



You Are the Messiah!

(based on Matthew 16:13–20)

Jesus and his disciples had been around the countryside of Galilee. Jesus had been healing people, feeding them, and teaching them about God. The religious leaders and scholars had questioned him and tested him, trying to figure out who he was and what he was doing.

Jesus asked the disciples, “What are people saying about me? Who do people say that I am?”

James said, “Some people say you are John the Baptist . . .”

Andrew jumped in, saying, “. . . but others say you are Elijah . . .”

And Thomas continued, “. . . and still others think you are Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

While all the disciples started telling what they had heard, Jesus thought to himself, “Interesting that everyone thinks I’m a dead person! But I suppose they are hoping I’m here to announce the coming of the Messiah, like John and Elijah, or that I speak God’s words like the prophets.” Then Jesus paused and said, “But who do you say that I am? What do you tell people?”

There was some hemming and hawing, and then Simon Peter spoke loudly and confidently, “Jesus, you are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God.”

The rest of the disciples looked at Simon Peter, stunned. He said it. Could it be?

Jesus looked directly at Peter and said, “Blessed are you, Simon! No one has told you this. Only God could have let you know who I am.” Jesus placed his hand on Simon Peter’s shoulder and continued, “I tell you now, you are Peter and you are like your name, rock solid. On you, my rock, I will build my church. It will be a new community of believers and followers of God’s way. And, nothing, not even all that’s bad in the world, will overcome it. Peter, I’m giving you the keys to the kingdom—that means you’ll be in charge.”

As happy as Jesus was to hear Peter’s declaration and the confidence in his voice, Jesus knew Peter and the others were a long way from understanding what it meant that he was the Messiah, the Savior. Jesus could see in Peter’s gaze that he was already thinking of what it meant to have authority, to be able to make things happen.

So Jesus told the disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah. He knew people were not ready to hear that news yet. The disciples, and even Peter himself, would wrestle with, and fail to understand, what they had just heard. It would take them a while to understand what it meant that Jesus was the Messiah.



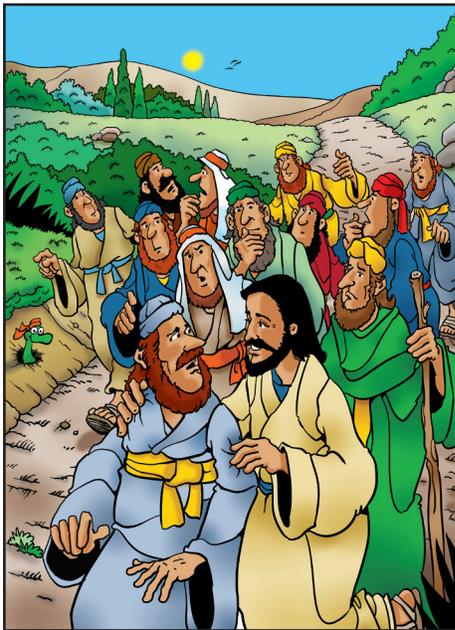
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- The disciples reported different ideas about who people thought Jesus was. Peter said that Jesus was the Messiah. What are different ways you know who Jesus is?
- What do you think the significance is that Peter's name means *rock* or *stone*?



Responding to God's Grace

- Make an acrostic with the letters JESUS written vertically down the left-hand side of a piece of paper. Write words or phrases that begin with each letter describing Jesus.
- Paint a rock with the word "Messiah" and a symbol for Jesus. Remember that Jesus said that Peter was the rock on which he would build his church.
- Look up what your names mean, and decide how Jesus may use you given the meaning of your names.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Make up a cheer about Jesus.
- Watch the YouTube video "LEGO-Bible Story Matthew 16" (bit.ly/LegoMatthew16). If you have toy people figures, recreate this story.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.