



LESSON

4



Peter: Extreme Forgiveness

Luke 22:33, 34, 54–62; John 21:1–19

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Extra Credit Verses: **Psalm 103:8–14; Mark 12:30, 31**

Topic

God’s extreme forgiveness.

Theme

God loves and forgives us when we fail.

Desired Student Response

Each student will know how to deal with sin in his life—confessing sin and joyfully continuing to serve God.



Welcome to Polar Extremes!

MATERIALS: Registration cards (30208); Polar passports with stickers (30434); nametags (30433).

Warmly greet each student. Students who have not filled out a registration card may do so now. Students may record their attendance in their passports. After students have marked their attendance, they may join in an activity.

Option 1: Fuzzy Posters

MATERIALS: Fuzzy posters (30476); markers or colored pencils.

Encourage students to color a fuzzy poster.



Option 2: Failure or Success?

MATERIALS: Rope (15' length).

Tie a 15-foot rope into a circle. Have students and workers stand in a circle and hold on to the rope. Begin to move the knot around the circle without letting go of the rope. As the rope circle keeps moving, ask students to think of two things they have tried in their lives. One should be something they succeeded at doing, and the other something they failed at doing. When the students have had a few moments to think, call out, "Stop." Whatever student is holding the knot shares two things they tried. The group guesses which activity that student failed at and which activity he succeeded at. The person then honestly admits which is which. Continue until all have had a turn or until time runs out!



Introduction

MATERIALS: Penguin beach ball (30473).

How many of you have seen a seal balance a ball on his nose? Do you think you can balance this beach ball between your nose and forehead? (*Encourage volunteers to try to balance the ball between their nose and forehead.*)

Thanks for trying. It wasn't easy, was it? But when you volunteered, weren't you quite certain you could do it? The Bible tells us about a disciple named Peter who had tons of self-confidence, but failed to do what he promised Jesus. (*Pray, asking for God's help as you learn important truths from the Bible lesson about Peter.*)



Explore the Bible!

MATERIALS: Bibles; lesson 4 visual book; flashlights; red and orange tissue paper; goldfish crackers; Bible-time costumes and props (optional).

Before class: Move the chairs to the side of the classroom. Put together a collection of flashlights to represent a campfire. Place some crumpled red and orange tissue paper over the flashlights to make the pretend fire look more authentic.

(Gather the students together around the flashlight fire. The flashlights should be turned on and the overhead lights turned off.) **Somehow at a campfire it gets easier to think about things that matter in life—things like what's in our hearts, obedience, following God. Peter had probably spent time with Jesus around some campfires during his three years of training as one of Jesus' twelve disciples. The disciples were**

men Jesus chose to follow Him. Peter had been a fisherman before he left his fishing nets to follow Jesus.

For three years the disciples traveled with Jesus. They saw Jesus do miracles. They asked Him many questions, and Jesus taught them. Peter loved Jesus very much.

“The time has come for Me to suffer and die. One of you will betray Me.” Jesus’ friends, the disciples, looked at one another. Who would betray Jesus? Who would do such an awful thing?

What was Peter’s response? (*Show visual picture 1. Have students open their Bibles and read Luke 22:33.*) **Now that’s extreme—extreme love from Peter that would lead to such an extreme promise. Peter clearly loved Jesus very much. On a scale of one to ten, how confident was Peter that he would remain loyal to the Lord even if he faced severe persecution? Yes, Peter promised to stay loyal to Jesus even if he had to go to jail or die for Jesus. Jesus, Who is the Son of God, knows everything. He knew Peter desired to obey and follow Him, but He also knew that Peter was going to deny even knowing Jesus. Jesus predicted that before that day ended and a rooster crowed, Peter would deny three times that he even *knew* Jesus.**

That night guards arrested Jesus as He prayed in a garden on the Mount of Olives, just outside Jerusalem. (*Read Luke 22:54 and 55.*) Jesus was led away to the high priest’s house. Peter followed from a safe distance and entered the courtyard of the high priest’s house. The Bible describes what happened next.

(*Have a good reader read aloud Luke 22:56–62. Show visual picture 2.*)

Extreme Failure Drama: Appoint five volunteers to reenact Peter’s three failures in the courtyard of the high priest. Provide simple costumes and props, if desired. Have one male play the role of Peter. Failure #1: A female plays the role of the servant girl who first confronted Peter about his association with Jesus. Failures #2 and #3: Have two students play the roles of the second and third individuals who confronted Peter. Have another student crow loudly after Peter’s third denial. Encourage the five actors to use their own words and put lots of emotion into their actions.

Peter had been following Jesus as a disciple for three years. Why do you suppose Peter said he didn’t know Jesus? (*Allow students to respond. Answers will include Peter’s fear of being arrested like Jesus.*) **Yes, Peter was afraid. He probably thought guards would arrest him as they had arrested Jesus. He might have been afraid for his life!** (*Read Luke 22:33.*) **We let things get in the way of our commitment to God too. We might not be afraid for our lives, but we might be afraid of**



Lesson 4, visual 1



Lesson 4, visual 2



what a friend might think of us. We might be afraid of being teased for doing what's right.

Peter denied even knowing Jesus three times before the rooster crowed. Peter felt guilty, so guilty and disappointed with himself for denying Jesus that he cried. Have you ever felt that guilty and sad over sin? What does guilt feel like? *(Allow students to respond. Turn on the overhead lights.)* Was Peter washed-up forever as a disciple? Would he have to spend the rest of his life feeling miserable and unforgiven?

Fast-forward to a later time. Jesus had been beaten and then crucified on a cross. Jesus chose to die to take the punishment so that our sin could be forgiven. After He died, He was buried in a tomb. But Jesus is the living, eternal God. After three days He rose to life again! God is truly powerful!

(Have the students open their Bibles to John 21:1–19.) Peter told some other disciples, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We're going with you." They jumped in a boat and pushed off. Fishing on the Sea of Galilee is best at night, but they fished all night and caught nothing. They were experienced fishermen, but they could not catch anything! How many of you have been fishing? Has this ever happened to you when fishing? *(Allow students to respond.)*

After a long night of fishing without success, the disciples saw a man standing on the shore. The man called to them and asked if they had any fish. They had to say no. Then the man told them to cast their net on the right side of the boat. This advice probably sounded ridiculous to the disciples. After all, they were experienced fishermen who had been fishing all night. But they cast their net on the right side of their boat. So many fish swam right into their net that the disciples had trouble pulling it onto the boat.

Who do you think the man on the shore was? *(Allow students to respond.)* That's right! He was Jesus, and He performed a miracle for the disciples. *(Show visual picture 3.)* When John identified Jesus, Peter immediately jumped into the sea and swam to shore. He could not wait for the boat to land.

When everyone got to shore, they saw that a fire had been built. Jesus had a breakfast of fish and bread waiting for the disciples. He invited all of them, including Peter, to come and eat with Him. *(Pass around goldfish crackers for the students to eat.)* Jesus was truly alive!

Peter had denied Jesus three times at a fire in the courtyard of the high priest. Now, at a fire on the shore, he would have the opportunity to tell Jesus three times that he loved Him. Jesus asked Peter three times whether he loved Him. *(Show visual picture 4.)* After each



Lesson 4, visual 3



Lesson 4, visual 4

question, Peter declared his love for Jesus. Jesus did not scold Peter for having denied Him in the high priest's courtyard. Instead, He gave Peter a new job. Jesus said to Peter, "Feed My sheep." Jesus wanted Peter to take care of the people who believed in Jesus, just like a shepherd takes care of sheep. Jesus forgave Peter and would use him in a mighty way in the future.

Peter would honor God throughout the rest of his life, and would honor Him in death too. *(Have a student read aloud John 21:18 and 19.)* It seems Jesus predicted Peter would die as a martyr. Tradition teaches that after serving Jesus faithfully for many years, Peter died on a cross—upside down.

John 21:19 ends with Jesus' command to Peter to follow Him. Peter had heard this same command more than three years earlier. In the courtyard he had denied three times that he was one of Jesus' followers. But Jesus had forgiven him, and now he really would follow Jesus to death.



Decision Time

MATERIALS: Big EvangeCube (8421); EvangeCubes (8418).

Peter had a big failure in his life, but God forgave him completely and used him to do great things. Peter followed Jesus wholeheartedly for the rest of his life. He preached to thousands of people, did many miracles, and eventually died to be faithful to Jesus. Like Peter, we may fail God sometimes, but God is ready and willing to forgive our sins. *(Recite 1 John 1:9, the memory verse for today.)* **Life with Jesus starts with believing on Him and trusting Him to forgive our sins.**

(Follow instructions for the EvangeCube as you present the gospel. The small arrows will help you know how to manipulate the cube. Practice before class so you can confidently teach your students how to use this evangelistic tool.)

God is powerful and loving. He is also holy—that means that God is perfect; He never sins. He hates sin.

(Show first panel, illustrating the separation between sinful man and holy God.) **God's Word says that we all sin; we all do wrong things. What are some of the wrong things we have done?** *(Allow students to respond.)* **God must punish our sin** *(Rom. 3:23).*

(Open to second panel, showing Jesus on the cross.) **God loved us so much that He sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross for our sin. Jesus took our place and paid for our sins** *(John 3:16; Rom. 5:8).*

(Show next panel, the tomb.) **Jesus' body was placed in a tomb.**

(Show next panel, the risen Christ.) **After three days, God raised Jesus from the dead.**

(Show next panel, the person standing at the foot of the cross.) **God has promised eternal life to all who believe in Jesus. You can become a member of God's family right now by believing in Jesus. Do you believe that Jesus is the only Son of God, Who became a man and lived a perfect life? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for your sin, was buried, and rose back to life on the third day? Jesus is the only One Who can take away our sin. Will you accept His free gift of salvation (Rom. 6:23)?**

(Show the final panel, the clasped hands with Heaven above and flames below.) **Will you choose to believe in Jesus and accept God's gift of eternal life with Him in Heaven? Please bow your heads and close your eyes. If you want to know more about salvation, please look up at me. (Direct teachers to take these students aside and talk with them about salvation.)** **Some of you have already put your trust in Jesus as your Savior. You have asked Jesus to forgive your sins, and you want to obey Him, like Peter. But like Peter, we will have times when we fail to follow our Savior. We sin even though we truly want to obey God. Talk to God about anything wrong you are doing. Ask Him to forgive you. (Read 1 John 1:9. Give the students a few minutes for silent prayer, and then close in prayer.)**



Option 1: In Your Own Words

MATERIALS: Stuffed animal, such as a penguin or polar bear.

Seat the students in a circle. While holding the stuffed animal, tell the beginning of Peter's story of guilt and God's forgiveness. Pass the animal to a student on your left, who will continue telling the story. This student will tell a few sentences and then pass the stuffed animal on again. Continue passing the animal around the class until students have told the whole story of Peter and the extreme forgiveness Jesus showed him.

Option 2: Try, Try, Try Again

MATERIALS: 3" x 5" cards; jump ropes; basketballs.

Before class: Write on 3" x 5" cards different challenging tricks that can be done with basketballs and jump ropes; e.g., dribble two basketballs at the same time; twirl the ball on your index finger; dribble the ball around

your leg; drop the ball over your head and catch it behind your back; jump rope and cross it in front of you before jumping again; jump in with someone as they are jumping rope. Allow students to try the different tricks. If they fail or don't get it the first time, encourage them to try again. Praise students for efforts and progress!

How did you feel when you did not succeed? It's hard to fail. If you fail, does that make you a failure for life? Does God view you as a failure?

Like Peter, we will all experience failure. When that happens, admit your mistakes. Confess your sins to God. And then rejoice in His forgiveness and go on serving Him with all your heart, and all your soul, and all your mind, and all your strength.



Scripture Memory

**“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness”
(1 John 1:9).**

Option 1: Motion Memory

Recite the verse with the motions.

1 John 1:9	<i>Form open book with hands.</i>
If we confess our sins,	<i>Point to mouth.</i>
he is faithful and just	<i>Point up.</i>
to forgive us our sins,	<i>Swipe one palm against the other twice.</i>
and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.	<i>Rub hands together as if to wash</i>

Option 2: Fishing for God's Word

MATERIALS: Plastic wading pool; craft foam; dowel rods; string; neodymium magnetic buttons or magnetic strips.

Before class: Cut out fish shapes from the sheets of foam. On the bottom of each fish, write a phrase from 1 John 1:9. Make enough sets of fish for several groups. Glue a magnetic button to each fish. Make fishing poles by tying string to dowel rods. Tie or glue a magnetic button to the end of the string of each rod. Fill the plastic wading pool with a few inches of water. Place foam fish in the pool. Mark a toss line two or three feet from the pool.

Divide students into groups. Give each group a fishing pole. The groups need to fish for the parts of the verse. The first group to catch all the phrases needed to form the verse and put them in the correct order wins.





Apply It Now!

Deal with Sin!

MATERIALS: Paper; pencils.

God wants to forgive our sins. First we must admit to Him that what we said or did or didn't do was wrong. Tell God that you are sorry for the wrong things you have done. If you have not yet asked Jesus to be your Savior, now is the best time to do so.

After you have believed in Jesus and invited Him to be your Savior, you can pray and ask God to help you honor Him by doing what is right. Prayer doesn't have to be just what we say to God. We can also write a prayer to God, as we would write to a friend or relative.

Provide paper and pencils and invite students to write a prayer to God, confessing sin and asking God to help them grow alert to temptations and help them resist sinning in the future.

God wants us to continue to love and serve Him after He forgives our sins. Peter failed to stand strong for Jesus, but God forgave him. Peter went on to serve God in a mighty way. We can receive forgiveness and go on to serve God too. What are some ways you can serve God? *(Allow students to respond. Answers may include: telling others about Jesus, inviting friends to church, visiting elderly people, picking up trash around the church, helping a Sunday School teacher before or after class, obeying cheerfully, helping Mom or Dad without being asked, volunteering to take care of a younger sibling, greeting people at church, passing out church bulletins before a service.)*



"Cool Advice!" on the student activity sheet can help students learn about confession of sin and God's forgiveness in their lives.



GAMES

- Iceberg Flyer Toss
- Iceberg Golf
- Beach Ball Soccer
- Ice Floe Race

Director's Guide
(Game Section)



SNACKS

- Avalanche Cupcakes
- Breakfast of Love

Director's Guide
(Snack Section)



CRAFTS

- Northern Lights Placemat

Craft Ideas
Book