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# GOD ANSWERS PRAYER

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## SERIES: NO FEAR

Join us throughout the month of June as we learn stories that show us examples of being a fearless follower of Christ. We will be going through the books of Luke and Acts.

## REMEMBER VERSE

ISAIAH 41:10—So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

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## SCHEDULE

### *All Services*

0:00—0:10	Welcome/Check-In
0:10—0:15	Transition to Large Group
0:15—0:30	Large Group (B100)
0:30—0:35	Transition to Small Group
0:35—1:05	Small Group (Lesson/Activity/Respond)
1:05—1:15	Dismiss

## NOTES

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# LEADER RESOURCES

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## SERIES OVERVIEW

WEEK 1: God Is Powerful

*Ascension*

WEEK 2: God's Spirit Unifies, Part 1

*Philip*

WEEK 3: God's Spirit Unifies, Part 2

*Peter and Cornelius*

CURRENT WEEK: God Answers Prayer

*Peter Delivered from Prison*

WEEK 5: God Speaks

*Lydia and Philippi*

WEEK 6: Remember & Celebrate

*ZONK!*

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## EQUIP

God answers prayer—but not always as we think He should. When King Herod Agrippa began persecuting the early church, these believers might have wondered why God would allow this to happen. But, as we can see now, God had a plan to use Herod's persecution for good.

Herod Agrippa was the grandson of Herod the Great (the king who ordered the death of male babies shortly after Jesus' birth; see Matthew 2:1-16) and the nephew of Herod Antipas (who played a role in Jesus' trial). Herod Agrippa ruled over the Palestinian territory from a.d. 41-44 AD after spending much of his childhood, and even adult life, in Rome. He was committed to maintaining Pax Romana—Latin for "Roman Peace." For him this meant keeping the Jewish religious leaders happy or else risking the threat of an uprising. When the new church community began to welcome Gentiles into their circle of worship, many people in the Jewish community were outraged. To show solidarity with the Jews, Herod began to persecute the leaders of the early church (Acts 12:1). The first apostle he killed was James, the brother of the apostle John. James' death increased Herod's popularity with the Jews, which only fueled his desire to hunt other Christian leaders. Peter was among those targeted. Acts 12 recounts James' death and then narrates Peter's imprisonment.

While Herod strategically planned to kill off the early church leaders and destroy the entire movement, he had no clue about the forces that were against him. Through prayer, the early church took the battle to God. God intervened by miraculously releasing Peter from prison. God hears the prayers of His people and responds.

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## ENCOURAGE

God answered the prayers of His people, and Peter was miraculously freed from prison. Even so, just a few sentences earlier, we read that the apostle James was killed. This is puzzling. It makes us want to ask: Why did God choose to spare the life of one apostle and not the other? Why did God seemingly answer one prayer and not the other?

As a Christian, this is one of the most difficult concepts to understand. But we know from Scripture, and the stories of those in our faith community, that God does answer prayer. His timing, and the ways He answers, are entirely up to Him. God calls us to trust that when we pray, He listens and will answer in the best way—for His kingdom and His glory.

Take some time to think about your prayer life. Does the way God chooses to answer your prayers sometimes trouble you? Bring these before God, and ask Him to reveal Himself to you through these struggles. Spend some time searching your own heart, and ask God to help you know Him as both the loving God who answers prayer and the sovereign God who is Lord of all.

## WELCOME

*Some fun ideas to welcome kids as they check-in to your room at the beginning of service.*

Invite the kids to color on the provided coloring page or work on the provided activity page.

As kids arrive, feel free to ask them this week's Connect Question. Feel free to write the question on the board and encourage some fun dialogue before you start your lesson.

QUESTION: What is your favorite knock-knock joke?

## RESPOND

*A chance for kids to respond to what God is putting on their hearts through creative expression.*

Just like Peter, we have a faith community willing to pray for us whenever we need it. We pray for each other because God not only hears our prayers but also asks us to pray for one another. As we pray, we're able to see God work in the lives of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

INSTRUCTIONS: Today we'll be making prayer cups! Hand each child a paper cup and five craft sticks. Have them decorate their cups and write the word Prayer. Then, on each craft stick, have them write a people group, country, topic, etc. that they can pray about. Some examples include: Pray for the lost, India, Tibet, missionaries, friends, family, the homeless, churches, healing, peace, etc.

SUPPLIES:

- Paper Cups
- Craft sticks
- Coloring Supplies

## REFLECT

*A chance to reflect on what kids have just learned about The Big God Story.*

God miraculously answered the prayers of His people when He delivered Peter from prison. In fact, the people were praying the moment Peter knocked on the door! Amazing! God is so good. He's powerful, He loves us, and He knows what's best for us--and He always answers our prayers in the very best way.

- Why was Peter in prison? *Acts 12:1-3*
- How did God free Peter from prison? *Acts 12:7-10*
- What did Peter first think about the angel who came to him in prison? *Acts 12:9*
- What happened when Peter went to the house to see the faith community? *Acts 12:12-17*
- How did the faith community respond when Rhoda first told them Peter was at the door? *Acts 12:15*
- Why do we pray for one another? *Ephesians 6:18*
- How are we called to pray for one another? *Ephesians 6:18; 1 Timothy 2:1; James 5:16*
- How has God answered prayer in your life?

## BLESS

*A powerful way to bless the kids and parents by sending them off with a benediction.*

INSTRUCTIONS: Invite the parents into your room at the end of the service to say one last prayer together with the whole family. Instruct them to find their child and sit/stand by their side. Explain what their child learned today and read the verse below. Pray together and then dismiss.

1 JOHN 5:14-15 – This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.

BLESSING: May you take every worry and every situation in your life to God. May you know that He listens to your prayers and answers you.

## NOTES

This script serves as an outline of what your storytelling might sound like. Items written in italics are cues for the storyteller and are not meant to be read out loud. You are fully encouraged to make it your own and add a personal touch.

The script serves as an example, however if you would like to teach based on the script and are in need of any supplies mentioned, we would be happy to supply those for you! Storytelling images mentioned will always be provided in your basket each week, but if you need any other supplies for your lesson, contact a Grove KIDS Staff member beforehand so we can supply it for you! You are also welcome to bring in your own props if you would like!

## STORYTELLING

Have any of you ever been to a surprise party? *Invite responses.* At a surprise party, all the guests hide in the room and then jump out and yell, "Surprise!" when the birthday boy or girl opens the door. It's so much fun. Turn to the person beside you and describe a time when you experienced a fun surprise. *Allow kids to share stories with each other.* Then invite a couple to share with the entire group. Today in The Big God Story we'll hear about a great surprise some believers experienced. First, let's pause and ask God to teach us today. *Lead kids in Prayer of Release to pause, be still, and ask the Holy Spirit to quiet their hearts and minds.*

What does it mean to be a Gentile? *Pause for responses.* Yes, a Gentile was a person who wasn't a Jew. In the book of Acts, the Jews and Gentiles were not friends. But God's Spirit unified the Jews and Gentiles and allowed everyone to be a part of His faith community.

During that time, a king named Herod Agrippa wanted to keep his power by keeping the Jewish leaders happy, so he started to hurt those who followed Jesus. Herod killed the apostle James. Then Herod decided to kill more apostles. Let's look at Acts 12:3. *Read verse as kids follow along.* Herod planned to take Peter to trial and have him killed after Passover. Peter's faith community had to trust that God would answer their prayers to save Peter.

In those days, people in prison were chained to guards. Usually one prisoner was chained to one guard, but Herod had Peter chained to two guards. A total of four squads of four soldiers per squad took turns guarding Peter. That's 16 soldiers! Peter had miraculously escaped from prison before, so Herod thought that if more people guarded him, he might not be able to escape this time. What do you think it would be like to have guards chained to you all the time? *Invite responses.* Escaping from the guards might have seemed impossible, but Peter and his friends still trusted that God answers prayer.

Peter was asleep inside the jail, chained to two guards. Two more guards stood in front of them, guarding the gate to the prison. And the prison gate was so heavy and strong that it would normally take a lot of men to open it!

While Peter was in prison, many Christians met and prayed constantly. They didn't know what God would do,

## RESOURCES PROVIDED

- None

but they trusted God to answer their prayers, so they prayed over and over again. *Volunteer reads Acts 12:7-8.* Peter got dressed really quickly and then got out of there! Peter did what the angel told him to do.

*Read Acts 12:9 as kids follow.* Have you ever been in such a deep sleep that when you woke up you felt a bit confused? It was probably like that. Peter was so shocked by the situation that he didn't know if he was awake or asleep. God was answering the prayers of His people! *Read Acts 12:10-11.* God used a miracle to answer their prayers!

Peter went straight to the house where he knew his faith community would be praying. How do you think they reacted? *Pause for answers.* Let's find out! *Volunteer reads Acts 12:13.* Then something funny happened. *Read Acts 12:14-15.* Can you believe this? The faith community, inside praying for Peter's release, didn't believe the servant girl. There was Peter, standing right at the door! God had answered their prayers, and the people were missing it!

Meanwhile, Peter kept knocking and waiting for someone to let him in. Finally someone opened the door! They were so surprised! Peter told them all about what God had done. He told them to tell others about this miracle. He wanted to encourage other faith communities to keep praying and trusting in God's faithfulness. God answers prayer!

What an amazing testimony to the power of prayer. The faith community didn't know what God would do or how He would work, but they chose to pray. When we pray together, we encourage one another and share the same hope that God will answer our prayers. God hears the prayers of His people, and He answers them.

God still answers prayers today. We may not always see how He answers prayer, and He may not always answer our prayers the way we want or the way we think He should. However, God's answers are always the best and most loving because God is a loving God. We have the privilege of praying for one another just like Peter's faith community prayed for him. *Share a personal story of a time God answered the prayers of your faith community.*