

Volume 3
SPRING

ALL together NOW



for **ages 4-12**

**13 Sunday school lessons
when you have kids
of all ages in one room**



LOIS KEFFER

Author of **ALL-IN-ONE SUNDAY SCHOOL**

Group

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This Group resource incorporates our R.E.A.L. approach to ministry. It reinforces a growing friendship with Jesus, encourages long-term learning, and results in life transformation, because it's



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Experiential

What learners experience through discussion and action sticks with them up to 9 times longer than what they simply hear or read.

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The aim of Christian education is to equip learners to be both hearers and doers of God's Word.

Learner-based

Learners understand and retain more when the learning process takes into consideration how they learn best.

All Together Now

Volume 3 — SPRING

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Introduction

Dear Friend in Children's Ministry,

The world is greening, the joy of spring is in the air. Time to welcome you to *All Together Now, Volume 3*! This quarter we continue through the final chapters in Jesus' life on earth, from mighty miracles that had all of Jerusalem wanting to proclaim him king, through the downward path of Holy Week and its triumphant ending as we finish our journey along the way of the King. Then we'll pick right up with the 12 who changed the world—first in Jerusalem, then in Judea, Samaria, and all the parts of the earth!

We'll begin the quarter by intercepting a mysterious night visitor to Jesus and end it by barely surviving a thrilling shipwreck with the Apostle Paul. And you and your kids won't want to miss a beat in between!

When the Jewish opposition saw Jesus' lifeless body on the cross, they thought their campaign to stamp out his new way of thinking about the kingdom of God was complete. After all, he had only a few close disciples and they were running scared—hiding out in some secret room, their hopes dashed, the savior they so passionately believed in brought down by death.

But those leaders couldn't have been more wrong! Jesus wasn't defeated. In fact, the power of God was about to burst forth, carrying Jesus' message across the entire Roman Empire and eventually the world, with an energy that only the Holy Spirit could provide.

How often during our lifetimes do we live out this same story? When all seems lost, perhaps well after all seems lost, God's will comes to light with clarity and the Spirit moves with power that takes our breath away.

Today's kids need to know this truth. They need to have it reaffirmed again and again. It's in the moment when everything seems to have melted down around us that God's power wells up, the scene begins to change, and we realize that touching bottom was just part of acknowledging that we are nothing without our great and mighty God who chose us before time began to be part of his design for the work of the kingdom of heaven on earth.

Lois Keffer

Face-Off With the Sanhedrin

Lesson 10

LESSON AIM

To help kids realize that ★ *God helps us speak the truth boldly.*

OBJECTIVES

Kids will

- ✓ role-play situations in which kids get in trouble without doing anything wrong,
- ✓ participate in a cue and response story about Peter and John healing a man and appearing before the Sanhedrin, and
- ✓ make a Peter paper-bag puppet.

BIBLE BASIS



Acts 3:1–4:22

After the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples who'd previously holed up in a locked room out of fear had no qualms about moving freely around Jerusalem. Not only that, they returned to their old practices of going to the Temple for the main hours of prayer—in this case, 3:00 in the afternoon.

A beggar who from birth had not been able to walk wisely had himself placed near the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, probably the gate that separated the Court of the Gentiles from the Court of the Women. All Jews were expected to be merciful

You'll need...

- ☐ copy of the "Role-Plays" handout (p. 109)
- ☐ paper lunch bags
- ☐ copies of the "Peter Puppet Add-Ons" handout (p. 113)
- ☐ markers
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ glue sticks

to the poor, and what better time to remind them of this than when they were on their way into the Temple to pray! This particular beggar had probably become part of the landscape to many of the Temple worshippers, but on this day he caught Peter's eye.

Peter and John commanded the beggar, "Look at us!" The man must have had his money receptacle eagerly at the ready, but a look at the apostles would have told him that they were men of no great monetary means. Can you imagine the jaw-dropping effect of these great words of Peter's? "I don't have any silver or gold for you. But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, get up and walk!"

A strong right hand from the big fisherman helped the man to his feet and instantly his feet and ankles grew strong. The beggar couldn't contain his joy! He went leaping about on those newly strengthened legs for all to see. The awestruck crowd recognized the formerly disabled beggar and wondered at the sight. Made wise by the Holy Spirit, Peter called out to the crowd and named the source of the healing power to be Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Before he finished preaching, 2,000 more had joined the church.

It didn't take long for the Temple guards to lock up Peter and John. The two men appeared before the Sanhedrin, the very body that condemned Jesus, the next day. If the elders of Israel thought they could intimidate our two brave disciples, they were dead wrong. Rather, Peter ended up giving the Sanhedrin a scolding rebuke.

The frustrated Jewish leaders could do nothing, for there with Peter and John stood the healed man—the evidence of Jesus' healing power. The evidence of the power of the Holy Spirit.

The elders of Israel wondered at Peter and John's boldness, knowing that they were simple Galilean fishermen, not men trained in matters of the law. When they ordered the disciples to speak no more of Jesus, the power and eloquence of Peter's response reached a new height: *Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?*

What a goosebumps story! What a fire-in-the-heart moment! And how blessed to know that the same Holy Spirit who inspired Peter and John in the face of the Sanhedrin can work within us 2,000 years later!



Psalm 118

The key tie-in from this Psalm is verse 22: *The stone that the builders rejected has now become the cornerstone.* Jesus quoted it

(Matthew 21:42), and now Peter repeats it to the Sanhedrin.

But look at everything else there is to dip into in this wonderful psalm! Read verses 6-9 and think of Peter's and John's attitudes as they stood before the frowning faces of the very body that condemned Jesus. Wow. Read through the entire psalm and identify how many phrases have become the basis of familiar worship songs.

This rich passage of Scripture is the perfect center for your quiet time with God this week.

UNDERSTANDING YOUR KIDS

A child might compare Peter and John's experience before the Sanhedrin to the dreaded trip to the principal's office. Or the reckoning moment with any person of authority whom they've innocently crossed before. They understand stammering lips, sweaty palms, a racing heart, and panic running just below the surface.

What a comfort to them to learn that God won't abandon them in the most intimidating situations. As young pilgrims in their journey with Jesus, the Spirit of God goes before them, behind them, beside them, and dwells within them.

Use this lesson to help kids believe that God's Spirit can empower them ★ *to speak the truth boldly.*

ATTENTION GRABBER

Caught Doing Good

Say: **Let's begin today by role playing three situations. It'll be up to you to figure out how the three situations connect.**

Help kids form three groups. (It's fine if a group has as few as two kids.) Hand each group one of the role-plays from the "Role-Plays" handout (p. 109). Give kids a few minutes to prepare, and then have them present their role plays to the group.

Have the group applaud each small group after its role-play presentation. Then say:

What's similar about all those role-plays? Take a minute to talk with your group before you answer.

Let children discuss this until they come up with the idea that in each of the role-plays, a character got into trouble for doing something good.

Say: **It's a pretty confusing feeling to be "caught" for doing something good, isn't it? When that happens, we don't automatically say, *Stop! You need to understand that I was doing the right thing. I was trying to be like Jesus!***

In today's Bible passage we'll see how two of Jesus' disciples got caught for doing something very good. And when they did, they got put in a scary situation. But even in that scary situation, ★ *God helped them speak the truth boldly.* Let's see what we can discover to help us speak the truth boldly.

BIBLE EXPLORATION

Peter and John Speak the Truth Boldly

(Acts 3:1-4:22)

Say: **When the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, the disciples stopped hiding. They moved out into the streets and started telling everyone about Jesus. Not only did they tell people about Jesus, they did some of the same kinds of miracles that Jesus did when he was on earth. For example, one day...**

Wait a minute—it's time to get you involved! Explain to kids that you're going to repeat a few important words as the story continues. Tell kids each time you say one of the important words,

Role-Plays

ROLE-PLAY 1

- Child 1 is having trouble working out a math problem.
- Child 2 turns around to explain the problem to Child 1.
- Teacher is tired of all the extra talking in class and says: *Everyone who's talking raise your hand! You will stay in from recess and do extra math work today.*

ROLE-PLAY 2

- Child 1 visits a local store with friends.
- Child 1's friends are stealing, but Child 1 tries to persuade them to put the stolen things back.
- Child 1 is held with friends at store until police arrive and then taken home by police who explain that while Child 1 was innocent, friends shoplifted.
- Parent of Child 1 is disappointed and angry with Child 1.

ROLE-PLAY 3

- Child 1 invites Child 2 over to play.
- Child 2 grabs a ball and starts throwing it around the dining room.
- Child 1 urges Child 2 to take the ball outside, and heads out the back door.
- Child 2 again throws the ball inside, accidentally hitting Child 1's elderly Grandmother in the head and causing her to cry.
- Child 1 rushes to crying Grandmother and tries to comfort her. Child 1 feels terrible.
- Parent scolds Child 1 and sends Child 2 home.

they'll give a certain response. Take a moment to teach kids the cues and responses. Each time you teach a response, model it and have kids do it with you. Say:

- ✓ **Whenever I say "Temple," use your arms to make a roof over your head.**
- ✓ **Whenever I say "beggar," hold out your hands and say, "Help the poor!"**
- ✓ **Whenever I say "Peter" or "Peter and John," pump your fist and say "Yes!"**
- ✓ **Whenever I say "Jewish leaders," pretend to stroke your beard and say, "Hmm."**
- ✓ **Whenever I say "Jesus," point a finger in the air, stand and say, "Christ the Lord!"**

Call out the cue words in random order to make sure the kids have the responses down. Rehearse until you're satisfied that the kids are confident with their responses.

In the story below, each of the cue words is italicized for your convenience. Emphasize the cue words, pausing to let children respond with vigor.

Say: **One day, *Peter and John* went up to the *Temple* to pray at the time for afternoon prayers. Inside the *Temple*, beside the Beautiful Gate, sat a crippled *beggar*. The *beggar* sat in the same spot every day, hoping that people who were on their way to pray would remember that God had commanded them to be merciful to the poor.**

This *beggar* caught the attention of *Peter and John*. He looked at them hopefully, thinking they would give him money. But *Peter and John* looked closely at the *beggar* and commanded him, "Look at us." *Peter* looked the *beggar* right in the eye and said, "I don't have any silver or gold. But what I do have, I'll give you. In the name of Jesus, get up and walk!"

The *beggar* looked shocked. But when *Peter* held out his strong right hand, the *beggar* took it and stood up. All at once the *beggar's* feet and ankles grew strong. He was so excited that he started jumping and leaping all over the *Temple*!

Interrupt the story to explain that the children need to use a new response for the beggar. The new response is to jump out of chairs and shout "Whoo!" Practice this response a few times, and then proceed with the story, saying:

The *beggar* couldn't stop himself from jumping and leaping and praising God all over the *Temple*! The other worshippers in the *Temple* recognized that the man who was jumping and leaping and praising God was the same *beggar* who could not walk, who had sat by the Beautiful Gate of the *Temple* for years and years. Their hearts were filled with wonder!

Peter jumped up onto one of the porches of the *Temple* to speak to the crowd. "Faith in the name of Jesus healed this man," he declared. Before *Peter* finished preaching, 2,000 more people believed in *Jesus*!

Seeing what was going on, the *Jewish leaders* sent men to arrest *Peter and John* and throw them in jail overnight. The next day *Peter and John* had to appear before the *Jewish leaders*. Remember, this was the same group of men who had arrested and condemned *Jesus*!

But do you think *Peter and John* were afraid? Not at all. They stood boldly before the *Jewish leaders* and proclaimed that they had healed the *beggar* in the name of Jesus. They said, "There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved."

The *Jewish leaders* mumbled and grumbled. They couldn't argue with *Peter and John*, because the healed *beggar* was standing right beside them. So they strictly ordered the disciples never again to teach in the name of *Jesus*.

But God helped *Peter and John* speak the truth boldly.

"Who are we to obey," *Peter* asked, "God or you? We can't help telling about the things we have seen and heard!"

The *Jewish leaders* could hardly believe how boldly *Peter and John* had spoken. They had expected the disciples to be afraid. But no! ★ *God helped Peter and John speak the truth boldly.*

The church grew and everyone praised God for the great miracle of the *beggar* being healed.

Join the kids in a big round of applause for the help they gave you in telling the Bible story. Then ask everyone to join you in a discussion circle.

Ask:

- Why do you think *Peter and John* healed the *beggar* in the name of *Jesus*?

- How could *Peter and John* speak the truth about *Jesus* so bravely and boldly to the very men who had declared *Jesus* guilty?

Say: ★ *God helps us speak the truth boldly!*

Ask:

- When has God helped you speak the truth boldly?
- When is it most difficult to speak the truth about Jesus?
- How can the Holy Spirit help you speak the truth boldly?

LIFE APPLICATION

Speak the Truth Boldly Puppets

Say: ★ *God helps us speak the truth boldly, and he certainly helped Peter and John in today's Bible passage. Now we're going to make a fun and simple paper bag puppet of Peter as a reminder. I'll give you each a paper lunch bag and a handout of add-ons to turn your lunch bag into Peter.*

All you need to do is color in Peter's head and robe, cut them out, and glue them to the lunch bag. Presto! You'll have a Peter puppet!

Lead kids to the craft area where you've set out markers, scissors, glue sticks, paper lunch bags, and copies of the "Peter Puppet Add-Ons" handout (p. 113). This is a simple project. Kids just need to glue the head add-on to the folded bottom of the bag and the robe to the body of the bag.

As kids finish, encourage them to clean up the craft area. Then invite them to bring their puppets and join you in a discussion circle.



COMMITMENT

Telling the Truth About Jesus

Have kids form pairs and take turns using their Peter puppets to tell today's Bible story from Peter's perspective. For instance, one partner might tell half the story, and the other partner might take over and tell the rest of the story.

After pairs have had time to tell the story, gather the group and say: ★ *God helps us speak the truth boldly, especially when it comes to telling others about Jesus.*

Peter Puppet Add-Ons

Color and cut out Peter's head and robe.

Glue the head to the folded bottom of a paper lunch bag.

Glue the robe to the body of the lunch bag, below the head.

Use your Peter puppet to tell today's Bible story from his point of view!



Ask:

• **How can you use your puppets and your Bible storytelling to tell others the truth about Jesus?**

Say: **I hope you and your Peter puppets will be busy telling others about Jesus this week, relying on God's help!**

CLOSING

Truth-Teller's Prayer

Gather kids in a circle for prayer.

Dear God, thank you for helping Peter and John speak the truth about Jesus boldly. Thank you for sending the Holy Spirit to help us speak the truth about Jesus. God, please give us sensitive hearts and ★ *help us speak the truth boldly,* telling others that Jesus Christ is Lord whenever you give us an opportunity. We pray this in Jesus' name, amen.



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