

Breathe

Module: PEOPLE WHO BREATHED

Lesson 4: PETER

Objectives:

- Students will see that no one is ever beyond hope: Peter is an example of someone who totally failed, and yet was redeemed by Jesus to become great.
- Students will identify past failures and dedicate them to God, allowing them to move forward towards living without fear, regret or shame.

Materials Needed

- ☐ “Life of Peter” fact sheet and scissors for each group of students
- ☐ Chart paper or Bristol board
- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Strips of blank paper and pens
- ☐ Lighter or book of matches
- ☐ Bucket with sand or water

Minds On

Prompt: Today we will talk about the apostle Peter, who experienced many ups and downs in his relationship with Jesus, and we'll see there is a lot we can learn from his life.

Divide students into groups of 2 or 3 for this opening activity and give each group a fact sheet and a pair of scissors. The fact sheet lists a number of things we know about Peter's life from scripture. Instruct the students to cut out the facts and categorize them as either ordinary, extraordinary, or disappointing/a failure.

When the groups have sorted their facts, have them discuss together where each fact belongs and tape them in groups on a piece of chart paper or Bristol board for display during the lesson.

Action

Prompt: We have seen that Peter's life was a bit of a rollercoaster ride, but what does that have to do with us? Let's focus in on three different stories that show Peter's development as a follower of Christ and see what he went through that we can relate to.

The first story has Peter making big promises of faithfulness to Jesus.
Have a student read Mark 14:26-31.

Allow students to discuss the passage, prompting them with questions such as:

- Jesus quotes some scripture to the disciples. Who is the shepherd, and who represents the sheep?
- Where does Jesus say he will go after he is risen?
- How does Peter respond? Do you think he really listened to what Jesus was saying?

The next story is found in Mark 14:43-54; 66-72.

Prompt: The book of John also records this story and he names Peter as the disciple who cut off the high priest's servant's ear. In a way he did keep his promise to stand by Jesus. However, when Jesus allowed himself to be arrested, everybody ran away.

Ask your students to discuss these questions, dividing into smaller groups if necessary.

- What do you think Peter expected when he said he would die with Jesus?
- Why do you think Peter denied knowing Jesus?
- Have you ever made a promise to someone that you did not keep? What caused you to break that promise? (This could be a good question to have students discuss with a partner or small group rather than the whole group.)
- How do you think Peter felt when he realized Jesus' words had come true?

When your students have finished discussing, have them come back together.

Prompt: The last story we'll read about Peter took place after Jesus rose from the dead, spent time with his disciples, and went up to Heaven. When the Holy Spirit came upon the believers in Jerusalem, they were able to speak in all kinds of languages, and it caused quite a stir among Jews who were visiting from different parts of the empire. Peter preached a sermon to explain what was happening and tell everyone about Jesus, and this passage tells us what happened next.

Have someone read Acts 2:37-41, then ask the group:

- Who does Peter say the promise is for?
- Did people believe his message?
- How do you think Peter felt on this day compared to the last story we read?

Prompt: In the warm up activity, we categorized a promise that Jesus made to Peter (Matthew 16:18). Yet again Jesus' words came true, but this time it was for a great promise, not a big failure. Jesus knew that Peter would have ups and downs, and he

loved him just as he was. Peter ultimately succeeded (and went on to perform amazing miracles and be a leader in the church) because he didn't let his failures and disappointments stop him from trusting and obeying Jesus.

Consolidate/Debrief

Give students time to reflect on any disappointments or failures in their own life that are obstacles to their faith and/or obedience to Jesus. Allow them to share with the group if they want, but it can also be a private reflection. Distribute strips of paper so students can write down one major thing they need to overcome or move on from in their walk with God. Once they have written this obstacle on the paper, take the group to a fire-safe area (outside if possible) with a bucket filled with sand or water. If a fire is not an option, consider using a shredder or simply having students tear up their paper and deposit the scraps in a garbage can.

Breathe In: Pray as a group to commit these concerns to God and ask Jesus to overcome every obstacle that has been written down. Thank God for the example of Peter's life that even an ordinary person who made big mistakes was not beyond hope.

Breathe Out: After the prayer, students can take turns burning their piece of paper over the bucket to symbolically give it to God and release it from their life.

Leader's Note: There may be some very significant, deep issues a student may be dealing with. Be prepared to have yourself or a leader walk with a student in those. Be cognizant as well to appropriately involve others (whether your pastor or a professional) if you (or the other leaders) are not qualified to deal with certain situations.

The Life of Peter

Before he was a disciple, he was a fisherman. Matthew 4:18	He was willing to die with Jesus. Matthew 26:35	He preached a sermon that made 3000 converts. Acts 2:38-41
Jesus miraculously healed his mother-in-law of a fever. Matthew 8:14-15	When he heard Jesus had been raised to life, he ran to check the tomb. Luke 24:12	He healed a beggar who was lame. Acts 3:6-7
He walked on water. Matthew 14:29	He denied knowing Jesus. Matthew 26:69-70	His shadow was believed to have healing powers. Acts 5:15
He didn't always understand Jesus' teaching. Matthew 15:15	He saw Jesus raise a dead girl back to life. Mark 5:37-42	He defied authorities who told him to stop preaching. Acts 4:19; 5:29
Jesus promised to build the church through him. Matthew 16:18	He gave up everything to follow Jesus. Mark 10:28	He healed a paralyzed man. Acts 9:32-34
He understood Jesus' mission. Matthew 16:16-17	He fell asleep while praying. Matthew 26:40	He raised a woman from the dead. Acts 9:40
He did not understand Jesus' mission. Matthew 16:23	He completely trusted Jesus. John 6:66-69	He was miraculously freed from prison. Acts 12:5-11
He asked Jesus for advice. Matthew 18:21	He defended Jesus with a sword. John 18:10	