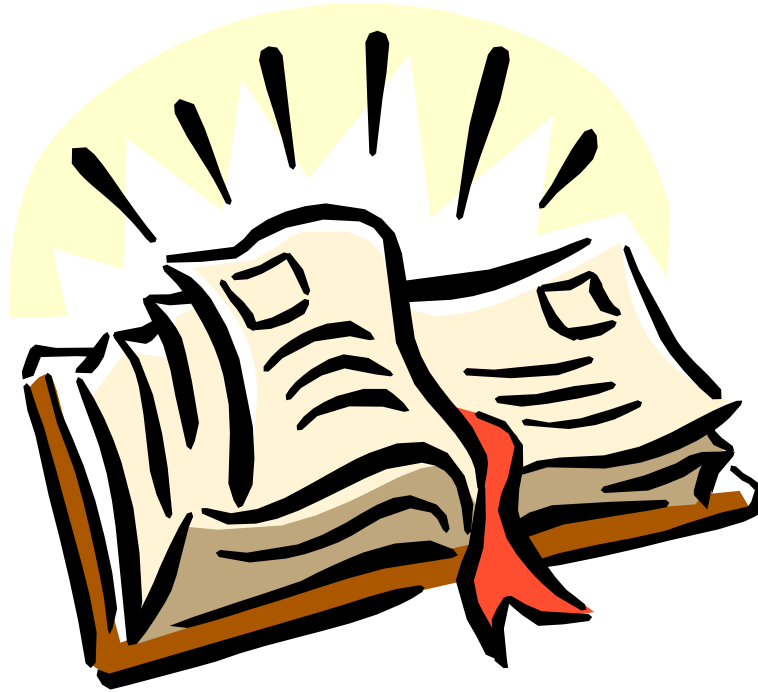


Bible Time for Kids!



CHILDREN'S DEVOTIONS FOR THE WEEK OF:



**LESSON TITLE: Peter is Released from
Prison**

**THEME: When we are persecuted we must
pray.**

SCRIPTURE: Acts 12:1-19

Dear Parents...

Welcome to Bible Time for Kids! This is a series of daily devotions for children and their families. Our purpose is to supplement our Sunday morning curriculum and give you an opportunity to encourage your children to develop a daily devotional life. We hope you and your family will be blessed as you study God's Word together.

This week we learned about the time when Peter is Released from Prison. The theme was "When we are persecuted, we must pray." The disciples in the early church went through a lot of persecution for believing in Jesus. They were often beaten, put in prison or even killed for Jesus. Many times in the book of Acts we see how that God intervened and helped His people in the midst of great persecution.

Sometimes we may be persecuted because we believe in Jesus. But we need to remember to always trust in Him no matter what and to always go to Him in prayer. We will find the help that we need when we pray. Maybe we are afraid that someone will laugh at us or call us names if we share about Jesus. We need to just trust in the Lord to take care of all of those things.

The section of scripture that we studied was **Acts 12:1-19**. The following five devotions are based on either the scripture and/or the theme for Sunday's lesson. As a starting point it would be good for you to review these verses with your children.

These devotions are designed to help you reinforce Sunday's lesson throughout the week with your children, provide some more ideas for the application of God's Word in your children's lives and provide a tool to help in family devotions.

Obviously children at various age levels will respond to the devotional in different ways. You may want to add your own ideas to these to make them more age appropriate.

May the Lord bless you as you study His Word together!

Prayer Breaks Chains

Text: Acts 12:5 – “Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.”

Also read Acts 12:1-9; also Psalm 43

Whenever we are going through a difficult time we need to always remember that God loves us and wants us to draw close to Him. Sometimes others may laugh at us or make fun of us because we believe in Jesus. Thankfully we live in a country that does not send us to jail for believing in Jesus. The early Christians knew what it was like to suffer for their belief in Jesus. But what is very interesting is what they did when the suffering began. They spent many hours on their knees before God. It does not seem like we do that very often today. God wants us to bring our problems to Him. Many times what seems impossible to us is just a miracle of God's, waiting for a faithful Christian to just ask.

Today we take a look at Peter. He was waiting to be executed by the Roman government because he was one of the leaders of the early Christian church. The situation seemed impossible. The Roman guards are chained to Peter. He is scheduled to die in the morning. Where are Peter's friends? They are not outside of the prison holding up signs protesting that Peter was arrested. They are not going to court to fight the people in charge. They are not stirring up all the other Christians with anger to overthrow the prison guards and get Peter out. They are on their knees asking God to deliver His servant, Peter. God delivered Peter through a miracle. God heard their prayer.

Think of a situation in your life that seems impossible to solve. What are you doing about it? Are you trying to come up with a really neat plan to try to fix it, or have you been taking it to the Lord in prayer? God wants us to ask Him to take care of our needs. He wants to bless us and give Him thanks. In our country, we are not in fear for our lives for praying, like many people in other countries. But we still have needs and problems in our lives and we should always go to the Lord in prayer with all our needs.

- Do you think Herod would have let Peter go free?
- Did God know where to find Peter?
- What did the church do to help Peter?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Prayer: Talking to God.

Suffering and Blessing

Text: Matthew 5:11-12 - "Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."

Read Matthew 5:1-12; also Psalm 7:1.

Debbie loved to share the Lord with anyone she met. She would tell other children at school or on her block about how wonderful Jesus was to her and how great it was to have a relationship with Him. It was not always easy for her to talk about Jesus. In fact, most of the time other kids would make fun of her and call her names. Because Debbie read the Bible and knew what Jesus said about persecution, she was not surprised when she was given a hard time about sharing her faith. Debbie expected those hard times. Jesus said they would happen.

Her parents prayed with her every day. They also loved sharing Jesus with others and understood what Debbie was going through when she would share how that some kids would call her names or laugh at her. But they always encouraged her to stand up for Jesus every time she had the chance. Even though it was hard to be persecuted, they prayed for the courage, strength and power from the Holy Spirit to speak the truth in love—to share with others that Jesus died on the cross for all of our sins.

Jesus spoke about persecution in the Bible many times. He knew that would be part of our lives as Christians who were willing to speak up for Him. The world did not care for Him, so certainly they are not going to care for His people. He knew that people would suffer for Him before it ever happened. When we stand up for what is right and for Jesus we may be laughed at or called names ourselves. Jesus understands because He went through the same thing and even worse. We need to go to the Lord in prayer when we are persecuted for our belief in Jesus. The Lord promises that he hears us and will help us when we need Him.

- Was Debbie surprised she suffered for Jesus?
- How did Debbie and her family prepare daily for telling others about Jesus?
- According to Jesus, what reward awaits those who are persecuted for Him?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Persecution: To suffer because of your faith in Jesus.

Not Above Suffering

(Part 1)

Text: John 15:20 - "Remember the word that I said to you. 'A servant is not greater than his master. If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also. But all these things they will do to you for My name's sake, because they do not know Him who sent Me.'"

John 15:18-25; also Psalm 33:18-22

Danny walked into his class and everyone turned to stare. Yesterday had been a very hard day for him. Charles was the most popular boy in the class and he had been very mean to Danny. Charles did not like Christians. He would always tease them and call them names. All that Danny was doing was reading his Bible during lunch, but Charles did not like it at all. He went up to Danny and called him names, pulled his Bible out of his hands and threw it to the floor and then shoved Danny to the ground. Danny silently prayed, "Lord, please help me!"

A teacher came and pulled Charles away. Danny was sure it was because of his prayer and just in time because it looked like Charles was ready to sock him. Danny never fought back. In fact, he had been praying really hard during the entire time. He knew that if he hit Charles that he would harm his witness for Jesus. But he prayed and God provided the teacher. Today it was harder though, in some ways. The kids were all staring at him and whispering. They wanted to know what he would do about Charles.

Danny knew he might have to suffer for his belief in Jesus, but he also knew who would protect him. He prayed and trusted God even though Charles was very mean. Jesus said in His own words that we would suffer and be persecuted for believing in Him. But He added something to that. Jesus said we would be persecuted because others did not know Him. Others who did not know Jesus many times did not want to hear about Jesus because then they have to think about their sin and need for Jesus. So instead of turning to Jesus they lash out at those who would bring them the good news. Let us find out what happens to Danny and Charles. **Continued on Day Four...**

- What did Danny do to make Charles angry?
- How did Danny handle the situation? How would you have handled the problem?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Suffering: to experience pain or distress. Danny suffered for his love for Jesus and God's Word.

Not Above Suffering

(Part 2)

Text: 2 Corinthians 4:9-10 - "persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed—always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body."

Read 2 Corinthians 4:8-15; and Psalm 30:7-12

Continued from Day Three... Danny's Bible had been torn and damaged in the scuffle with Charles the day before. He had been saving up for a new one anyway. When he went home Danny explained to his parents what had happened. The whole family gathered around Danny and prayed for him and for Charles to see Jesus in Danny. Danny's dad was glad that his son had done the right thing by not socking Charles in the eye first or hitting back. He told Danny it showed faith in Jesus and a lot of courage to do what he did. But he was not sure that he would not have a similar situation again. Today, Danny faced the class and his persecutor. Danny was holding a brand new Bible in his hands.

Danny walked into the room and walked up to Charles. He set the new Bible on Charles' desk. Danny told Charles he was sure the Lord wanted him to give this new Bible to him. Everyone watched to see what Charles would do. To everyone's surprise, except Danny, Charles thanked him and then stuck out his hand and apologized. Danny was so happy. The Lord was beginning to soften Charles' heart. As Danny had prayed that morning for Charles, he felt that the Lord would have him give the new Bible to Charles. The Lord was going to use this in Charles' life to show him His love. Danny's sacrifice touched Charles' heart. Later the two became friends and the Lord used everything to eventually lead Charles to salvation.

God even uses persecution in our lives for His purposes. We see in our daily Bible reading that God fortifies, or strengthens His people. We should always pray to the Lord in times of persecution. It is there that God can be glorified.

- What did Danny do that gave him courage and strength?
- If Danny fought back, would things have turned out different?

Kid's Bible Dictionary



Fortified: Strong and secure, like a fortress for war. The Lord will fortify us when we are walking closely with Him and praying to Him for all of our needs.

Day Five

Persecution and Freedom

Text: Psalm 42:8 – “The LORD will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me—a prayer to the God of my life.”

Read Psalm 42:1-11; also Romans 8:35-39

Ahmed was not surprised when they arrested his father. They had been passing out the gospel tracts for several months in their village. It was against the law to share Jesus in their country, but Ahmed's father had a call on his life from the Lord to witness to the town. There were many there who had never heard of Jesus. Several others from their church had been arrested, but now they all prayed for his father. He could be killed for sharing Jesus. It had been two weeks since they had last seen his father. Ahmed's uncle shared from the Bible how Christians could expect to be persecuted for their faith. He said they might be arrested too.

As they prayed on their knees, Ahmed began to praise God. They sang aloud and worshipped the Lord. When the knock on the door came, no one was scared. They knew if they were to be arrested, God would care for them. Ahmed's uncle opened the door to the smiling face of his father. Ahmed ran to his father and gave him a great big hug. The Lord had delivered him as the family had prayed for the last two weeks. There was much joy and thanksgiving to be shared. Even though they were persecuted, drawing near to God in prayer gave all of them faith, strength and courage. The villagers began to wonder who Jesus was and more people were saved in the village.

In certain parts of our world today this is very much a real story. People are not allowed to worship Jesus and they may be beaten, thrown in prison or even killed. But through it all God is with them and strengthens them. They are all part of the body of Christ, our brothers and sisters. We need to remember to pray for those who are persecuted for believing in Jesus.

- How did Ahmed's family handle this fearful situation?
- Who is the Great Deliverer?

Kid's Prayer Time



Praise God for His Word that gives us answers for every situation in our lives. Do you have family or friends that suffer? Pray that God will deliver them miraculously out of their situation. God knows our trials. He is our strength in times of persecution.

Memory Verse...

First and Second Grade

“When Peter realized what had happened he knew that the Lord had sent His angel and delivered him from Herod.”

Third Grade and Above

“And when Peter had come to himself, he said; ‘Now I know for certain that the Lord has sent His angel, and has delivered me from the hand of Herod and from all the expectations of the Jewish people.’”

Acts 12:11