

ST. PETER

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of the downloadable “622 service” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader's notes
- Masking tape and “found objects”, or paper and pens
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: CONSTRUCTING OBSTACLES

Divide your group into teams of five or fewer teens each. If possible, go outside or use a large indoor area. Give the teams a few minutes to devise an obstacle course using masking tape to mark out the path and whatever else they can find to build obstacles. Next, assign the teams to try each other's obstacle courses. You might have them vote on which is the most innovative, and which is the most challenging.

As a quiet activity alternative (and one requiring less time), ask your teens to create a “maze” on paper as individuals or in pairs, then have them exchange and work through each other's mazes.

622: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the first part of the order for service for young people in the booklet, up to the middle of page 4.

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: PITFALLS IN LIFE AND FAITH

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- What do you feel are some of the obstacles you face in life generally? How do you respond to them?
- What are some of things that you think of as obstacles in the Christian life? How should we respond to them?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don't otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *We all face obstacles in life, some of which are common to all, and some of which are unique to us. These are things that make it hard for us to do the things that we'd like to do; to move forward in healthy ways. Responding to obstacles can be challenging. It is easy to become frustrated and lash out in ways that are not constructive. Finding a good way to overcome often requires courage, wisdom and creativity. If anything of a current and serious nature arises, take a moment to pray for that need.*
- *Allow your teens to explore the question even if they do not arrive at ideal responses. Today's text will delve into the topic further.*

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THE LESSON: 2 PETER 1

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

Simon Peter was once an ordinary fisherman. Then Jesus called him, and he answered the call. During the years of Jesus' ministry, St. Peter witnessed countless miracles and heard the scriptures explained – he was an “eyewitness of majesty” (2 Peter 1:16). Later on he himself would become instrumental in the building of the Church: preaching powerfully, healing the sick and even raising the dead. We remember St. Peter for his declaration of faith, which Jesus commended saying, “You are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church” (Matthew 16:18). Tradition tells us that St. Peter was martyred in Rome by crucifixion, but that he asked to be crucified upside-down, because he did not feel worthy to be killed in the same way as Jesus.

But St. Peter's story was often one of big failings followed by gracious restorations. When Jesus was being tried and condemned, St. Peter denied ever having known him. In fact, he denied him three times, something Jesus had foretold would happen. But Jesus appeared to him after being raised from the dead and gave the saint the opportunity to reaffirm his devotion. Another time, when he saw Jesus walking on the water, St. Peter wanted to walk to him, but then became frightened, took his eyes off Jesus, and sank (Jesus rescued him). Christians throughout the ages have taken comfort from St. Peter's failings, knowing that if God could save and transform this error-prone fisherman, then there is hope for us too!

As a shepherd to believers, St. Peter understood in a very personal way how easily we can take our eyes off Jesus. He wanted to use every opportunity to build up the Church. The two epistles of St. Peter in the New Testament speak movingly of God's grace and encourage us to press on so that we may truly know him.

Refer to 2 Peter 1.

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS' NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they've just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Based on this passage, how would you describe the relationship between St. Peter and his readers?
- How does St. Peter describe the goal of all Christians?
- What are the “pitfalls” that St. Peter identifies as dangers that might deceive his readers?
- What do St. Peter's readers need to do in order to avoid these things?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *In his address, St. Peter identifies himself as “a servant and apostle... to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing” (v1). He has an obligation to serve and to nurture these believers, though he does not elevate himself above them, instead considering them “of equal standing” in faith. St. Peter has a deep concern for his readers, that they will press on in their faith, supported by the witness of the apostles and the words of scripture.*
- *St. Peter refers to our “entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (v11) after having come to know him, and having been made “partakers of the divine nature” (v4).*
- *St. Peter reminds them that they have “escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire” (v4). He wants them to cultivate virtues that will keep them from being drawn away from their salvation into sin*

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that could make them “ineffective or unfruitful” (v8). He wants them to know that they must continue on the path of salvation “to make your calling and election sure” (v10).

- We, like the first readers, need to embrace those things that “pertain to life and godliness” (v3): the knowledge of God, faith, virtue, self-control, steadfastness, godliness, brotherly affection, love (vv 5-7), and diligence (v10). Moreover, St. Peter stresses the importance of being “established in the truth” (v12), recognizing that scripture is not “cleverly devised myths” (v16), nor a matter of “someone’s own interpretation” (v20), lest they become vulnerable to false teachings.

DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON’T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU’LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY “AT-HOME CHALLENGE” IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON’T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE “FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES”, WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON’T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Begin your time of reflection by asking God to reveal to you any obstacle or pitfall that might be getting in the way of your relationship with him. Spend sometime quietly listening and examining yourself. If there are sins that you need to confess, take time to do that. Ask him to help you continue on the path of newness of life, showing you what he’s already granted to you for “life and godliness”.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following collect.

O Almighty God, who by thy Son Jesus Christ didst give to thy Apostle Saint Peter many excellent gifts, and commandedst him earnestly to feed thy flock: Make, we beseech thee, all Bishops and Pastors diligently to preach thy holy Word, and the people obediently to follow the same, that they may receive the crown of everlasting glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (COLLECT FOR THE FEAST OF ST. PETER, P. 283)

CLOSING PRAYERS (622 AGAIN)

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE “PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS” SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU’RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the “Grace”, the final prayer in the booklet.

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2 PETER 1: **HOW TO KEEP FROM FALLING**

¹Simeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained a faith of equal standing with ours by the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ: ²May grace and peace be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

³His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, ⁴by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. ⁵For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, ⁶and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, ⁷and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. ⁸For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁹For whoever lacks these qualities is so short-sighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. ¹⁰Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure, for if you practise these qualities you will never fall. ¹¹For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

¹²Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things. ¹⁶For we did not follow cleverly devised myths when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

¹⁷For when he received honour and glory from God the Father, and the voice was borne to him by the Majestic Glory, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased”, ¹⁸we ourselves heard this very voice borne from heaven, for we were with him on the holy mountain. ¹⁹And we have something more sure, the prophetic word, to which you will do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts, ²⁰knowing this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone’s own interpretation. ²¹For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.