

While We Wait

BIBLE PASSAGE: 2 Peter 3:1-13

MAIN POINT: Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return?
We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.

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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.



Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Draw pictures:** Draw related pictures (Peter, church, prison) or ask a teacher to draw as you tell the story.
- **Change posture:** As you tell Peter's words, lean in and speak softly as if speaking to close friends.

While We Wait

2 Peter 3:1-13

It had been about 30 years since Jesus returned to heaven, and **Peter**—one of the original twelve disciples and also one of Jesus' closest friends—was now much older. **He was a leader in the Christian church, and he was now a prisoner in Rome when he wrote a letter to other believers.**

Peter warned the believers against false teachers who tempted them to sin. He did not want these false teachers to lead the believers away from Jesus. He told the believers to turn to the Scriptures to know how to live, and he gave them instructions for living the way Jesus wanted them to live.

Peter also wrote about the day Jesus will return. Some of the false teachers said that Jesus will never come back. But Peter had been with Jesus when He promised that He would come back! So **Peter told the believers to be ready.**

Peter wrote to remind his dear friends of what the prophets said and what the Lord commanded. “First, people are going to come and make fun of you. They will say things like, ‘If Jesus is really coming back like He promised, where is He?’

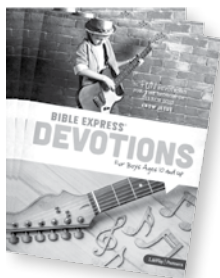
“God is not being slow to keep His promise. He is being patient; He does not want anyone to die without knowing Jesus. He wants everyone to turn from their sin and trust in Him!”

Peter wrote, “The Day of the Lord will come when we do not expect it—like a thief in the night. God will judge the world. Until then, you should live a holy life by the Holy Spirit's power. Live in a way that pleases God. Jesus

will come again and make the new heavens and a new earth.”

At this time, the Roman emperor persecuted Christians. He punished them or even killed them. Not long after Peter wrote this letter, he was killed because he followed Jesus.

Christ Connection: 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. At just the right time, Jesus will come again, and we look forward to the day when He creates the new heavens and a new earth.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids 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

SESSION TITLE: While We Wait

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MAIN POINT: Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him.

KEY PASSAGE: 2 Timothy 3:16-17

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to think about places they go where they have to wait. (*restaurants, doctor's office, checkout lines, and so forth*)

SAY • If we know we have to wait at certain places, why do we go there? We are willing to wait for things that are important to us. What is the longest time you've waited for something?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "While You Wait" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "While You Wait" on the activity page. Kids should think about the kinds of things they wait for. Then, for each letter, kids will list something they can do while they wait. Invite kids to share their answers.

SAY • It's hard to be patient and wait for things, but some things are worth the wait! Today we will look at a letter the apostle Peter wrote to his friends, reminding them—and all believers—why we need to patiently wait for Jesus' return.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: “Hot Potato”

Invite boys and girls to play a game of “Hot Potato.” While music plays, the kids pass the beanbag around in a circle as quickly as they can. Randomly pause the music. Whoever is holding the beanbag when the music stops is out and helps judge subsequent rounds until just two players remain.

SAY • In this game, you never knew when the music would stop, did you? You had to wait for it. In today’s Bible story, Peter wrote a letter to tell his friends what to do while they waited for Jesus. It’s a story that is still important for us today.



- beanbag
- “Hope of Heaven” song or another song

OPTION 2: Snowball hunt

Before the session, write the names of Bible books on separate pieces of paper. Include *2 Peter*. Also include additional names from the Bible such as *Moses*, *Abraham*, *David*, and *Paul*.

Crumple up the papers into “snowballs” and scatter them around the room. Open several Bibles to the table of contents page and position them on a table. Explain to the kids that when you say go, they should race to open up the papers.

Kids should place the Bible book names together in one pile and discard the other names in another pile. Encourage kids to refer to the Bible as you check their work.

SAY • Today’s Bible story comes from the Book of 2 Peter. Peter was a disciple of Jesus, and he wrote a letter to believers and told them to be ready for Jesus’ return.

- paper
- marker
- Bibles

Transition to teach the story

Teach the STORY

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• name tag
• large binder or clipboard

[Leader enters wearing a name tag and carrying a large binder or clipboard.]

LEADER • This is it, our final training together. I'm proud of each and every one of you for the hard work you've put in and the enormous amount of information you've learned. After today, you will be equipped, prepared, and ready to complete our mission. Congratulations!

But I have some sad news to share with you. Due to unpredicted weather conditions, our upcoming launch has been postponed until further notice. I understand your disappointment. We have worked so hard. But don't give up. We will complete our mission when the time is right. Things like this are out of our control, so we just have to wait patiently until we are able to move forward.

And would you believe this? Today's training is on

this very topic! In complicated missions such as this, we must continue to work together and encourage one another in the face of disappointment and circumstances beyond our control.

Our training today comes again from the New Testament in the Book of 2 Peter. Peter was one of Jesus' closest disciples. He was an eyewitness to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Peter learned a thing or two about waiting, and he wrote a letter to his friends to help them while they waited for Jesus to return.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Speaking of Jesus' return, let's say our big picture question together before we jump into our final training time. *How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.* Can you say it without looking? Let's try together. [*Lead kids.*]

• Big Picture Question
Poster

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline or big story circle.

LEADER • OK, recruits. It's time to see if you have been listening during our previous trainings. I need some volunteers to tell me what we learned in our first three sessions. [*Allow kids to briefly review the stories based on the timeline.*]

• Giant Timeline or
Big Story Circle

Our final training session today is called "While We Wait." As our anticipation of the launch grows, it is vital that we know how to spend our remaining time together. Let's see what the apostle Peter shared in his letter.

- Bibles
- “While We Wait” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Peter 3:1-13. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “While We Wait.”

LEADER • Peter spent a lot of time with Jesus. He knew that he could trust whatever Jesus said. He knew without a shadow of a doubt that Jesus would keep every promise He made. Jesus would come again just as He said and make all things new. Some believers weren’t so sure. They hadn’t spent time with Jesus like Peter had. They were beginning to doubt and were tempted to listen to false teachers spreading false beliefs. Peter knew he had to encourage his friends with the truth and help them guard against temptations that were coming their way. **Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him.**

We face the same temptations they did. Many people today don’t believe in Jesus or don’t believe He will come again. People might make fun of you for going to church and believing in Jesus. They might tell you that you can be in charge of your life, that whatever you want to believe can be true, or that God is not in control of anything. But those beliefs are just not true! We can trust what the Bible says, and the Bible says Jesus *is* coming back.

Peter also took time to explain to his friends why God is being patient in His timing. The Bible tells us He doesn’t want anyone to perish, but for everyone to repent and trust in Jesus. [See 2 Pet. 3:9.]

We play a part in God’s mission to rescue sinners. Peter confirms the answer to our big picture

question: *How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.* We can share our faith with our friends, family, and neighbors. Then we will be ready for Jesus to come back and make all things new again.

Christ connection

LEADER • Some people thought the believers were foolish for thinking Jesus is coming again. Peter explained that God is in control. He is patient, and He wants everyone to trust in Jesus. At just the right time, Jesus will come again, and we look forward to the day when He creates the new heavens and a new earth.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

LEADER • This is our final time to recite our key passage together. Let's say it with confidence since we believe it to be true.

Lead boys and girls in singing "Inspired by God."

- Key Passage Poster
- "Inspired by God" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • What is the longest you've ever waited for something? Why were you willing to wait so long? Think about that and check out this video.

Show the "Unit 35, Session 4" discussion starter video.

Then lead kids to discuss the following questions:

- How did the kids in the video feel about waiting?
- Why is it hard to wait? Is waiting ever a good thing?

- "Unit 35, Session 4" discussion starter video

- What are we waiting for? What should we do while we wait?

LEADER • God calls us to grow and tell others about Him as we wait for His promised return. ***How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.***

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Hope of Heaven" song

LEADER • I am so thankful that we can trust Jesus to keep His promises. He *will* come again and make all things new. That's worthy of our praise! Let's stand and sing together.

Sing together "Hope of Heaven."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Jesus, we wait in anticipation for Your return. While we wait, help us to obey Your Word, keep our focus on You, and tell our friends and family about You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Apply the STORY

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We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.

- Key Passage Poster
- beanbag or foam ball
- stopwatch or timer

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

Arrange the kids in a circle, facing one another. Give one kid a beanbag and instruct her to say first word of the key passage. Kids will pass the beanbag around the circle. Each player will say the next word of the key passage until boys and girls say the entire key passage.

After a practice round, time how long it takes for the group to say the key passage. Challenge them to try again to beat their time. Play additional rounds as time allows.

SAY • In this game, you had to wait patiently as your friends passed the beanbag around the circle. The time it took to say the whole key passage wasn't up to just one person; you all played a part.

As we wait for Jesus to return, we all have a part to play in sharing the gospel with those around us. And we can be confident in sharing the good news about Jesus because, as this passage reminds us, God's Word is true. ***How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.***

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Form groups of three or four kids. Give each group a few index cards, a Bible, and a pencil. Instruct each group to write a question or two about the stories in this unit. Refer to the small group timeline to review. Ask them to write down the verse reference that gives the correct answer. Then invite each group ask its questions to the class. Examples:

Session 1: Paul's Letter to Philemon (Philem. 8-22)

- What did Paul tell Philemon to do? (**Paul told Philemon to forgive his servant as a Christian brother, *Philem. 17***)

Session 2: Paul Gave Hope (1 Thess. 4:13–5:11)

- How did Paul encourage the Thessalonians? (**Paul encouraged the Thessalonians by reminding them that Jesus will return, *1 Thess. 4:14-17***)

Session 3: Remember God's Truth (Jude 3–4, 17-25)

- What did Jude encourage Christians to do? (**Jude encouraged Christians to stand strong in the faith, *Jude 20-21***)

Session 4: While We Wait (2 Pet. 3:1-13)

- What did Peter say we should do until Jesus returns? (**Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him, *2 Pet. 3:11***)

SAY • Great job reviewing the stories from this unit. **Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him.** The letters in the New Testament help us know how to live and what to expect for our future when Jesus returns. In the meantime, *How do we live while waiting for Jesus to return? We remember God's truth, grow in godliness, and spread the gospel.*

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- index cards
- Bibles
- pencils
- Small Group Timeline

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- dry erase board or poster board
- markers
- Bibles, 1 per kid

Option: If your group is large, provide several sheets of poster board and form small teams of kids.

- ziplock bags
- blank cards or paper
- various travel-size items

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: WAITING acrostic

Write the word *WAITING* vertically down the middle of a dry erase board, one letter per line. Make sure each kid has a Bible. Help kids find 2 Peter 3:1-13.

Ask the kids to find key words or phrases in the passage that incorporate the letters in the word *waiting*. (Example: *W* can be part of “Where is His ‘coming’ that He promised?”) Talk about how each key word or phrase relates to the story.

SAY • Most of the time, waiting isn’t very fun; however, understanding why you have to wait can help. Peter tells us that God is not being slow in keeping His promise. He is waiting so that more people will trust in Him. We can help that happen when we share the good news of Jesus with our friends, family members, and neighbors.

OPTION 2: Sharing bags

Before the session, collect travel-size items to prepare sharing bags with the kids. You may choose to contact parents or other church members to donate supplies. Suggested supplies include 8-ounce bottled waters, snack bars, travel packs of facial tissue, bandages, individually-wrapped hard candies, hand sanitizer, and so forth.

Explain to the kids that one way to share the love of Jesus is to meet the physical needs of people. There are often people around us that need extra help or encouragement. When their physical needs are cared for, they may be more willing to listen as we care for their spiritual needs by sharing how much Jesus loves them.

Help the kids pack items into their sharing bags. Guide

them to create or sign cards that say *Jesus loves you* to put in the bags. Encourage kids to write out a brief explanation of the gospel. Brainstorm ways or situations they may encounter people in their community where they can share Jesus through their sharing bag.

SAY • Peter wrote that Jesus will return soon, so we should obey Him and tell others about Him. Talk with your parents about the best way you can give your sharing bag to someone in need and share Jesus' love while we wait for Him to return.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to guide kids as they carry out His mission while they wait for Jesus' return.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "What's Left?" on the activity page. Kids should cross out the things that won't be found in the new heavens and the new earth. Then they can arrange the remaining words to fill in the blanks.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "What's Left?" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.