

Peter the Apostle

Lesson
37

Purpose To help the children understand that they, like Peter, can develop a stronger testimony of Jesus Christ.

Preparation

1. Prayerfully study Matthew 4:18–19; 14:22–33; 16:13–17; 17:1–9; Luke 22:31–34, 54–62; Acts 3:1–9; 4:6–20; 5:12–42; and Alma 32:21. Then study the lesson and decide how you want to teach the children the scripture account. (See “Preparing Your Lessons,” p. vi, and “Teaching from the Scriptures,” p. vii.)
2. Select the discussion questions and enrichment activities that will involve the children and best help them achieve the purpose of the lesson.
3. Materials needed: A Bible or a New Testament for each child.

Suggested Lesson Development

Development Invite a child to give the opening prayer.

Attention Activity Ask the children to listen as you tell them the following stories.

Story 1: When Jesus explained that he would soon be put to death, a man said, “I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death” (Luke 22:33). This same man followed in the crowd when Jesus was arrested and taken to a trial. A woman approached and said that this man had been with Jesus, but the man denied it, saying, “I know him not.” Soon afterward another person said, “Thou art also of them.” Again the man denied knowing Jesus. A third time someone pointed him out as one of Jesus’ followers, but the man said once again, “I know not what thou sayest.” (See Luke 22:54–62.)

Story 2: One day a man and his friend were stopped by a man who had been born lame. The man said to the lame man, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” He took the lame man’s hand and lifted him up. The lame man was immediately healed and went into the temple “walking, and leaping, and praising God.” When the chief priests heard about this, they asked by what power the lame man had been healed. The man who had healed the lame man said it was by the power of Jesus Christ, even though he knew that he could be put in jail or killed for saying this. The priests commanded the man not to teach again in the name of Jesus Christ. But he replied that it is more important to obey God than to obey the false Jewish priests and that he would continue teaching in the name of Christ. (See Acts 3:1–9; 4:6–20.)

Explain that the man in both stories was Peter. When Peter denied knowing Jesus just before the Crucifixion, he was still learning and growing. Jesus had been arrested, and Peter was frightened. By the time Peter healed the lame man, he had received the Holy Ghost and had a stronger testimony of Jesus Christ. This gave him the strength to do what was right no matter what might happen to him.

- What is a testimony? (Personal knowledge of Jesus Christ and the truthfulness of his church.) Explain that this lesson can help strengthen the children's testimonies of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Accounts
and Discussion
and Application
Questions

Teach the children the following accounts about Peter and discuss each one. Study the following questions and the scripture references as you prepare your lesson. Use the questions you feel will best help the children understand the scriptures and apply the principles in their lives. Reading the references with the children in class will help them gain insights into the scriptures.

1. Peter followed Jesus (Matthew 4:18–19; note footnote *a* for verse 19 in the LDS edition of the Bible).
 - Why do you think Peter followed Jesus Christ after Jesus told him who He was? What did Peter have to sacrifice in order to follow Jesus? What do we have to sacrifice to follow Jesus? How have you been blessed for following the Savior?

2. Jesus and Peter walked on the water (Matthew 14:22–33).

- Why do you think Jesus was able to walk on the sea? (Matthew 14:25.) Why was Peter able to walk out to meet Jesus? (Matthew 14:28–29.)
- What happened to Peter after he took a few steps? (Matthew 14:30–31.) Why do you think Peter's faith wavered? How did Jesus help Peter when his faith wavered? (Matthew 14:31.) Why is our faith sometimes weak? How does Jesus Christ help strengthen our faith? (Through the Holy Ghost, our parents, Church leaders, good friends, the scriptures, and so on.)

Help the children understand that every time we do something that Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ have commanded us to do, we are exercising faith. And each time we exercise faith, our faith will get a little stronger. We, like Peter, must use our faith to follow Jesus' teachings, and then our faith will help strengthen our testimonies.

3. Peter testified that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Matthew 16:13–17).
 - Who did Peter say Jesus Christ was? (Matthew 16:16.) How did Peter know this? (Matthew 16:17. Through the Spirit.) How can we, like Peter, express our testimonies of Jesus Christ?
4. Peter was with Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1–9; see "Summary Discussion and Application Questions" in lesson 15, p. 51).
 - What happened to Jesus Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration? (Matthew 17:2.) Who appeared to Jesus and Peter, James, and John? (Matthew 17:3.) Whose voice did the disciples hear? (Matthew 17:5.) Why do you think this experience would have strengthened Peter's testimony of Jesus Christ?
5. Peter and John healed a lame man and were cast into prison (Acts 3:1–9; 4:6–20; 5:12–42).

Have a child review the story of Peter and John healing the lame man. Tell the rest of the story from Acts 5:12–42.

- How did Peter and John escape from prison? (Acts 5:19.) What did the angel tell them to do? (Acts 5:20.) How would you feel about going back to preach after being imprisoned for doing so? How do you think Peter and John received the strength to do what was right?

Help the children understand that we might never be imprisoned for teaching about Jesus Christ, but we will be tried in other ways. How might you be tried in your life because of your testimony of Jesus Christ? (See enrichment activity 4.)

- How did Peter's testimony of Jesus Christ grow? Why do we need a strong testimony of Jesus Christ? How can we get this testimony? How can we help our testimonies grow? (Read the scriptures, learn more of him, keep the commandments, pray, listen to the Holy Ghost, attend church, and so on.)

Enrichment Activities

You may use one or more of the following activities any time during the lesson or as a review, summary, or challenge.

1. Help the children understand that a testimony includes knowing the following:

Heavenly Father lives and is the Father of our spirits.

Jesus Christ is Heavenly Father's Son and our Savior.

Joseph Smith is the prophet through whom the Lord restored the gospel in the latter days.

The Book of Mormon is the word of God and contains the fulness of the gospel.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is the only true church.

We are led by prophets and Apostles today.

Discuss ways we can gain a testimony of these truths.

2. Explain and help the children memorize the ninth article of faith.
3. Have the children think of experiences Peter had with the Savior that increased his testimony of Jesus Christ. (Feeding the 5,000, healing the sick, raising Jairus's daughter from the dead, and so on.) How can we know for ourselves that Jesus Christ is the Son of God? (By studying the scriptures, praying, obeying the commandments, and so on.)
4. Have the children name some ways other people might try to get them to deny the Church or do something wrong. Then discuss how they can be strong enough to resist such temptations. Use the following examples, if necessary:
 - Someone tries to get them to not attend Church meetings.
 - Someone tries to get them to break the Word of Wisdom.
 - Someone tries to get them to lie.
 - Someone tries to get them to spend their tithing money.

Emphasize that we must gain a personal testimony of Jesus Christ to be strong like Peter.

5. Tell the following story about what happened to President Joseph F. Smith, sixth President of the Church, when he was a young man returning home from his mission:

“One day after Joseph F. Smith and his companions had traveled a short distance and made their camp, a company of drunken men rode into the camp on horseback, cursing and swearing and threatening to kill any Mormons that came within their path. Some of Joseph’s companions had gone down by the creek and out of sight when they heard the men coming. They waited there for this band of men to pass. Joseph F. Smith was a little distance from the camp, gathering wood for the fire as these men rode up. When he saw them, he said his first thought was to find someplace to hide. Then the thought came to him, ‘Why should I run from these fellows?’ With that thought in mind he boldly marched up to the campfire with his arms full of wood. One of the men pointed his gun at the young elder and demanded in a loud, angry voice, ‘Are you a “Mormon”?’

“Joseph F. Smith did not hesitate for a moment. He looked the man in the eye and answered, ‘Yes, siree; dyed in the wool; true blue, through and through.’

“He answered without any sign of fear and completely surprised the man. The man grasped Joseph F. Smith by the hand and said: ‘Well, you are the pleasantest man I ever met! Shake, young fellow, I am glad to see a man that stands up for his convictions’ ” (Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Life of Joseph F. Smith*, pp. 188–89).

6. Help the children memorize Acts 5:29.
7. Sing or read the words to “Testimony” (*Hymns*, no. 137), verses 1 and 2.

Conclusion

Testimony	Bear your testimony of Jesus Christ, and testify that as we learn more about Jesus and listen to the witness of the Holy Ghost, our testimonies of Jesus will continue to grow throughout our lives. Explain that we may still have doubts and questions, but as we continue to study the scriptures, pray, and obey the commandments, our testimonies will become stronger.
Suggested Home Reading	Suggest that the children study Matthew 16:13–17 and Acts 5:29–32 at home as a review of this lesson. Invite a child to give the closing prayer.