

While We Wait

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Peter 3:1-13

MAIN POINT: Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Timothy 3:16

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to come back? We follow Jesus and tell everyone about Him.

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Peter's story of faith began when Jesus said, "Follow Me." (Matt. 4:18) Peter and his brother Andrew—two fishermen from Galilee—left their nets and followed Jesus. As one of Jesus' twelve disciples, Peter witnessed firsthand Jesus' miracles and teachings. He saw Jesus heal his mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14) and raise a little girl from the dead (Luke 8:49-55). He saw Jesus walk on water, and Peter walked on water too. (Matt. 14:25-29)

Peter believed that Jesus is the Messiah (Matt. 16:16), and he was understandably upset when Jesus predicted that Peter would deny Him (Matt. 26:34-35). Peter fell asleep as Jesus prayed in the garden, and he drew his sword

to defend Jesus when He was arrested. (Matt. 26:40; John 18:10) Peter denied Jesus three times, but after the resurrection Jesus appeared to Peter and the other disciples. Then Jesus restored Peter to ministry at the sea of Galilee. (John 21:15-19)

The first 12 chapters in the Book of Acts record the Holy Spirit's work through Peter after Pentecost. God revealed to Peter that the gospel is for everyone—Jews and Gentiles. Peter was arrested and imprisoned for sharing the gospel, but an angel of the Lord rescued him. (Acts 12:1-8)

When Peter wrote his second letter, he was in prison again. Peter was aware that death was imminent. (2 Pet. 1:13-15) Like Jude, Peter warned against false teachers. Some people thought the believers were foolish for thinking Jesus is coming again. Peter explained that God is patient, and He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. Soon afterward, Peter was killed in Rome as Jesus had predicted. (John 21:18-19)

Peter's letter was written nearly two thousand years ago to believers who were not far removed from Jesus' life on earth. We still wait eagerly for Jesus' return, but God calls us to use our time on earth as an opportunity to better know and love Him, and to tell others about Him.



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The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Wait for it:** Bring a small wrapped prize for each child. Explain that if children wait patiently until the end of the Bible story, they will get a gift.
- **Draw it:** Before the session, draw Earth and other heavenly bodies with bright, shining colors. Place a piece of paper over your illustration, covering it completely. During the story, draw a globe with duller colors on the paper. Add dirty looking splotches as you name some of the lies, and add a cross as you explain God's desire for everyone to trust Jesus. At the end, rip down your paper and crumple it up, exposing the new earth drawing.

While We Wait

2 Peter 3:1-13

Peter, one of Jesus' friends, was an old man and a leader in the church. **Peter wrote a letter to tell the believers to read God's Word and watch out for teachers who said things that weren't true.** God's Word helps us know how to live. Peter told the believers how to live the way Jesus wants them to live.

Peter also wrote about the day when Jesus will come back. Some of the false teachers said that Jesus will never come back. This is not true! Peter was with Jesus when He promised He would come back. So **Peter told the believers to be ready.**

Peter wrote, "Dear friends, the prophets said this would happen. They said people would make fun of you for believing that Jesus will come back. But God is not being slow to keep His promise. God is being patient. He wants everyone to know Jesus. He wants everyone to turn away from their sin and turn to Him!"

No one knows exactly when Jesus will come, so we must always be ready. Peter told the believers to live in a way that makes God happy. When Jesus comes, He will make the new heavens and a new earth.

Christ Connection: Some people thought the believers were foolish for thinking Jesus is coming again, but it is true! Peter said that God is patient. He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again. We look forward to that day when Jesus will make the new heavens and a new earth.



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DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover how God's Word can help them grow in the gospel. Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Introduce THE STORY

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Welcome time

- “I Have Hope” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “All the Time” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to draw a line connecting the time of day on the top row with the action in the bottom row that you would do at that time.

SAY • The sun rises every morning and sets every evening. Some days can seem really short and other days can seem really long. In our story today, some people got tired of waiting for Jesus to come back and stopped believing God’s promise. But God always keeps His promises, just like the sun always rises and sets!

Turn to truth

Place a Bible in the center of the room and gather preschoolers around it. Explain that you are going to make a statement and children should decide whether it is true. If so, they should put a hand on the Bible. You may want to



provide more Bibles and spread them out so every child can reach one. If the statement is false, they should spin around.

SAY • Last week, we learned how important it is to remember God's truth. This week we will hear about more people who said things that weren't true about Jesus. The Bible has a lot to say about knowing the truth! God wants everyone to turn away from wrong and believe His Word.

Wait a minute

Give preschoolers various challenges to sustain for a full minute. Suggestions include wiggling, flapping arms, jumping up and down, sitting in a squat, and so forth. After several rounds, challenge children to wait patiently, sitting still and quiet, until it's time to go to Bible study (or at least one full minute).

SAY • Waiting patiently is hard, even for just one minute! Have you ever had to wait patiently for a long time? In our story today, Peter encourages believers who had been waiting a long time for Jesus to come back. He said God is patient and His timing is perfect!

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move very slowly to Bible study.



• countdown video
(optional)

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Introduce the Bible story

Greet children with “Merry Christmas!” Talk about why you love Christmas. Act disappointed when someone says it’s not Christmas yet.

SAY • I love celebrating Jesus’ birthday. It’s so hard to wait! Imagine thinking that Christmas would never happen again because you got tired of waiting for it. In our Bible story today, we’ll learn how to wait and trust God.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark at 2 Peter 3 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • What book is this? The Bible! Whose words are in the Bible? God’s! Is the whole Bible true? Yes! Today’s story is from the second letter that Jesus’ disciple Peter wrote to believers.

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon. But

- Bible
- bookmark
- “While We Wait” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

“soon” to God can feel like a long time to people on earth. Some people thought the believers were foolish for thinking Jesus is coming again, but it is true!

Peter said that God is patient. He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again. We look forward to that day when Jesus will make the new heavens and a new earth.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who wrote the letter in today’s story? (*Peter*)
2. Is Jesus coming back? (*Yes!*)
3. When is Jesus coming? (*Only God the Father knows.*)
4. Is God slow about keeping His promise? (*No, He is patient.*)
5. When Jesus comes, what will He make new? (*the heavens and earth*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • The new heavens and new earth sound even more exciting than Christmas! I can hardly wait! ***How do we live while waiting for Jesus to come back? We follow Jesus and tell everyone about Him.***

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to 2 Timothy 3:16. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song.

SAY • Our key passage tells us that the whole Bible, this letter from Peter included, was inspired by God. That gives us hope that these words are true. We can wait patiently because God always keeps His promises!

• Key Passage Poster
• “All Scripture” song

Transition to experience the story

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LOW PREP

- Bible storybook
- Small Group Timeline (optional)

Remember God's promises

Use a storybook Bible or the timeline to review previous examples of God keeping His promises. Point out how long some of the fulfillments took. Emphasize God's faithfulness.

SAY • Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon, but some people got tired of waiting and didn't believe Jesus' promise. But God always keeps His promises! Remember when God told Abraham his family would outnumber the stars? Well Abraham only lived to meet some of his children and grandchildren, but in a few hundred years, there were thousands of people in his family!

Look at nature items

Provide various nature items or images representing the old making way for the new, such as snakes shedding their skin, crabs choosing new shells, or caterpillars changing to butterflies. Encourage preschoolers to investigate the items using magnifying glasses. Read 2 Corinthians 5:17.

SAY • All of these items had to be shed to make way for new growth. Snakes shed their old skin to expose new skin; sharks lose teeth and replace them with new ones; and trees drop their leaves every fall to

- nature items (snakeskin, leaves, shark teeth)
- images of animals or plants undergoing changes (optional)

grow new leaves in the spring. **Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon.** When Jesus comes, He will make the new heavens and a new earth. Everything and everyone will be made new!

Be ready

Print and cut out the “Paper Dolls” figures and clothing. Challenge preschoolers to work together in getting their doll dressed to go outside in the snow or to go to bed.

SAY • Good job getting your dolls ready! If your mom says it is time for bed, you put on your pajamas to show you are ready to go. So when Jesus promises to come back, we should do what He says to show we believe Him and are ready! ***How do we live while waiting for Jesus to come back? We follow Jesus and tell everyone about Him.*** No one knows exactly when Jesus will come, so we must always be ready. Peter told the believers to live in a way that makes God happy.

- “Paper Dolls” printables,
- 1 per child
- scissors

Play heart tag

Provide a sheet of heart stickers for each child. Tell children they have a limited amount of time to tag as many people as they can with hearts. Instruct them to wait until you start the music and to stop when the music stops. Watch to make sure everyone gets at least one heart sticker before stopping the music.

SAY • Just like you didn’t know when the music would start or stop, no one knows exactly when Jesus will come, so we must always be ready. Peter told the believers to live in a way that makes God happy. ***How do we live while waiting for Jesus to come back? We***

- heart stickers
- “I Have Hope” song (optional)
- “All Scripture” song (optional)

follow Jesus and tell everyone about Him. Peter said that God is patient. He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again.

How long until ... ?

• calendar

Show preschoolers a calendar, pointing out the days, weeks, and months in a year. Invite the children to help you count how long it is until Christmas. Then invite a child to name his or her birthday or favorite holiday, then count how long until that date. Repeat for each child.

SAY • Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon. But “soon” does not mean any particular number of days or weeks or months or years. Besides, a thousand years to us is like one day to God! Peter said that God is patient. He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again. We look forward to that day when Jesus will make the new heavens and a new earth.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve a favorite snack, but ask preschoolers to wait patiently until you say it's OK to eat. Talk about how **Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon**. God is not being slow to keep His promise. God is being patient. He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of something that is hard to wait for. The believers in our story thought it was hard to wait for Jesus' return.

Peter wrote that Jesus will come back soon. Keep your picture somewhere that will remind you to pray for patience and for Jesus to come back soon! Pray for the children.

SAY • God, thank You for always keeping Your promises.

Thank You for sending Jesus to rescue us. We believe You will come back for us, too. Give us patience, and use us to help more people trust in You. Amen!

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers