**Live in Community**

 Small Group Study

**Volume Overview**

**Stand Firm**

Put on every piece of God’s armor so you will be able to resist the enemy in the time of evil. Then after the battle you will still be standing firm. ([Ephesians 6:13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph6.13))

*The world thinks of power as action. Powerful people are able to take control, able to change things. But Jesus blessed the meek, the hungry, and the poor. There is a power this world overlooks. There is power in standing firm in faith. Christians have long stood their ground, not to gain this world’s power but as witnesses to a better world to come. So we stand strong, committed, and bear witness to the world.*

**Session Overview**

**Bear Witness**

**Biblical Encounter:** Peter and John Stand Trial ([Acts 4:1–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac4.1-21))

**Outcome:** Live in such a way that even adversaries can tell you’re committed to Jesus.

*In this session, we’ll look at how Peter and John boldly proclaimed their faith. Both of these men had followed Jesus, and they were committed to spreading the gospel. They preached boldly, and God performed miracles through them. Unfortunately, they ran into some people who didn’t like what they had to say, so they were thrown in jail.*

*We can learn a lot from these two men, but today’s focus is on their character. Even their enemies could tell that these men had been with Jesus. This begs the question: Can people tell that we’ve been with Jesus? Is our faith obvious to others by the way we live our life—even to people who disagree with us and what we believe?*

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| ***You Will Need*** *•* ***Group Activity Page****, one per team* *•* ***Group Activity Page Answer Page****, as needed* *• Pencils, one per team****Getting Ready*** *• Print copies of the* ***Group Activity Page****, one per team.* *• Print the* ***Group Activity Page Answer Page****, as needed.* **• *First time leading* Live *for Youth? Look here for the*** [**Facilitator Guide**](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf)**.** |

*To access session content and videos from a computer, visit:* [***BibleEngagementProject.com/downloads***](https://bibleengagementproject.com/downloads)

**Engage**

**Welcome**

*Take this time to welcome everyone, introduce new students, learn names, and thank everyone for coming. Your friendliness here can create a comfort level that encourages student participation later.*

**Opening Prayer**

*Prayer thoughts: Consider using the Lord’s Prayer (*[*Matthew 6:9–13*](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt6.9-13)*) as a template as you pray. At the end, pray for any needs that you know about in your group. Ask God to help everyone to walk away changed from this discussion of God’s Word.*

**Introduction**

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| **QUESTION**Are you more likely to blend in with a crowd, or do you like to stand out and be noticed? |

When it comes to blending in versus standing out, we’re all wired differently. Some of us are shy, while others are outgoing. Some people are the life of the party, while others dislike being in big groups. But as Christians, we’re all called to stand out from the world around us. That doesn’t mean we wear different clothes or act weird. But as our Bible story today shows us, it means that we live in such a way that even those against us can tell that we’re following Jesus.

**Group Activity**

**Hidden Pictures**

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| ***You Will Need*** *•* ***Group Activity Page****, one per team* *•* ***Group Activity Page Answer Page****, as needed* *• Pencils, one per team****Getting Ready*** *• Print copies of the* ***Group Activity Page****, one per team.* *• Print the* ***Group Activity Page Answer Page****, as needed* |

Have you ever looked at pictures where things are hidden in plain sight? That’s our activity today. The concept is simple: Split into teams, and each team will get a ***Group Activity Page*** with hidden pictures. Your job is to work together and scan the picture until you find all the hidden objects. They blend in really well, so you’ll have to look closely. Shout out as soon as your team has found all the hidden objects.

• *Have students form teams. Team size doesn’t matter if everyone can be involved.*

• *Give a copy of the* ***Group Activity Page*** *and a pencil to each team.*

• *Celebrate the winners.*

The purpose of these hidden objects was to blend in and not be obvious. As Christians, we should be the opposite. We should stand out from the world. But what does this mean? In today’s Bible story, we’ll meet two men whose conduct and character were so different that even their enemies couldn’t deny that they had been with Jesus. Let’s watch today’s video before we dive in.

**Watch**

**Consider What the Bible Says**

*Ensure each student has access to a Bible, preferably the same version.*

In the Book of Acts, we see that the Early Church was growing rapidly. People were getting saved, miracles were taking place, and God was doing incredible things. This upset many religious leaders of the day, though. Time and time again, Christians were confronted by the Jewish religious leaders. Today’s story begins with Peter and John being thrown into prison for their faith. This isn’t a sad story, though. It’s the story of the two men’s boldness, courage, and character that stands out.

**Peter and John Were Thrown in Jail**

Read [Acts 4:1–4](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac4.1-4).

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| **QUESTION**What good thing happened as a result of Peter and John speaking to the people that day? |

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| **QUESTION**What made the priests, temple guard captain, and Sadducees upset? |

The group that arrested Peter and John were Jews who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead through Jesus. That’s why they were so upset with Peter and John. It’s also why they didn’t like Jesus in the first place. Jesus’ resurrection, the key event of Christianity, went against everything that the Sadducees believed.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think the crowd felt when Peter and John were arrested? |

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| **QUESTION**If you were Peter or John that day, how do you think you would have responded? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think this story mentions how many people chose to believe in Jesus that day? |

Thousands of people put their faith in Jesus that day. Even though the Church was very young at that time, Christianity was experiencing explosive growth. It’s simply proof that sharing the gospel has an impact. When the good news is preached, people can experience real life change. Peter and John’s boldness was proof of that, as we’ll see in Peter’s response to the charges made by the Sadducees.

**Peter Responded with Boldness**

Read [Acts 4:5–12](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac4.5-12).

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| **QUESTION**What emotions do you think Peter felt when he stood before these Jewish leaders? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you see the Holy Spirit at work in this passage? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever felt like the Holy Spirit helped you respond to someone? What happened? |

Standing in front of powerful, important men, Peter delivered a strong response. But the power behind his response didn’t come from Peter. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit worked through Peter—making him bold in the face of opposition.

Remember that one reason God gave us the Bible was to instruct us. He uses stories of people and their situations to teach us. He also uses these stories to show us that we, too, can walk in the power of the Holy Spirit.

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| **QUESTION**What does it mean to be full of the Holy Spirit? |

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| **QUESTION**Can you think of a time that you defended your faith in the face of opposition? If so, was it easy or hard for you? |

**The Council Couldn’t Deny the Truth**

Read [Acts 4:13–21](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ac4.13-21).

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| **QUESTION**What did these leaders notice about Peter and John? |

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| **QUESTION**How should people around us be able to tell that we have been with Jesus? |

It’s easy to forget that Peter hadn’t always been this bold. Right before Jesus’ death on the Cross, others noticed that Peter had been with Jesus ([Luke 22:54–60](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Lk22.54-60)). In that situation, Peter denied any relationship with Jesus. But sometime after his denial of Jesus, Peter was restored by Jesus himself, and he was never the same from that point forward. Now, a short time later, Peter stood firm in his faith, and his boldness was noticed by everyone watching.

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| **QUESTION**How do you think Peter and John’s personal relationship with Jesus gave them boldness in this situation? |

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| **QUESTION**How did Peter and John respond when they were told to never again speak or teach in the name of Jesus? |

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| **QUESTION**How do you think Peter and John’s boldness was an example to other disciples and friends of Jesus? |

Peter’s response stopped the leaders in their tracks. Who were these regular, ordinary guys, and what made them so bold and powerful? Not only was Peter and John’s response powerful, but the miracles they performed spoke for themselves. The disciples’ message was spreading, too. Miracles kept happening, and people were getting saved.

Peter and John were simply telling others what they had seen and knew about Jesus. They weren’t relying on their own ability to preach or to teach, or their own strength to perform miracles and draw crowds. They were simply relying on the Holy Spirit and telling others about Jesus. They knew that the gospel was true, and they wanted others to know the truth of salvation through Jesus as well.

**Did You Know?**

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| Peter and John were standing trial before the same Jewish leaders who were responsible, alongside Pilate, for the death of Jesus. High priests Caiaphas and Annas, the main architects behind the plot against Jesus, and the Sadducees all represented the Sanhedrin—the ruling body of Jewish religious leaders. But Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, was not intimidated by them. Anyone present would have been shocked that Peter boldly placed the blame on them for Jesus’ crucifixion because they did not have the power to crucify anyone unless done hand in hand with Pontius Pilate, the Roman authority. |

**Reflect**

**Live in such a way that even adversaries can tell you’re committed to Jesus.**

Peter and John could have easily given up in this situation. After all, nobody ever wants to be arrested and mistreated. But they weren’t out to please the religious leaders. They simply wanted to obey God. The hero of this story is not Peter or John, though. The hero of the story (and the hero of the whole story of Scripture) is Jesus. Jesus saved Peter and John and changed their lives. Jesus had sent the Holy Spirit who empowered them. And Jesus was working through them to draw people to God. How could they not share?

**Listen to God**

Let’s take time to consider how our life demonstrates a real trust in the Bible. These questions are meant to serve as a conversation between you and God. Sharing your responses with the group is completely voluntary.

• *Pause for a few moments of silent reflection after reading the questions. Then ask students if they want to share. Sharing your personal response may also be helpful to the students.*

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| **QUESTION**How has Jesus changed your life? |

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| **QUESTION**How is your life a witness to others of what Jesus has done for you? |

**Activate**

Let’s commit to be people who are witnesses for Jesus, and tell others what we have seen and heard. Determine to tell someone this week about what Jesus has done in your life. Commit to pray every day for your friends who need Jesus.

**Conclusion**

When we have seen and heard of Jesus’ strength and power and experienced His love ourselves, how could we ever stop telling others about Him? Today, we read a story of two men who were so captivated by Jesus that people noticed. Even their enemies couldn’t help but see the difference Jesus had made in their lives. Perhaps people in our life would take notice too if we stood firm in our faith more often. Living for Jesus may bring obstacles, but it also brings opportunities to tell others about Him.

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| **Salvation Opportunity***Include this if you think there may be some in the group who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus.*The first step in living a life full of faith and purpose is to simply know Jesus and experience His grace and forgiveness for yourself. Maybe you’ve never encountered Him before. Today could be the perfect day to trust Him with your life and experience firsthand all that He has to offer.**Is anyone here that we can pray for who doesn’t have a relationship with Jesus or wants to renew their relationship with Him?***Take a moment to acknowledge those who respond, and thank them for their desire to make things right between themselves and God. Pray with them as you close in prayer or after the group time is over. Following group time, talk more about where they are in their walk with God and how you might be able to help.* |

**Prayer**

Heavenly Father, we want to be witnesses for You, and we don’t want to let any opposition or difficulty stop us. We all have people in our life who don’t know You. Would You help us to look more and more like Jesus every day? We want others to see Jesus in us. Help us to live boldly for You every single day. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

**Dismissal**

This week I want to challenge everyone to go through the personal devotions. Let’s see what the Holy Spirit speaks to us and how God’s Word helps us grow in our faith. See each of you next time!