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# Jesus Forgives Peter

*Scripture: John 21:1-19*

**Theme: Jesus restores us when we fail Him**

*PreK-K (Ages 3-5)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson: Jesus Forgives Peter (John 21:1-19) Today we're going to learn about a special friend of Jesus, Peter! Sometimes Peter felt scared and made mistakes, but Jesus always forgave him. Even when we do things wrong, Jesus loves us and wants us to be kind and brave, just like He wants us to be! Peter was afraid, but Jesus knew he'd get back up and try again. That's what Jesus does for us too! When we trip or make a mess, He says, "Don't worry! I've got you." We can trust Him to help us feel better and do better. Jesus didn't give up on Peter, He showed Him love again. And He loves us too! When we ask for forgiveness, Jesus makes us feel safe and happy. That's why we can be kind, try our best, and always know He's watching over us. Wonder: How can we thank Jesus for forgiving us? Maybe by drawing a heart or saying, "Thank You, Jesus!" 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 Forgives Peter

One morning, after Jesus had risen from the tomb, He walked with His friends by the shore of the lake. Peter and the other disciples were not with Him, so they went fishing instead. They caught so many fish that they could not pull the net even with all their hands! When they saw Jesus standing there, they were very scared. He asked Peter, "Do you love me?"

Peter answered, "Yes, Lord! You know I love you!" Jesus smiled and said, "Feed my sheep." Peter was happy to obey.

But Jesus asked again, "Simon, Simon, do you love me?" Peter replied, "Yes, Lord, you know I love you!" This time, Jesus said, "Tend my lambs." Peter felt a little sad, but Jesus told him, "When you are old, I will show you how you will

follow me." Peter was amazed!

Peter went home and told the other disciples about Jesus. They all cried and hugged Peter, for he had done wrong but Jesus had forgiven him. Jesus loves us too, even when we make mistakes. Just like Peter, we can always come back to Him with our hearts open, and He will welcome us with a hug!

--- Why This Story Matters: This story reminds us that Jesus forgives us no matter what we do. Even when we mess up, like Peter, He always loves us and wants to help us be better. Just as Peter learned to love and serve Jesus again, we can too!

## Key Verse

### John 21:17 , 'Feed My sheep.'

Oh, what a kind and loving Jesus is! He cares so much for you and me. When Jesus says, "Feed My sheep," It means to love and take care of people, just like He did for us! Little ones, think of fluffy bunnies, Or tiny kittens with soft furry tails. Jesus is like a gentle shepherd, Who watches over all His little friends! Feed them with kindness and care, Share love and make them smile. Just like Jesus does every day, He loves you more than you'll ever know! So when you see a friend who needs help, Or someone who feels lost or scared, Remember Jesus says, "Feed My sheep," And show them the love that He's given!

## Activities

### Activity 1:

#### Supplies needed:

- *No fancy stuff needed, just paper*
- *paint*
- *and love!*

1. Paint & Decorate: Give each child a smooth stone or a small cardboard circle. Let them draw a fish or a heart on their stone (symbolizing Jesus' love).
2. "Fish for Jesus" Story: Read John 21:15, 19 aloud. Ask: "Did Peter deny Jesus? What did Jesus say to him?" (Hint: "Feed my lambs" means love him!)
3. Act It Out: Pretend to be fish swimming in the water. One child holds a net (like Jesus calling Peter). When it's their turn, they "catch" Jesus (a teacher) and hug them like Peter did later.
4. Share Hugs: Each child hugs a friend and says, "Jesus loves me and forgives me!" (Repeat: "Jesus forgives!")
2. "Deny or Love?" Fish Craft & Role-Play
6. Color & Cut: Give each child a fish shape (plate or printout). Let them color it with crayons. Cut out 3 "denial" and 3 "love" fish (write "I love you!" or "Denied!" on them).
7. Story Time: Read John 21:15, 19. Ask: "What did Peter say three times? How did Jesus love him?" (Hint: "Feed my lambs" = teach them Jesus' way.)
8. Role-Play: Split into two teams. One team acts out Peter's 3 denials (pretend to walk away). The other team acts out Jesus' 3 hugs (like feeding fish).
9. Swap Roles: Switch teams and act out the forgiveness. End with a big group hug: "Jesus forgives even when we say we don't love Him!"
10. Why These Work:
11. Wonder: Both activities use symbols (fish, hugs) to make abstract ideas concrete.
12. Repetition: The "Jesus forgives!" refrain reinforces the lesson.

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for preschool and kindergarten children about Jesus Forgives Peter (John 21:1-19), designed to spark wonder and simple reflection:
- What do you think happened when Peter saw Jesus again after he denied Him three times?
- (Repeat: "Peter was scared and afraid. Jesus was there, and Peter saw a big smile! What do you think Peter felt when he saw Jesus? How did Jesus make him feel special again?")
- If you were Peter, what might you have said to Jesus when He asked, "Do you love Me?"
- (Repeat: "Love is like a warm hug or a kind word. How can we show love to Jesus, just like Peter did? What are some ways you can love others, like Jesus loves us?")
- Why do you think Jesus wanted Peter to feed His fish?
- (Repeat: "Jesus used fun things to teach Peter. What fun things do we do to show we care about God? Can you think of a way to make someone else feel loved, like Jesus made Peter feel loved?")
- How can we be like Jesus when we make mistakes?
- (Repeat: "Peter was sorry and tried again. Sometimes we do things wrong, but Jesus always forgives! What happens when you apologize to someone? How can you ask God for forgiveness like Peter did?")
- Each question invites exploration while keeping it age-appropriate with repetition of key themes: love, forgiveness, repentance, and kindness. Would you like any adjustments for a specific focus?

## Prayer Focus

*Prayer for Wonder and Forgiveness (Jesus Forgives Peter) "Dear Jesus, you are so kind and full of love, like a big, warm hug for every child who needs to glow. Even when Peter made a big mistake, you forgave him, just like you forgive us, too! Help us to love and forgive like you do, so we can shine bright with goodness and joy!" "Jesus, we wonder at your amazing grace, how you forgive mistakes, what a wonderful place! Like Peter, we may sometimes go astray, but you always draw us back in love's sweet way. Teach us to trust you and never fear, just like Peter, we learn to share and care!" "Lord, help us to see like you do, so kind and true, when others make mistakes, help us forgive too. Like Peter, we may say, 'I don't get it!' But Jesus says, 'It's okay, I'll fix it!' Shine your light in our hearts today, so we grow strong with love and play!" "Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving all our sins, for you are our friend, our loving, kind, divine. Help us to be like you, gentle and wise, so the world sees how amazing you are! We love you, Lord, with all our hearts and cheer, Jesus forgives, and that's wonderful here!"*

### >> 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.