



# Early Childhood DEVOTIONS



FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

## LIFE TOGETHER

FOCUS: GOD ACTS AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

*"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock" (Is. 26:4).*

## Peter's Miraculous Escape from Prison

BIBLE STORY: ACTS 12:1-17



### BEFORE YOU TEACH

God acts at the right time, stepping into our lives just as He did with Moses, Joseph, Esther and others. The most significant of those real-time rescue events was the death and resurrection of Jesus. God culminated His salvation work at the cross, but He continues to work among us, rescuing and working through us to rescue others.

We are not always aware of God's activity, even when it is right in front of us. This month's narrative makes that clear. Although God's people gathered and were praying for God's intervention, it doesn't seem that they were expecting it. Let's keep our expectations high and all our senses at the ready when we pray. The God who surprised the universe with the resurrection of His Son is still a God of surprise and delight.

### Greeting

Welcome each child by name into the classroom every day.

### Gathering

Gather children in or around the classroom worship center using a familiar song, chant or signal.

### Tell the Story

Lead children in dramatizing God's rescue of Peter as indicated.

A short time after Jesus had returned to heaven, King Herod arrested Peter, the disciple of Jesus, and put him in prison. Peter was chained (*cross wrist over wrist*) and guarded by 16 soldiers (*salute*)! While Peter was in prison, other followers of Jesus prayed and prayed (*fold hands in prayer*) for him. On the night before Peter was to go to trial, he was sleeping (*sleeping action*) between two soldiers and was wrapped with heavy chains (*cross wrist over wrist*). More soldiers (*salute*) guarded the entrance of the prison. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared and a bright light shone (*shield eyes*) in the prison cell. The angel woke Peter up, saying, "Quick! Get up!" As the angel said this, the chains fell off (*dramatically separate wrist over wrist*) of Peter's wrists. Then the angel said to him, "Put on your clothes and sandals (*dressing action*), and follow me."

Peter did as he was told, following (*alternately pat hands on knees*) the angel out of the prison. Peter thought he was dreaming (*rub eyes*) as they passed the guards and walked,

**Note:** Throughout the year, you will need the songbooks *Little Ones Sing Praise and Songs of God's Love*, both available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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walked, walked (*alternately pat hands on knees*) through the gate to the city as it opened for them. Then the angel left Peter as he walked, walked, walked (*alternately pat hands on knees*) down the street. When Peter realized he wasn't dreaming (*rub eyes*), he said, "Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent His angel and rescued me at just the right time."

Peter then walked, walked, walked (*alternately pat hands on knees*) to the house where the followers of Jesus were praying for him. Peter knocked, knocked, knocked (*knocking action*) on the door, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer. When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so happy she ran (*rapidly pat hands*) to tell the others, forgetting to unlock and open the door for him. "Peter is at the door! Peter is at the door!" she shouted to the others. "You're out of your mind," the people told her. When Rhoda kept insisting it was Peter, they said, "It must be his angel."

Meanwhile, still standing outside the locked door, Peter knocked, knocked, knocked (*knocking action*). Finally opening the door, the followers of Jesus saw that it was Peter, and they were astonished (*show surprise*)! Motioning for them to be quiet (*finger on lips*), Peter then told about how the Lord had brought him out of prison at just the right time! The people of God prayed for God's rescue of Peter. God rescued Peter, and God's people were surprised! God hears our prayers too. At just the right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us and all people. We, too, are surprised (*show surprise*) by His great love!

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Dear Jesus,  
You came to earth to rescue me  
From sin and death You set me free.  
Surprised by grace and Your great care  
For me and people everywhere.  
Send me to tell of Your great love  
Sent to us all from heav'n above. Amen.



## Remember the Story

### BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

**Pre-K & K:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God" (EPH. 2:8).

**Grades 1 & 2:** "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast" (EPH. 2:8-9).

## Activities

### CREATE AND DO: Make a summer memories book.

You will need: multiple brown paper lunch bags, multiple 5-by-8-inch paper "diary" cards for each child, and heavy yarn.



**Directions:** Create book pages by punching two holes on the bottom of each bag. Design one bag as the cover, titled "Summer Delights" and imprinted with Zeph. 3:17 (*see "Sending"*). Children decorate the cover bag. Design and duplicate "diary cards," each with a date line on the upper left and a simple "summer" drawing on the upper right. Add lines on which children/families can write. Adhere a diary card to each bag "page." Bind the bags together with yarn to create a book. Instruct families to record summer adventures on the diary cards, inserting corresponding photos or objects that highlight their activities into the pages.

**SING:** "I'm With You" (LOSP, P. 32).

## Live the Story

Re-energize! Set aside time this summer to read the recently published book *Vocation and Wellness* by Dr. John D. Eckrich, the founder of Grace Place Wellness Ministries. This much-needed resource, written by a Christian physician, is designed specifically for professional church workers to help identify and replace energy-depleting patterns with a proven prescription for re-energizing health and wellness in body, mind and soul. Available from amazon.com.

## Sending

Assure children of God's presence and unending love. Say, God saved Peter at just the right time. **God sent Jesus to save us at just the right time. God acts at just the right time, according to His will.**

Speak this blessing, first spoken by the prophet Zephaniah: **"The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing"** (ZEPH. 3:17).

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