Preschool–Grade 6

Peter Denies Jesus

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: Stand up for Jesus. If we fail, we can be truly sorry and turn back to Him, because He 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, 6 paper strips, a marker, tape, a few paper flames (or red, orange and yellow paper) for a pretend fire, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 6 paper strips (see part 4). Put the paper flames in a pile in the middle of your story circle. Put bookmarks in your Bible at Luke 22:32 and Luke 22:61.

1. Opening game: Stand Up If... (5 minutes)

Say: "Stand up if this is true for you!" Then: "...if you like ice cream." "...if you have a pet." "...if you like to sing." "...if you love Jesus!" Cheer for everyone who stood. Then ask: *Is it always easy to stand up and say you love Jesus? When could it be hard?* Say: "Today we'll hear about a time when it was very hard for Peter, a friend of Jesus."

2. Bible story: Peter Denies Jesus (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Luke 22. Sit with the kids in a circle around the pretend fire. Tell it in your own words:

Peter was one of Jesus' twelve apostles (Luke 6:13–14). One night Jesus told him, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not" (Luke 22:32). Peter said, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death" (22:33). That means, "I will stay with You no matter what!" But Jesus told Peter that before the **cock** (a rooster) crowed that day, Peter would **deny** three times that he knew Jesus (22:34). Say: "To deny means to say, 'No, that's not true.'"

That same night, men took Jesus away to the high priest's house. Peter **followed afar off**, far behind (22:54). In the middle of the **hall**, an open room inside the house, people made a fire and sat down around it. Peter sat down with them (22:55). *(Point to the pretend fire.)*

A **maid**, a young woman, saw Peter sitting by the fire. She looked hard at him and said, "This man was also with him." But Peter said, "Woman, I know him not" (22:56–57). *(Hold up one finger.)*

The story continues: A little while later, another person saw Peter and said, "Thou art also of them," which means, "You are one of them!" Peter said, "Man, I am not" (22:58). *(Hold up two fingers.)*

About an hour later, another man said, "Of a truth this fellow also was with him: for he is a Galilaean." That means, "This man was with Jesus for sure! He is from Galilee, like Jesus." Peter said, "Man, I know not what thou sayest" (22:59–60). *(Hold up three fingers.)*

And right away, while Peter was still talking, the cock **crew**: the rooster crowed (22:60)! *(Everyone crows like a rooster.)* **Read Luke 22:61 from your Bible:** "And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice." Say: "**Thrice** means three times." Then Peter went out and **wept bitterly** (22:62). Say: "That means he cried very hard. He was truly sorry."

But that's not the end! After Jesus rose from the dead, He came to Peter (Luke 24:34). Later Peter stood up in front of a big crowd and preached about Jesus (Acts 2:14). Jesus' prayer for Peter came true!

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What did Peter say he was ready to do? *(Go with Jesus to prison and to death, Luke 22:33)*
2. Where did Peter sit down? *(By the fire in the middle of the hall, 22:55)*
3. How many times did Peter say he didn't know Jesus? *(Three times, 22:57–61)*
4. What happened right after the third time? *(The cock crew, 22:60)*
5. What did Peter do when he remembered Jesus' words? *(He went out and wept bitterly, 22:62)*

4. Memory verse: Rooster Crow (5 minutes)

Write the verse on the 6 strips: *But I have prayed for thee, / that thy faith fail not: / and when thou art converted, / strengthen / thy brethren. / Luke 22:32.* Tape them up in order. Explain the old words: **thee** means you, **thy faith fail not** means your faith won't quit, **converted** means turned back to God, and **strengthen thy brethren** means help your brothers and sisters be strong. Read the verse together. Then crow like a rooster and take one strip away, and read it again. Keep crowing and taking one strip away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Peter failed, but Jesus still loved him. Jesus loves you too. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! Then Peter, the same man who had said, 'I know him not,' stood up and told everyone how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: if someone asks, say, "Yes, I love Jesus!" And if you do something wrong, tell God you're sorry right away.

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Peter denies Jesus word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/peter-denies-jesus-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/peter-denies-jesus-craft), or **Brave Answers:** kids sit around the pretend fire. Walk around and ask one child at a time, kindly, "Aren't you a friend of Jesus?" Each child stands up and says, "Yes! I know Jesus!" Cheer for every brave answer.

7. Prayer

"Dear Jesus, thank You for loving Peter even when he failed, and thank You for loving us. Help us stand up for You and say we know You. When we do wrong, help us be truly sorry and turn back to You. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: Luke 22:54–62 doesn't tell what Jesus' look was like (22:61), so don't call it angry or sad; just say He turned and looked upon Peter. The men who mocked and struck Jesus (22:63–65) are left out on purpose. Don't add soldiers or a count of people at the fire; the passage gives neither.

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