

God: The One To Follow - Peter

Lesson One: Peter Meets Jesus Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-42

Character Review: **Commitment** to do what God asks, *or instructs and commands*, is a valued character quality. The foundation of being fully committed is having our minds fully convinced, and our hearts fully convicted, of what is true. Then, taking a step of faith we stand by that truth. This will be expressed in loving loyalty.

The motivation for obeying God by following Jesus must come from a heart to please God because He first loved us, and we treasure our relationship with Him. This is very different from “appeasing” God, which is doing things to avoid His judgment.

Pleasing leads to freedom in Christ. **Appeasing** leads to bondage to a religion, instead of a loving relationship. (See block letters for PLEASING and APPEASING on next page)

Peter learns to follow Jesus. He learns over a period of time what that really means. Jesus molded Peter, changing him from a man often guided by whims of emotion into a strong and steady man of God who would lead the Church.

Pre-Club Activity

Clubbers sit in a circle with legs crossed. One clubber is chosen to be the guesser. He/she looks away briefly while another clubber is chosen to be the leader. Then, the leader begins a simple pattern of clapping, slapping knees and snapping fingers. All others follow the pattern. The leader changes the pattern when he/she thinks the guesser is not looking. The guesser keeps watching and guessing until he/she guesses who the leader is. The guesser then picks the next leader when another clubber chosen by a teacher looks away, and the game continues.

Following a leader requires close attention visually and auditorily to catch the rhythm and pattern, maintain it and change it at the right time. Following means “not being in control,” which contradicts our human nature. However, commitment to following the leader yields control to the leader and the game can be played. This is what the clubbers will see happen in Peter’s life. How will Peter learn to follow Jesus? Let’s listen and find out.

Rhyming Review

1. The Jewish people waited a long time for the Messiah to come. This would be God’s only Son.
2. John the Baptist told the people that from their sins, they must turn. Coming to God through Jesus, God’s lamb, they would learn.
3. God’s lovingkindness for us, to the Savior will lead. Because of our sin, the Savior we need.

4. Andrew told Simon about Jesus because He is the Savior who frees us.
5. When we grow in God's grace, it will show on our face. When we know more about Jesus in our mind, our thoughts will be kind.
6. Jesus got in Peter's boat so that all the people could hear and see. Afterward, Jesus had Peter catch many fish. He said, now, "Follow me."

PLEASE

APPEAR

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Lesson Two: Peter Walks on Water with Jesus Matthew 14:22-33

Character Review

Conviction: *Holding a value or belief so firmly that it influences my attitudes and actions. Conviction inspires faith, confidence, optimism, enthusiasm and persuasiveness. A lack of conviction brings apathy and doubt.** Peter's walk with Jesus demonstrated conviction and the virtues it inspires. We can see his faith in action as he placed his confidence in Jesus as Messiah. After the catch of fish in obedience to Jesus asking him to let down his nets, he immediately fell before Jesus in conviction of his own sin and in the presence of the LORD. Later, He optimistically and enthusiastically declared in Matthew 16:16, "...You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." **Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 4*

People, including children, will have their conviction strengthened when they can see and hear God's powerful work in their lives and the lives of others including Christian heroes, missionaries and Bible characters, brought to life. Help the children to experience the excitement with Peter and encourage them that they, too, can know for sure that God's Son is worth following.

Each character quality has an opposite expression when the quality is lacking. When Peter's conviction wavers, we see **apathy** and **doubt**. Yet, Jesus reaches out to him and rescues, restores and strengthens him. Therefore, in II Peter 5:10-11, we hear Peter declare what he knows to be true through personal experience: *"And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. ¹¹ To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

*The key concepts to convey to the clubbers: God is all powerful. Jesus is God. I can **trust** God even when it seems impossible. (pg. 21 of the text)*

May we be able to absorb the Word (II Peter 3:18) and understand the commands of the Lord for our lives and say "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water," as we obey Him in the matter that He instructs us to do. And may we not doubt when the storms rage. Matthew 14:28-29 **Word Up! Jesus has awesome power!**

Pre-Club Activity

The activity described on page 23 of the text, the introduction for the lesson, is well suited for engaging the students in the lesson about the awesome power of Jesus. It is traditionally called a "mobius strip" (Paper Loop). One strip of paper from the long side of an 8" x 14" piece of paper with ends taped together typically cannot fit around an adult's head. However, by following the directions, you will be able to cut it in half to create a loop twice as big and easily fit it over your head. The point is: sometimes with special tricks we can do what seems impossible, **but Jesus does not need any special trick**. He is able to control the creation that He made. It's called a miracle. What miracle do you think Peter will experience in today's Bible lesson? Let's find out.

An alternate pre-club activity choice or a small group follow-up activity for “Peter walking on the water,” is found at this link:

<https://biblelessonstuff.com/object-lesson-on-faith-walk-on-water/>

Plan ahead. Use a sturdy clear plastic container to reduce the risk of breaking glass. Bring water from a water bottle. Practice at home the night before. You only need a very tiny amount of dish soap, so no need to bring a large heavy container.

Rhyming Review

1. When hard things come, I don't have to cower because I can trust in Jesus who has all power!
2. Jesus dismissed the crowd that was so loud. He prayed in a quiet tone upon the mountain alone.
3. Jesus saw the disciples straining at the oars causing their fears to soar.
4. Outside of the boat they thought they saw a ghost. But it was Jesus walking on the water. Jesus has awesome power. For Him, it was no bother.
5. Peter walked to Jesus. When he looked at the waves and wind, Peter began to doubt. Then, he began to shout.
6. When Jesus and Peter got into the boat the storm stopped. The disciples almost hopped. It was an amazing experience to get into their head. “Truly you are the Son of God!” they said.

The Culture Points of CEF Condensed

Godly Leadership at Every Level

The men and women who lead must have a personal heart for God in order to be able to discern the will of God and lead the ministry effectively.

Spiritual Welfare of the Workers

Invest in the spiritual lives of our staff. When volunteers live for God's glory and have a clear call from the Lord, the work will prosper. This is sustaining in times of challenge.

Foundational Prayer

The time spent before the throne of God in prayer, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, brings power, laborers and resources into the ministry. The meetings, strategic plans and advances are second.

Evangelizing Children

It is our highest priority to present the Gospel so that children may be saved and discipled in God's Word. Staying on point is our goal.

A Clear and Biblical Presentation of the Gospel

The Good News of Jesus Christ is the power of God unto salvation. We must present it clearly and accurately.

A Commitment to Excellence for the Glory of God

In the training we conduct, the materials we produce, the facilities we use and the way we present ourselves, we must strive for excellence to the glory of God.

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Lesson Three: Peter's Denial & Restoration Luke 22:31-34, 54-62, 24:1-10, John 21:1-19

Character Review

Kindness is selflessly caring about and helping others. Kindness inspires friendliness, compassion, gentleness, generosity, forgiveness. A lack of kindness brings selfishness.

* *Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 7*

"But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, ^she saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit." Titus 3:4-5 ESV

Jesus demonstrated godly love through his compassionate response to Peter's wavering faith. Jesus knew that Peter's power to follow Jesus fully would mean full reliance on the power of God. Jesus wanted to use Peter's life for God's glory. **Jesus forgave and restored Peter to fellowship with Himself.** Jesus' last words to Peter were the same as His first, "Follow Me," right after He commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and tend His sheep. Jesus renewed His relationship with Peter as from the beginning along with instructions for following Him in the years ahead.

Forgiving for restored fellowship goes beyond just overlooking an offense. God's kind of forgiveness makes an attempt to help or pray for the person and their relationship with God and others. Saying "it's ok," when it is not ok, is not genuine forgiveness.

"Forgiveness is me giving up my right to hurt you for hurting me." – Skip Garmo
Speak the truth in restoring love.

Jesus is unselfish, compassionate, gentle, and forgiving generously. Let's be like Jesus, eager to forgive and help restore fellowship of others.

Pre-Club Activity **Change!**

Do people change? Fill in the underlined word(s):

People change their clothes every day.

A woman usually changes her name when she gets married.

Students change schools when they move.

Students change grades when they are promoted to the next grade.

People change how old they are every year on their birthday.

Can you remember the last time you were really upset or afraid?

How about the last time you were really sad or angry?

Was it easy to just change your feelings?

Some things we can change easily, and some things are very hard to change.
Some things, only God can change.

Only Jesus can change a person inside so that they can be a brand-new person.
It's called "twice-born." The person born physically can also be born spiritually because Jesus gives new life.

The resource pack has a picture of a caterpillar and butterfly. Metamorphosis is a total change from one thing to another. A fun activity as review questions are asked and answered is to wrap and unwrap a clubber standing still with twisted brown wrapping paper, making him or her look like they are coming out of a cocoon. (An optional butterfly craft is provided. Some children listen better if they are coloring. You can try this with some students at a table to see if they listen better during the lesson.)

In today's lesson we are going to see a big change in a strong fisherman. Listen to how it all happened.

Rhyming Review

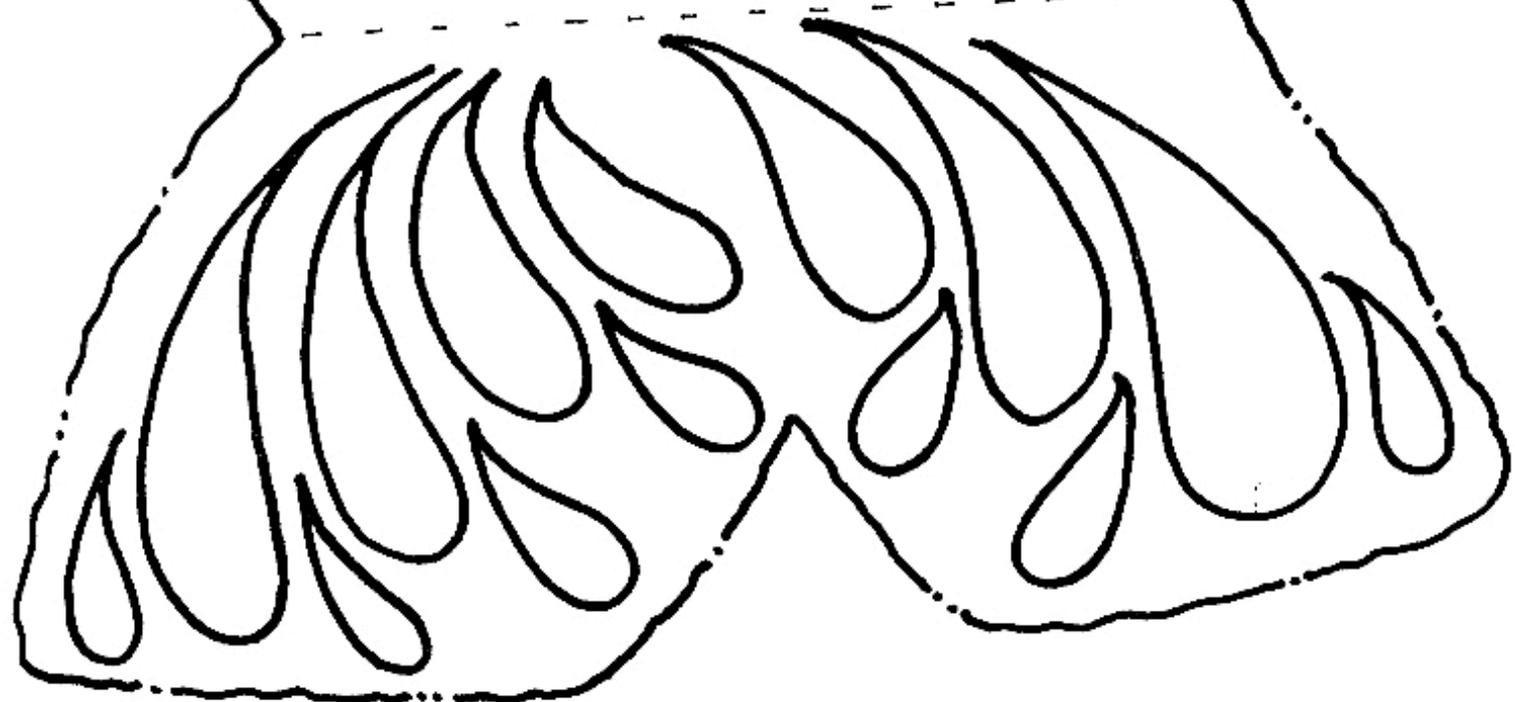
1. Judas left the Passover meal. Jesus he betrayed, while the others stayed.
2. To Jesus, Peter strongly declared his loyalty. But Jesus said he would deny him times three.
3. After Peter denied Jesus three times, he felt very bad. His face was looked very sad.
4. Believing in Jesus is Good News for every nation. This is because He makes us a new creation.
5. Peter heard wonderful news on the third day after Jesus died. The tomb was empty. Jesus was alive!
6. Jesus talked with Peter on the shore. Jesus asked Peter if He loved Him more.



NEW CREATION

If anyone is in Christ, he is a

the old has gone, the **NEW**
has come.



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Lesson Four: Peter Learns the Gospel is for Everyone Acts 10:1-48

Character Review

Courage is conquering fear in order to assist others. *Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 9.*

In Luke 22:32 Jesus said to Peter: “but I have prayed for you that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned again, strengthen your brothers.” This is just what Peter did on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2. He trusted in the power of God to conquer his fear in order to assist others in knowing the living God. In Acts 10, his courage was needed again to bring this Good News not only to the Jewish people but to the non-Jews as well.

Pre-club Activity

When I say “change,” change your facial expression:

- ◇ From happy to sad.
- ◇ From surprised to bored.
- ◇ From puzzled to shocked.

When I say “change,”

- ◇ Change your direction from walking toward the door to walking away from the door.
- ◇ Change your arms from being at your side to reaching into the air.
- ◇ Change your legs from standing to sitting.

All the changes that you have just made are temporary changes. They last only a little while. (Show the picture of a chameleon from the resource pack for Lesson 4.) The chameleon can change colors to help protect himself or communicate with other chameleons. The changes are temporary. In today’s verse time we are going to review II Corinthians 5:17 about a change that is not temporary. It is permanent. Only God can make this kind of **change** in us. (See block letters for “CHANGE” below)

In the Bible lesson we will get to hear about a family that was ready for God to **change** them, but they needed Peter to tell them about how Jesus made the way for this kind of permanent change. However, Peter was a Jew and this family was not Jewish. Peter was not used to talking with non-Jews. What do you think is going to happen?

Rhyming Review

1. A chameleon can change its color so he won't become another animal's meal. That change is temporary while God, making us His new creation, is permanent and real.
2. The Good News of Jesus is for everyone, not just for some.
3. Cornelius's family were Gentiles, but the Good News they wanted to hear. Would Peter listen to God, and to them draw near?
4. Cornelius had a great respect for God. He prayed a lot and gave to the poor. Any truth about the Lord, he wanted to know more.
5. Peter learned that God's Good News is not only for the Jews. Jesus made a way also for the Gentiles to choose (Him as their Savior).
6. People who believe in Jesus are no longer enemies of God or adversaries. They share the Good News and are missionaries.

CHANGE

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Lesson Five: Peter and Rhoda Acts 12:1-19

Character Review

Diligence is willingly completing the tasks I have accepted.* Peter was diligent in completing the task that the Lord Jesus had given him to be a fisher of men, to feed His lambs and tend His sheep. Peter was willing to leave all that he had to follow Jesus. In the book of Acts, we see that imprisonment, beatings and threats could not deter Peter from preaching of the risen Christ. But most of all, he trusted in the forgiveness and restoration of his Lord to overcome his own doubting and weaknesses. God's power worked through Peter until Peter could confidently write in I Peter 5:10-11, *And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. "To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

* *Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 6.*

Faith: Mary the mother of John Mark, and the believers gathered at her house, were exercising faith in the all-knowing and all-powerful God to intercede for Peter who was in prison. Just as in the memory verse: I Peter 5:7 *"Casting all your anxieties on Him because He cares for you,"* they were pouring out their hearts for God's mercy because they knew God's love.

Alertness: Rhoda was alert, and heard Peter knocking on the door. She believed right away that it was Peter. Eager to share the joy of answered prayer, she **ran** to tell the others. She was not deterred that they couldn't believe it. Finally, they went to see for themselves and were astonished.

Pre-club Activity

Who's knocking at my door?

Choose a clubber to sit in a chair with his/her back to the group. Have two clubbers hold up a poster board behind the chair with a picture of a door on it. Another clubber is chosen to come to the "door" and say "Knock, knock. May I come in?" The seated clubber on the other side of the "door" asks, "Who is it?" The answer: "A good friend. Can you guess?"

If the clubber guesses the child's name, they can trade places and the formerly seated clubber chooses the next knocker. If the name is not guessed correctly, he/she can guess three times before changing players. An alternate way is to allow all the clubbers whose names are guessed correctly to stay inside the door and keep adding until it's time to start club. You may need two poster boards to create a visual block. The additional clubbers can help the seated clubber guess.

In today's lesson we are going to join a family who is praying. But someone knocks at the door. No one notices but a young girl. Who do you think it is? What do you think she will do?

Rhyming Review

1. King Herod wanted Christians who talked about Jesus being alive and being the Savior, to stop! But Peter would not!
2. King Herod wanted to make sure Peter and the prison would not be parted, so he had him heavily guarded.
3. Peter's friends could help in a big way. They could pray.
4. When all of our cares on Jesus are cast, all our anxieties will fail to last.
5. To get Peter out of prison, an angel was sent by God. If you think that's a special miracle, then nod.
6. God always answers when you pray. He hears what you have to say. Sometimes it's yes or wait or no because he loves us so.

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Lesson Six: Under the Sea Review Party

Gospel Spotlight – Story of Matthew Maury – “*Paths in the Sea*”

*Psalm 8:8 the birds in the sky, the fish of the ocean,
everything that travels the pathways of the sea. (CEB)*

Matthew Maury is known as the “Pathfinder of the Seas.” When he read Psalm 8:8, “*the paths of the seas*” jumped out at him. As an experienced seaman in the 19th century, he was aware of the perils and challenges for those traveling the deep waters trying to make their way efficiently from one continent to another. Believing God’s Word to be true, he set out to find those pathways to aid oceangoing vessels on their journeys. Through much research and study, he did just that.

Diligence – Matthew Maury also exhibited diligence. He not only became very motivated to embark on a lengthy study of the captain’s logs from the voyages of many ships, but he persevered to complete all of the research necessary to discover the ocean currents and map them out for others. *Diligence is willingly completing the tasks I have accepted. Character Solutions: Christlikeness Bible Guide, pg. 6.*

Personal Response

We travel in an ocean of air. We move around from place to place, relating to people on many different levels of relationship and in different seasons of our lives. Jesus said He is the **way**, the truth and the life. Our footsteps need to follow in His steps if we are to be on the good and right path.

Through Jesus we can discover and live in the “Pathways of Grace.” This is the multifaceted grace that is applicable for every situation and season of life. It is founded in the Word of truth, fueled by the love of God and expressed in the praise of God.

We can overcome storms of the seas, the darkness of the deep, and the lost wanderings carried away by strong currents, because God is with us through Jesus. He walks on the water. He stills the storms. He pours out His abundant grace on us so that we, in turn, can show forth His grace to others.

So, when the hard moment comes through situations or people, we can take joy in knowing that God’s grace can be applied through the wisdom and power of the Holy Spirit within us and His grace is sufficient.

**Grace-filled living is the pathway through our seas, charted by our Lord Jesus
and opens the way for legacy living.**

Legacy Living and its dimensions

Financial

The legacy that comes to the minds of most is passing funds along from one generation to another. However, tangible resources are not limited to funds. They also include possessions, energy, time, and our very lives. Yet, there are other dimensions of leaving a legacy.

Christ-like Character

In the foresight of wisdom, Mary McLeod Bethune left a legacy that she described as her philosophy of living and serving. Among many of her treasured values she listed: love, hope, faith, racial dignity and harmonious living. These gems were nested in the challenge of “developing confidence in one another, a thirst for education, a respect for the uses of power” and a responsibility to the young.

For a full description in her own words, check out: <http://www.duboisl.org/book/export/html/75>

Like Mary, as we live out God-given virtues, we are illustrating by our lives what a living faith does, how love empowers, and where true hope in the truth takes us. Those who follow us will see our footprints of courage, insight, unselfishness and love of what is true. As we live in the light of Jesus, the pathway is lit for others that they, too, may know the Savior.

Spiritual Fruit

Leading others to Christ and discipling them leaves a legacy of lasting seed-bearing fruit that continues to bear more fruit. More and more lives living in the grace of the Savior send a shaft of light into the darkness, generation after generation.

In Summary

Grace-filled living flows into the way we are charting pathways of faith for others to follow. When we pause to consider the legacies we are leaving, let's think about what we are doing to invest in eternity through the next generation.

- ◇ Are we placing the Word of God in the hands of the spiritually thirsty?
- ◇ Are we planting seeds of hope in hurting hearts?
- ◇ Are we leaving a loving example of integrity, wisdom and courage?
- ◇ Do our personal resources support lasting spiritual fruit?

Pre-club Activity

Can we make a current?

Within the GNC room/space, have all the people, children and adults stand randomly. Play a GNC song while one of the team members leads a growing line. If the students are able to hold at their waists appropriately (depending on the group), this can make a stronger picture of a current as the leader weaves in and out of the group picking up one person at a time.

When the music ends and the students are seated, ask this question: What do you think would be easier: to walk through this room while the current of people was moving through it, by getting in the line and current of movement, or just trying to dodge the line, go around it or work through it? The big sailing ships many years ago, and the sailing ships today, get to their destinations much quicker and easier by knowing where the ocean currents are and going with the current instead of against it. But there are no street signs in the ocean! How did they discover where the ocean currents are? That's what we are going to find out in today's lesson.

Character Notes from Skip Garmo for the missionary story:

Pete Menjares

His life story in sequence and in the context of Christlike character:

- **Wisdom** (lack thereof): No direction; led to wrong loyalties and wrong choices
- **Kindness** of friends: Friends reached out to this newcomer, Pete—Their friendship changed his life
- **Kindness** of a neighbor: A concerned neighbor compassionately prayed for Pete; God listened and answered her prayers
- **Loyalty**: Pete committed himself to God -- a new, wise, and transforming loyalty
- **Diligence, Kindness, and Loyalty**: Pete studied, learned, became an educator, and used his classroom influence to reach out and help transform others. Quote (source unknown): "To teach is to touch a life forever."