Preschool–Grade 6

Peter Denies Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Stand up for Jesus, even when it's hard. When we fail, we can be truly sorry and turn back to Him, because He prays for us and loves us.
Bible passage: Luke 22:54–62, with Luke 22:31–34. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren." *Luke 22:32 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. On the other side, draw three big empty boxes in a row and number them 1, 2 and 3.

1. Opening game: What Would You Say? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Kids show a thumbs up if it would be easy to stand up for Jesus, sideways if it would be a little hard, and down if it would be really hard. 1) Your grandma asks if you love Jesus. 2) A friend at school asks why you pray before lunch. 3) A group of older kids laughs and asks, "You don't really go to church, do you?" 4) Your team captain says, "Prove you're not one of those church kids." Ask: *What makes it harder to stand up for Jesus?* Say: "Today we'll see what happened when Peter was asked about Jesus three times."

2. Bible story: Before the Cock Crow (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Luke 22. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Peter's promise. At the supper the night Jesus was taken, Jesus told Peter, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32). **Look up Luke 22:33.** Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." **Look up Luke 22:34.** Jesus said the **cock** (rooster) would not crow that day before Peter would **thrice** (three times) **deny** (say it isn't true) that he knew Him.

By the fire. Look up Luke 22:54. Men took Jesus and brought Him into the high priest's house, and Peter **followed afar off**: he came, but stayed far back. **Look up Luke 22:55.** They **kindled** (lit) a fire in the middle of the **hall**, and Peter sat down among them.

One. Look up Luke 22:56–57. A **maid beheld** him (saw him) as he sat by the fire, looked hard at him and said, "This man was also with him." Peter said, "Woman, I know him not." Write "I know him not" in box 1.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

Two. Look up Luke 22:58. After a little while another saw him and said, "Thou art also of them." Peter said, "Man, I am not." Write it in box 2.

Three. Look up Luke 22:59–60. About an hour later another **confidently affirmed** (said firmly), "Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a **Galilaean**," a man from Galilee, like Jesus. Peter said, "Man, I know not what thou sayest." Write it in box 3. **Immediately, while he yet spake** (while he was still speaking), **the cock crew**.

The look. Look up Luke 22:61. The Lord turned and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered Jesus' words. **Look up Luke 22:62.** Peter went out and **wept bitterly**: he cried hard, full of sorrow.

Turned back. Jesus had said, "when thou art **converted**" (turned back), not "if" (22:32). After Jesus rose, "the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34). Simon is Peter's other name. Later Jesus asked Peter three times, "lovest thou me?" (John 21:15–17). And on the day of Pentecost, Peter stood up and preached to a crowd (Acts 2:14).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Peter meant it when he said he'd go to prison with Jesus (Luke 22:33). Why do you think he said "I know him not" a few hours later?
2. Peter "followed afar off" (22:54). What does following Jesus "far back" look like for kids today?
3. Each answer Peter gave (22:57, 58, 60) went further from the truth. How can one small lie lead to another?
4. Jesus prayed for Peter before Peter failed (22:32). How does it help you to know Jesus cares about you even before you mess up?
5. Peter wept bitterly (22:62). What is the difference between being sorry you got caught and being truly sorry?

Recall questions

1. Where did Peter sit? *(By the fire in the midst of the hall, Luke 22:55)*
2. Where did the third man say Peter was from? *(Galilee: "he is a Galilaean," 22:59)*
3. What did Peter do after the Lord looked upon him? *(He remembered Jesus' word, went out and wept bitterly, 22:61–62)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **thee** and **thy** mean you and your, **fail not** means won't quit, **converted** means turned back to God, and **strengthen thy brethren** means help your brothers and sisters in the Lord be strong. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Peter failed, but Jesus didn't give up on him, and He loves you too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). On the day of Pentecost, Peter, the same man who had denied Jesus, stood up and preached: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: when someone asks about church or Jesus, give a kind, true answer. If you do wrong, tell God you're sorry right away and make it right.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Luke 22:33: Where did Peter say he was ready to go with Jesus? *(Into prison, and to death)*
2. Luke 22:54: Whose house was Jesus brought into? *(The high priest's house)*
3. Luke 22:55: Where was the fire kindled? *(In the midst of the hall)*
4. Luke 22:56: Who first said Peter was with Jesus? *(A certain maid)*
5. Luke 22:59: About how long after the second time was the third? *(About the space of one hour)*
6. Luke 22:60: What happened while Peter yet spake? *(The cock crew)*
7. Luke 22:61: Who turned and looked upon Peter? *(The Lord)*
8. Luke 24:34: Who did the risen Lord appear to? *(Simon, that is, Peter)*

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You for praying for Peter and for loving us. Give us courage to stand up for You. When we fail, help us be truly sorry, turn back to You, and help others be strong. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Luke doesn't describe Jesus' look (22:61), so don't call it angry or sad. The mocking and striking of Jesus (22:63–65) is left out on purpose. Peter's three questions from Jesus are in John 21:15–17, outside this passage; mention them only as the happy ending.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post