

# Peter's Denial

John 18:15-18, 25-27

## **MEMORY VERSE**

MATTHEW 10:32

"Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

A serving spoon, a ping-pong ball, and a jar with a top narrow enough for the ball to barely squeeze through.

A box or bowl, three blocks, and a whistle.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Denied Friendship**

Set up a child in your class to be the recipient of denial. Choose two children in your class who know each other well. Prepare one to deny knowing the other. Begin an interview with the denying child by asking probing questions about the alleged friendship. The other child should be surprised, even defensive, about the denial.

Explain to the child that you were setting him up to make an illustration. Tell the class that that is what Peter did to Jesus. Ask the denied child, how it felt to be denied. Allow for some discussion.

## **LESSON TIME!**

Have you ever been in a group that made fun of Jesus and the church? Did you say anything to defend Jesus or did you just stay quiet? Is it easier to deny Jesus by being quiet or is it easier to stand up for what you believe when you are part of a crowd? What if they turn to you and say, "You go to church, don't you?" What would you say?

Today's story is about Jesus' disciple, Peter, who had to make a decision to stand up for Jesus or deny Him. Judas, one of His disciples, had betrayed Jesus. Jesus was arrested by soldiers and taken to the High Priest. He was being falsely accused. The High Priest was planning Jesus' death on the cross.

Earlier in the evening, Peter had told Jesus that no matter what happened, he would stand up for Jesus, even to the death. Jesus told him that before the rooster crowed in the morning he would have denied Him three times. **Good intentions are not enough; it's what we do that counts.**

### JOHN 18:15

**And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple. Now that disciple was known to the high priest, and went with Jesus into the courtyard of the high priest.**

Peter and another disciple were following at a distance to see what was going to happen to Jesus. Since the other disciple (probably John) was known by the High Priest, he was allowed to go into the courtyard with Jesus.

Since Peter wasn't known, he had to stay at the door of the gate. The other disciple came back to the gate, and got permission for Peter to come into the yard while he went inside.

### JOHN 18:16-17

**But Peter stood at the door outside. Then the other disciple, who was known to the high priest, went out and spoke to her who kept the door, and brought Peter in.**

**Then the servant girl who kept the door said to Peter, "You are not also one of this Man's disciples, are you?" He said, "I am not."**

The servant asked if Peter was a disciple of Jesus. If he acknowledged that he was, he was afraid that he would be arrested too, so he denied Jesus by saying that he was not. It is interesting that Peter was now afraid. Just hours earlier he was ready to go to battle with the soldiers who came to take Jesus away, but now he was afraid to acknowledge that he knew Jesus.

Sometimes we can be afraid of what people think. We may even be afraid of what they think about us because we love Jesus. But if we love Jesus we do not need to be afraid. 1 John 4:18 says, "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear." Even though Jesus was arrested He still had everything under control. It was the time that was planned for Him to lay down His life. We can't be too critical of Peter because many of us would probably do the same thing. But we certainly can learn from Peter's mistake. Romans 15:4 says, "For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." Many of the details about people written in the Bible are there as examples for us, both good and bad, to learn from.

## **Good Intentions are Not Enough**

Set up a race between two children in your class. Make a course that they must follow while carrying a ping-pong ball on a serving spoon. The object of the game is to be the first to drop the ball into a narrow jar at the end of the course. Whenever the ball falls from the spoon the class must shout, "Good intentions are not enough!" When the balls fall the children must go back to the beginning of the course, even if they make it to the end and miss getting the ball into the jar.

Illustrate for the children that even though they tried really hard and intended to win the race, good intentions are not enough. Make this an opportunity to explain that even with our good intentions, we fall short and need the saving grace of Jesus.

### JOHN 18:18

And the servants and officers who had made a fire of coals stood there, for it was cold, and they warmed themselves. And Peter stood with them and warmed himself.

Have you ever been camping and set a bonfire in your campsite at night for light and to stay warm? The servants and officials had set a fire in the courtyard of the temple too. Peter was standing before the fire with them. Notice that Peter was staying with the servants of the High Priest and the officers of the temple (possibly Roman soldiers). These were very possibly the ones who came to help in arresting Jesus.

Sometimes when we spend time hanging out with the world we can get into trouble. We certainly need to share the good news of Jesus with those who are lost, but we have to be careful about being in the wrong place at the wrong time with the wrong people. Perhaps Peter could have been with the other disciples praying. Again, some good lessons to learn from Peter's life.

### JOHN 18:25

Now Simon Peter stood and warmed himself. Therefore they said to him, "You are not also one of His disciples, are you?" He denied it and said, "I am not!"

One of the servants in front of the fire turned to Peter and asked him again if he was Jesus' disciple. Peter denied it again for the second time that evening. **Good intentions are not enough; it's what we do that counts.**

### JOHN 18:26-27

One of the servants of the high priest, a relative of him whose ear Peter cut off, said, "Did I not see you in the garden with Him?"

Peter then denied again; and immediately a rooster crowed.

Another servant recognized Peter as the one who tried to defend Jesus by cutting off the ear of a servant when Jesus was arrested. He challenged Peter saying that he knew and saw him in the Olive Garden with Jesus. This must have been pretty frightening because Peter was now all by himself. What if this person wanted revenge for what happened to his relative.

Again Peter said that he didn't even know Him. The rooster crowed and he remembered that Jesus had said that he would deny Jesus three times that very night. Peter went home and cried. He had realized what he had done and he felt awful. He immediately asked for forgiveness. Do you think the Lord forgave him? **Good intentions are not enough; it's what we do that counts.**

## Before the Whistle Blows

Prepare a box or bowl and three blocks. Hide the blocks in the room and explain to a volunteer that the object of the game is to place the blocks in the container before you blow the whistle twice. Be prepared to blow the whistle approximately every five seconds.

You can make the game more difficult by reducing the seconds of the whistle blowing. Ask volunteers how it felt to hear the whistle blow for the second time before they had a chance to finish their tasks. Ask how Peter must have felt to have denied Jesus three times when he heard that second crow of the rooster.

Peter had very good intentions, but **good intentions are not enough; it's what we do that counts.** Peter asked forgiveness and turned from his sin. He learned from his mistakes and became strong in his faith. Later he became a very great man with Jesus' help.

If we follow Jesus, He will guide us. We don't have to fear the crowd and deny Him. Jesus will give us the strength to do what is right if we trust Him. We should reflect Jesus by the way we live. Light always overtakes darkness. When we fail to reflect the light of Jesus, the darkness of the world wins.

When we fail, we can learn from our mistakes like Peter did. We can ask Jesus to forgive and help us, and He will teach us to be strong and to stand up for what we believe. Jesus always hears our cries for help. In Matthew 10:32, Jesus said, "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven."

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer asking Jesus to help us to do what we intend to do; live for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.