

PETER AND JOHN BEFORE THE COUNCIL

Unit C4 Acts 4:1-22

YOU WILL NEED

- Basket, Bible, book stand, candle
- Beige felt underlay
- Brown felt rectangle (12cm x 20cm) to represent the Temple precinct
- 6 grey (or black) felt strips (1cm X 15cm) to make prison (see diagram below)
- 3D figures
 - Peter
 - John
 - 2 Religious leaders
 - 2 crowd
 - Healed beggar

PREPARATION - Invite the children to enter the storytelling space, have them seated in a semicircle, ready to listen to the story. Ensure that all materials are prepared in a basket (gold box for parables) and that a Bible is in close proximity, elevated off the floor on a book stand.

TELLING THE STORY - Story is a key part of our faith tradition. Young children, with their capacity for intuitive learning, are particularly able to find meaning through story.

Hold the Bible in your hands...

This story comes from our Sacred Scripture, the Bible. We find this story in the New Testament, in the Book of Acts, so we know that this story is centered on the life and teachings of Jesus and the early Christian community. Because this story is from the Bible we will light the candle as we listen to the story.

Lay out the beige felt underlay and place the brown square close to you in the middle of the underlay. Place the four grey felt strips to make a square (gaol) on the far left of the underlay.

Place Peter and John in front of the Temple as you say:

In the time after Pentecost, Jesus' disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit.

Place crowd members facing Peter and John and a little back from them:

One day Peter and John were speaking to the people about Jesus.

Place the religious leaders facing Peter and John:

The religious leaders came to them annoyed because Peter and John were teaching the people about Jesus and the resurrection of the dead.

Place Peter and John in the square (gaol) on the far side of the underlay as you say:

So the religious leaders arrested Peter and John and put them in gaol until the next day, for it was already evening.

Leave the religious leaders to the centre of the underlay in front of the Temple precinct.

The next day the religious leaders gathered in Jerusalem with the High Priest.

Move Peter and John out of gaol facing the religious leaders.

They made the prisoners stand in front of them and asked, “By what power or by what name did you heal this man?” Place healed beggar next to Peter and John.

Turn Peter and John to face the students, point to healed beggar and say:

“Let it be known to all of you, that this man is standing before you in good health by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead.”

Move the priest and leaders to the side, close to the Temple, leaving Peter and John and the healed man in the centre and say:

The leaders and High Priest were amazed at the courage of these ordinary men and what they had done, but they wanted to stop the news about Jesus from spreading.

Move them back to Peter and John

So they ordered Peter and John to speak no more about Jesus.

Put your hand over Peter and John as you say:

But Peter and John answered them, “You must judge whether it is right for us to listen to you or God, but we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.”

After threatening Peter and John again, the leaders let them go. All the people praised God for what had happened.

WONDERING - Following the story, “I wonder” statements engage children with the story and invite reflection. Wondering together teaches the art of dialogue, of listening to others, accepting and learning from others’ ideas and contributions.

Sit back, pause for a moment, look up at students, and then wonder about the story together.

I wonder...

- how we know that Peter and John were filled with the Holy Spirit.
- why the religious leaders didn't want Peter and John teaching about Jesus.
- how Peter and John felt when they were arrested and imprisoned.
- what part of this story you think is the most important.
- why the leaders let them go.
- how the man who was healed felt.

EXPLORING - Provide an opportunity for individual/small group exploration in order to respond to the story. This provides students with time to focus on and explore the story or aspects of it, which have significance for them. For this reason, students choose from a variety of materials and types of work. This is an opportunity for students to respond to what they have heard in whatever way they choose, it should be seen as a prayerful opportunity for dialogue between the student and God. The 'work' itself is often an expression of the child's experience or feelings. Children may share their 'work' only if they wish.

PRAYER - Conclude the session with prayer. Children come closer to God through the experience of prayer. Teachers help students to pray by praying with them, providing a variety of prayer experiences. These may include laying of hands over students' works, spontaneous prayer, prayer related to the Scripture, prayers found in KWL, informal or formal prayers, or a hymn.

Carefully pack story materials back into your basket. Ensure that children are watching so they know how to pack the materials away and where to find them.