

LEADER Bible Study

Like his first letter, Peter's second letter was written to believers in the early church who had experienced persecution and suffering. At this time, Peter was in a Roman prison. He was aware that his death was imminent. (See 2 Pet. 1:13-15.) Besides the outside threats to their faith, these believers were also confronted with false teachers within the church who tried to lead them away from the true gospel.

Peter warned against false teachers. In the opening chapter of his letter, Peter's exhortation to live like Jesus gives believers a measure for making sure they are following the truth. The best defense against false teachers is a dedication to a knowledge of the truth. As you prepare to teach from 2 Peter 1, consider these two questions: How do we live like Jesus? Why do we live like Jesus?

First, God's people live like Jesus through the power of Jesus (2 Pet. 1:3-4) and through personal application (2 Pet. 1:5-7). Not only is the Christian life marked by faith in Christ, it is characterized by goodness, knowledge, self-control, endurance, godliness, brotherly affection, and love. These come from knowing Jesus, who calls us to Himself.

Second, God's people live like Jesus to confirm their calling. (2 Pet. 1:8-11) If we claim to have faith but do not live like Jesus, we have forgotten what Jesus has done for us. Because God has credited to us Jesus' righteousness, we strive to live in loving obedience to Him to show those around us that Jesus has truly changed our lives.

Soon after writing this letter, Peter was killed in Rome as Jesus had predicted. (John 21:18-19) Help kids grasp that Jesus lived a perfect life and died the death we deserve for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sins and changes our hearts. Jesus calls and empowers His followers to live like Him.

The **BIBLE** Story

LIVING LIKE JESUS

2 Peter 1

Peter was one of Jesus' disciples who became a leader in the early church. He **wrote two letters in the Bible to help believers who were facing hard times**. When **Peter wrote his second letter**, he was **in a Roman prison**. **He had been arrested because he was a follower of Jesus**.

Peter wrote, "We have everything we need because we know Jesus. When we trust in His righteousness, **He gives us power to live for Him**. He is good, and He promises us good things. So this is how we should seek to live. **Along with faith, seek these things: goodness, knowledge, self-control, patience, brotherly affection, and love**." When we have these qualities, Jesus will be glorified in our lives. **When we remember the good promises God has for us, we can rely on His power to resist temptation**.

Peter wanted the believers to remember what Jesus had done for them. **Jesus did the greatest work by dying on the cross**. He has taken away our sins! **Because of Jesus, God invites us into His kingdom and gives us eternal life**. **Peter wrote, "God has chosen you and given you His power, so do everything you can to live like Jesus."**

Peter knew he was going to die soon, so he also wrote, "You already know what I'm telling you. I want to keep reminding you as long as I am living so that you will remember even after I'm gone. We did not tell you made-up stories. We told you what we saw and heard."

Christ Connection: Jesus lived a perfect life and died the death we deserve for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God forgives our sins and changes our hearts. Jesus calls and empowers His followers to live like Him.

Bible Storytelling Tips

Alter your voice: Use a slight variation in your voice to distinguish the quotes from the rest of the story.

Dress the part: Wear Bible times clothing and pretend you are a person from Peter's day explaining what he wrote to your church

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.