for using the roleplays during Life Need.

- Listen carefully to the endings students make up for the situations. If students give totally unsuitable responses, you may say something like this: “Well, that’s one possible ending. What might be another response?”
- These roleplays can give you insights into how your students feel about tensions and experiences they actually face. Take advantage of what you learn to help you teach and pray more specifically regarding your students’ needs.
- These roleplays may make your students a bit uncomfortable, especially if the situations hit a vulnerable spot. To hide their discomfort, upper-elementary students often giggle or cut up. Be prepared for this kind of behavior, and be patient with your students.

Understanding Your Students

It cannot be overstated: for most upper-elementary students, the top priority is being popular with their peers. Sometimes the desire to win the approval of their peers overrules their desire to please adults or do what is right. As a result, your students experience conflict when pressured to do wrong or hurt others in order to fit in with

the crowd. Students can greatly benefit from the roleplays this week in the “Betrayal” Teaching Aid. These roleplays will give students practice in handling these tensions more effectively.

PRESSION ACTIVITIES

Choose from these activities to do as students arrive.

■ Before class, write the words “I feel like a failure when . . .” on the board. Students may complete the sentence with funny or serious incidents.

□ whiteboard, markers

■ Students can act out humorous sketches about what might have happened if famous inventors or explorers gave up. (For example, discoverer Matthew Henson staying at home because the North Pole was too cold; Garrett Morgan deciding to stick with stop signs instead of improving traffic signals.) Talk about how failure, or fear of failure, can make a person feel like quitting. You may need to research and come up with a list of inventors and explorers.

■ For Worship Time: Use the DisKit CD from *Upper Elementary Creative Teaching Aids*.

□ DisKit CD, CD player

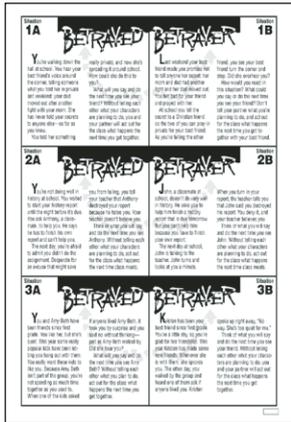


STEP 1

Life Need
(5–10 minutes)

Lesson Aim:

That your students will know that Jesus can help them overcome failure and discouragement.



Objective: That your students will identify with feelings of betrayal through roleplays.

Materials:

- “Betrayal” Teaching Aid
- Scissors

Your students can be exceedingly hard on themselves at times. Today’s lesson, from Matthew 26 and John 21, shows students that Jesus can help them overcome failure and discouragement, the way He did for Peter.

To begin this lesson, you’ll use the roleplay cards from the Creative Teaching Aid packet, “Betrayal.” Make photocopies of this reproducible sheet and separate the cards before class. (You’ll use the other side in Lesson 11). Look over the three situations on the cards, and choose the one you think is best suited for your students. Then ask for two volunteers to participate in the roleplay. (If you have time, you may want to present more than one roleplay.)

Give students a few minutes to think how their characters might act at the next meeting with the other persons involved in the betrayal. Remind them not to let each other know what their planned responses will be. They will need to respond to each other’s actions, but each should stick with his or her original plan.

When it’s time for partners to act out their roleplays, you could instruct the audience as follows: **We’re going to see how two people react to a situation of betrayal. One person is playing the part of someone who has been betrayed; the other takes the part of the betrayer. As you watch, think of how you’d feel or what you would do in a similar situation.**

Before the roleplay, briefly summarize the situation on the card; then let the students perform their roleplay with the endings they created. **It hurts to be betrayed, and it’s usually not fun to betray a friend either.**

▶ What were some of the feelings expressed in the roleplays? (Answers will vary depending on the endings students chose.)

One thing about a betrayal, if there’s no repentance or forgiveness, the problem usually goes from bad to worse. In today’s Bible study, we are going to see what Jesus did when Peter denied he knew Jesus. Peter’s denial of Jesus was somewhat like a betrayal.



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STEP 2 ▶

Bible Learning
(15–20 minutes)

Bible Basis:

Peter repents his denial and discovers that the risen Jesus still loves him and has work for him to do (Matthew 26:23-25, 31-35, 57-75; John 21:15-17).



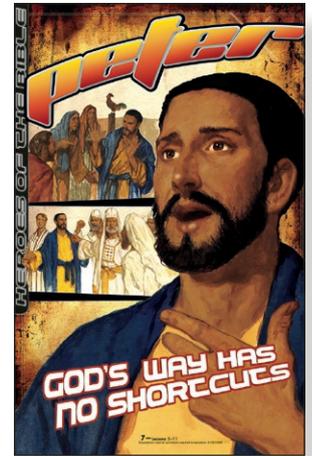
Objective: That your students will understand the constancy of Jesus' love and forgiveness in all situations.

Materials:

- Bible Adventures pp. 2–3
- Bibles
- “Jesus’ Victory” Teaching Aid
- “Heroes-of-the-Bible—Peter” Teaching Aid
- Butcher paper

Set the scene for today’s Bible study by looking at the “Jesus’ Victory” Teaching Aid. Briefly point out the events of Thursday and Friday. Then display and point out the “Heroes-of-the-Bible—Peter” poster. As a class, create a list on butcher paper, with everything they know about Peter. Save the list to use in Lesson 7. Mention that many lessons this quarter will study Peter.

This week’s story really starts before Jesus’ resurrection. Even though Peter shared the joy of the other disciples about Jesus’ resurrection, part of him was still very sad. He had a very bitter memory of denying Jesus.



Bible Study

Ask students to find Mathew 26, Luke 22, and John 21 in their Bibles. Have them bookmark Luke 22 and John 21 to use later in the lesson. Give your students a copy of Bible Adventures and have them open it to pages 2 and 3. Choose a volunteer to read the opening paragraph from Bible Adventures. Ask another student to read Matthew 26:23-25 aloud.

▶ **How did Jesus identify His betrayer?** (He said the one who dipped his hand into the bowl with Him would betray Him. Also, when Judas asked directly if he were the one who would betray Jesus, Jesus said yes.)

Have volunteers read the transition, then Matthew 26:31-35 from the Bible.

▶ **What did Jesus say would happen?** (All the disciples would leave Him.)

▶ **How did Peter answer?** (Peter said even if everyone else left, he would stay.)

▶ **What did Jesus say Peter would do before the rooster crowed in the morning?** (Say he didn’t know Jesus; disown Jesus.)

Ask a student read the next paragraph, then choose a volunteer to read the Scripture Spotlight aloud.

▶ **Why do you think Peter was here?**

(Perhaps he was running away; he didn’t know what else to do; he wanted to know what happened to Jesus or be near Him.)

BIBLE STUDY BASED ON MATTHEW 26:23-25, 31-35, 57-75; JOHN 21:15-17

BEFORE AND AFTER

“Peter told John, who was next to Jesus, to ask Jesus who it was. But all this was done privately. See John 13:21-30 for the details.”

At supper the night before He died, Jesus said that one of the disciples would betray Him. When Peter heard this, he wanted to know who it would be.¹

Read Matthew 26:23-25. How did Jesus identify His betrayer?

After the supper they all went to the Mount of Olives.²

Read Matthew 26:31-35. What did Jesus say would happen? How did Peter answer? What did Jesus say Peter would do before the rooster crowed³ in the morning?

Judas came with a large crowd carrying swords and clubs. He kissed Jesus as a signal to the group. They arrested Jesus and took Him to the high priest, and all the disciples deserted Him. But Peter followed—at a distance.

Now Peter was sitting out in the courtyard, and a servant girl came to him. “You also were with Jesus of Galilee,” she said.

Scripture Spotlight
Matthew 26:69-74

¹“Roosters in telling ‘cock crow’ time pe before

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But he denied it before them all. "I don't know what you're talking about," he said.

Why do you think Peter was here? Do you think this was dangerous for Peter? Why or why not?

Then he went out to the gateway, where another servant girl saw him and said to the people there, "This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth."

He denied it again, with an oath: "I don't know the man!"

After a little while, those standing there went up to Peter and said, "Surely you are one of them; your accent gives you away."

Then he began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know the man!" Immediately a rooster crowed.

Read Luke 22:60-61. What do you think went through Peter's mind as Jesus looked at him?

Peter remembered what Jesus said. He went outside and cried.

Read John 21:15-17. Why did Jesus ask Peter if he loved Him? How do you think Peter felt? What did Jesus want Peter to do?

*Peter spoke with a Galilean accent that people from Jerusalem would notice right away.

Howdy y'all

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▶ **Do you think this was dangerous for Peter? Why or why not?** (*Peter could have been arrested or questioned because he was nearby and people had seen him with Jesus.*)

Ask another student to read the next Scripture Spotlight.

▶ **How did Peter answer the people who were asking if he was with Jesus?** (*He swore he did not know Jesus.*)

▶ **Why do you think he said he didn't know Jesus?** (*Peter was afraid.*)

Have a student read aloud Luke 22:60-61 in their Bible while the other students follow along.

▶ **What do you think went through Peter's mind as Jesus looked at him?** (*Peter probably felt terrible about denying Jesus and remembered Jesus had predicted he'd do it.*)

Read the next transitional sentence, then have a student read John 21:15-17 from their Bible.

▶ **Why did Jesus ask Peter if he loved Him?** (*Jesus was giving Peter a chance to reaffirm his love. Jesus may have been confirming His forgiveness.*)

- ▶ **How do you think Peter felt?** (*Perhaps he was hurt that Jesus had to ask him.*)
- ▶ **What did Jesus want Peter to do?** (*Take care of Jesus' people, those who believed in Him. By asking Peter if he loved Jesus, Jesus was restoring the broken relationship. Peter had failed Jesus, but Jesus forgave him and loved him, and Peter went on to help lead the Church.*)
- ▶ **Why do you think this story is in the Bible?** (*It shows us even Peter failed Jesus. God wants us to know He loves us even when we fail and He can still use us.*)

Bible Review

- ▶ **How can failure sometimes make a person stronger?** (*Sometimes our relationship with the Lord is stronger as we are more aware of how much He has forgiven us. We learn and grow from our mistakes. Also, we learn to depend more on God's help rather than on our own strength.*)

Peter isn't the only one in the Bible who let God down. Moses was told to speak to a rock to get water, but he hit the rock instead. Abraham lied and told kings that Sarah, his wife, was his sister. Thomas doubted Jesus had been raised from the dead. All of these people failed God, but each of them was forgiven. They grew in faith, and God used them to do great things for Him. If time permits, have students look up and read these stories: Numbers 20:8-12, Genesis 22:1-18, and John 20:24-29.

STEP 3 ▶

Bible Application
(5–10 minutes)

Objective: That your students will apply God’s promises for overcoming discouragement and failure to specific situations.

Materials:

- Bible Adventures p. 1
- Bibles
- Pencils

All of us struggle with living up to what God expects. Sometimes we fail God by doing the very thing we know He doesn’t want us to do such as hating, lying, cheating, even stealing.

- ▶ **What are other ways we might feel we’ve disappointed God?** *(Sometimes we fail God by not doing what we ought to do such as not having the courage to defend Christ when someone is mocking Christianity.)*

When we fail, we need to repent and receive God’s forgiveness. But how can we overcome feelings of failure and discouragement that linger even after we’ve been forgiven? Have your students turn to page 1 in *Bible Adventures*. Have a volunteer read the instructions at the top of the page. Give students a few minutes to fill in the Scripture promises at the bottom of the page and to finish the maze.

The promise in Philippians 4:13—Christ gives me strength; for 1 John 1:9—God is faithful in forgiving me; and in Hebrews 13:5-6—Because God is with me, I don’t have to be afraid.

For the first situation about being afraid, students should have traced the maze path to the promise in Hebrews 13:5-6.

- ▶ **How can this promise help you the next time something scary happens?** *(You can know that God is with you. You can ask God to build your confidence and trust in Him during scary situations.)*

For the second situation about feeling inadequate, the maze path goes to the promise in Philippians 4:13.

- ▶ **How could this promise help you when you’re facing a new situation?** *(You can ask Christ to give you strength and courage.)*

For the third situation about sinning, students should have traced the maze path to 1 John 1:9.

- ▶ **How can this promise keep you from feeling discouraged when you sin?** *(When you confess your sins, God will always forgive you.)*

- ▶ **We depend on God to help us in any situation. What else helps us overcome failure?** *(Let students offer any ideas they have such as praying, Bible reading, attending church and Sunday school.)*

It’s encouraging to know that God is always there to help us, even when we’ve really let Him down.

