

Apostle Peter in prison



Acts 12: 1-17

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The first Christian congregation in Jerusalem was severely tried and tested. King Agrippa, a grandson of Herod the Great, had Apostle Peter arrested and imprisoned.

The congregation prayed unceasingly for their apostle. In the night before he was to be judged, an angel of the Lord freed Apostle Peter without the guards noticing anything. The apostle went straight to the house where the faithful were gathered. They were all overjoyed at his miraculous deliverance.

That same night Apostle Peter had to flee to another part of the country.

The children learn that God protects his servants and they begin to understand the importance of intercession.

The life of the first Christians in Jerusalem was not easy. Some of the faithful were persecuted for their faith's sake, but they remained true and faithful to all that Jesus Christ had taught them and that the apostles had proclaimed for years. One night something extraordinary happened:

It is evening in Jerusalem. A number of apostolic members have gathered in a large house. The faithful are sad. They keep discussing the arrest and imprisonment of their beloved Apostle Peter who, though innocent, has been imprisoned for some days now. Tomorrow he is to appear before King Agrippa, the grandson of Herod the Great. "Will he be sentenced? How can we help our apostle?" are the questions they ask themselves anxiously. They find comfort in celebrating Holy Communion together and become somewhat calmer. They pray fervently and earnestly to God. They plead with the Lord to protect and help their apostle. They trust the heavenly Father and are convinced he will do what is best for them. They decide to remain there the whole night and pray.

1

Suddenly, in the middle of the night, there is a knock on the door. They are startled and frightened. They wonder who could be knocking at such a time. Is it a friend or a foe? Rhoda, one of the maidservants, goes to the outside door but

is afraid to open it. She asks: "Who is there?"

"'Tis I, Peter," comes the whispered reply. Rhoda is so surprised that she forgets to open the door. She runs back into the house and calls out: "Apostle Peter is at the door!" "Rhoda, don't talk nonsense. You know as well as we do that he is in jail under heavy guard," the others answer. "But I recognized his voice. Peter is outside!" insists Rhoda. Just then there is another knock on the door and Rhoda blurts out: "Do you hear, he is knocking again!" Now they all rush to the door and open it.

2

And indeed, Apostle Peter is standing there! He is joyfully greeted by all. Eagerly they wait for his explanation. The apostle recounts what has happened: "I was lying in prison chained to two soldiers and was fast asleep. Suddenly someone shook me and I awoke. There was a bright light in the cell and an angel of the Lord said to me: 'Hurry! Get up!' At the same moment the chains fell away from my hands. The soldiers did not wake up. 'Put on your shoes and your cloak and follow me!' the angel said. As if in a dream, we passed two guards who did not notice us. Finally the huge iron prison gate opened by itself and we walked through unhindered. Suddenly the angel was gone. I stopped in my tracks and began to realize that what I had experienced had not been a dream! The Lord had sent an angel to free me. I have come straight here to you to tell you of this wonderful happening."

Together they thank God for this miraculous rescue.

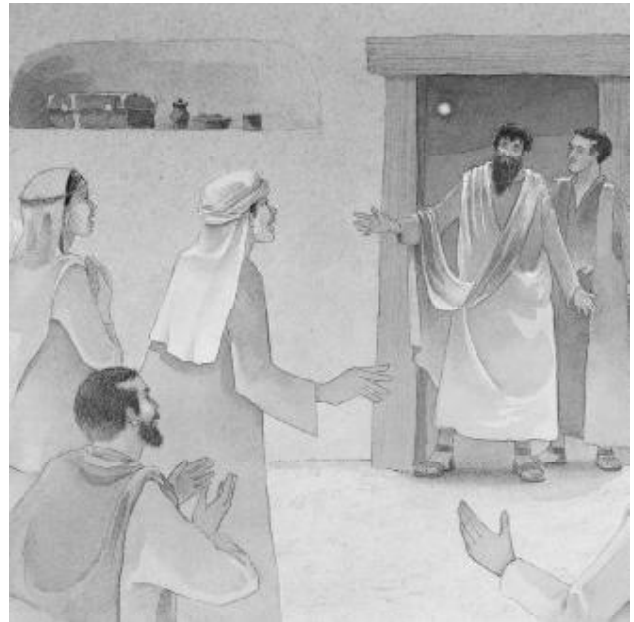
Unfortunately the Apostle Peter cannot remain with them for long as the soldiers will soon come looking for him.

He sends greetings to James and the rest of the congregation and asks that they be told of his wonderful deliverance. He then bids them farewell in the assurance that James, the brother of the Lord Jesus, will care for them during his absence.

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*Apostle Peter was innocently imprisoned.
The entire congregation prayed for him.
In the middle of the night an angel of the Lord came
and rescued the apostle.
The apostle went straight to the assembled congregation.
The members were overjoyed that the Lord had intervened
so wonderfully.*



- 1 The congregation of Jerusalem prays and pleads to God on behalf of their apostle. Have our children ever prayed so fervently for anyone?
(Perhaps the teacher can mention his own experience here.)
- 2 We look at and describe the picture.
We let the children enumerate ways in which the apostle could regain his freedom.
- 3 The congregation prayed fervently for their apostle in prison.
Let us also always pray for our apostles and the other ministers.
We enumerate reasons for such intercession (help, strength, comfort...).
- 4 The children make a drawing of the apostle in prison.