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Jesus Forgives Peter

Scripture: John 21:1-19

Theme: Jesus restores us when we fail Him

Nursery (Ages 0-2)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

"God Loves You!" "Jesus forgives you too, just like He forgave Peter! When we make mistakes, Jesus says, 'I still love you!' He wants to help and make you feel safe, just like He does!" (Short, loving, and repeatable, great for gentle engagement!) Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

Jesus Loves Peter Too!

One day, Jesus walked by the water with His friends. Peter tried to swim, but his feet got tired. He saw Jesus and said, "Lord, are You really me?" Jesus smiled and said, "Yes, I am!"

The next morning, Jesus was again by the water. Peter walked out into the cold waves and ran to Jesus. Jesus said, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord!" Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

Later, Jesus asked again, "Simon, do you love me?" Peter said, "Yes, Lord!" Jesus said, "Feed my sheep." Peter looked at Jesus and wept, "I am not worthy!"

Jesus said, "Simon, love me. Love others like I love you." Peter said, "Lord, you know everything!" Jesus told him, "Follow me."

--- Why This Story Matters: God always loves you, just like Jesus loved Peter, even when you forget. His love is like a hug from heaven!

Key Verse

John 21:17 , 'Feed My sheep.'

"Jesus says, 'Take care of my little ones!' God loves you so much, just like He loves the sheep! Feed them, play with them, and always keep them safe! Jesus says, 'I love you!' Be kind to them!" (Use soft petals, a gentle voice, and maybe a stuffed sheep or animal for fun!)

Activities

Activity 1:

Toddlers draw Peter's fish and hug a "forgiven" handprint to show God's love for Peter, and for them!

1. Color Time (3 min): Give each child a paper boat and let them draw with crayons.
2. Say: "God made you special, just like Jesus loves you!"
3. Read the Bible (2 min): Hold up John 21:15-19 (simplified: "Jesus said, 'Love others like I love you'").
4. Race the Boats (5 min):
5. Place boats in a row, then "race" them in a bowl of water (or just cheer them on!).
6. Say: "Just like Jesus forgives Peter, He forgives YOU too!"
7. Praise Time (3 min): Praise each child with a big hug, "You're loved by God!"
2. "Peter's Fishy Hug" Crayon Art
9. Fish Drawing (4 min):
10. Give each child a fish cutout (or let them draw a simple fish).
11. Say: "Peter was afraid, but Jesus forgave him!"
12. Handprint Hug (3 min):
13. Have them glue a handprint on paper (show them to make a heart shape).
14. Say: "God puts a hug on YOU too!"
15. Read the Story (2 min): Hold up John 21:15-19 ("Jesus forgives Peter, just like He forgives you!").
16. Color Time (4 min): Let them color their fish + handprint.
17. Repeat: "Thank you, Jesus! You're my friend!" (with hugs!)
18. Tips: Keep it short, singy, and hands-on! Use simple phrases like "God loves you!" to reinforce the lesson.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four simple, open-ended questions to explore God's love with babies and toddlers, using the story of Jesus Forgiving Peter:
- "Peter had a big mistake, what did Jesus do to help him?"
- (Repeat: "Jesus loves even when we make mistakes!")
- "If Jesus forgave Peter, what can you do to be kind and forgiving too?"
- (Repeat: "God's love is always here!")
- "Peter felt scared, but Jesus said, 'Follow me!' What makes you feel safe like Peter did?"
- (Repeat: "God is always with you!")
- "When we say sorry, God is happy! Can you show me how you can be kind and sorry to someone who hurts you?"
- (Repeat: "Love and forgiveness are magic!")
- These keep it open-ended, simple, and focused on God's love in action! Would you like any adjustments?

Prayer Focus

"Dear God, thank You for loving me so much! You are always there to help and forgive, just like You forgave Peter when he got scared. We love You, God!"

>> Missions Spotlight

In post-genocide Rwanda, the question of forgiveness is not theoretical , it's daily life. Missionaries share that Jesus' forgiveness of Peter shows us how to forgive even the unforgivable. The cross makes forgiveness possible.

-> To the Cross

Peter had denied Jesus three times. Now, on the beach, Jesus asked Peter three times, 'Do you love Me?' Jesus restored Peter. Because of the cross, when we fail, Jesus doesn't reject us , He restores us. His grace is bigger than our biggest failure.