



Peter's Denial

(based on Mark 14:26–31, 66–72)

Jesus and his friends had come to Jerusalem for the Passover. They gathered for a special meal together, and when they were finished eating, Jesus gave them bread to eat and wine to drink, and told them that he would soon have to die. They sang a hymn together and then they walked to a place called the Mount of Olives.

Jesus knew that he would soon be arrested and taken away. He knew that he was going to be killed. He told his friends that all of them would eventually abandon him. He said, “All of you will become deserters.” He meant that, someday, each of them would run away or pretend that they did not know him. Then he told them, “After I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee.”

Peter loved Jesus. He did not think that he could ever pretend not to know Jesus! Peter said to him, “Even if everyone else deserts you, I won’t! **No, I won’t!**” (*Yes, you will!*)

But Jesus knew better and said to Peter, “Truly I tell you, this day, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.”

But Peter did not believe it. He said to Jesus, “Even if I have to die with you, I will not deny you! Not me! **No, I won’t!**” (*Yes, you will!*)

And all of the rest of Jesus’ friends said the same thing, “**No, I won’t!**” (*Yes, you will!*)

Later that night, the soldiers came and arrested Jesus. The soldiers led Jesus away and took him to the home of the high priest. Peter was waiting outside the high priest’s home, in the courtyard where a fire was burning. Peter was standing by

the fire to keep warm, when one of the servant girls saw him. She stared at him and said, “You were one of the people with Jesus!”

But Peter denied it! (That was the first denial.) The girl said, “**Yes, you were!**” (*I was not!*)

Peter said, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” He went out into the front courtyard of the house. The **rooster** (*Cock-a-doodle-doo!*) crowed for the first time.

The servant girl saw Peter again. She told the other people who were standing around him, “This man was with Jesus.” But Peter denied it again. (That was the second denial.) The girl said, “**Yes, you were!**” (*I was not!*)

After a little while, the people who were standing out in front of the house said to Peter, “You come from the same place Jesus did! You were one of the people with Jesus!”

Peter was really angry. He shouted and swore and said, “I do not know this man you are talking about. I was not with him.”

The people said, “**Yes, you were!**” (*I was not!*)

That was the **THIRD** time Peter denied Jesus!

At that very minute, the **rooster** (*Cock-a-doodle-doo!*) crowed for the second time.

Then Peter remembered that Jesus had said to him, “Before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times.” And he broke down and wept.



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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

- ✦ Sometimes, when a friend gets into trouble, we might worry that we are going to get into trouble too. Jesus knew that soon there would be trouble and that his friends would pretend not to know him. He knew that they were going to run away. And he told them that they would, before it even happened. Read the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- ✦ It's hard to find grace in this story. Peter let down his friend. The grace is in the assurance that Jesus loved Peter no matter what. When have you felt that you let down a friend or family member but knew you were loved no matter what?
- ✦ Pay attention in the worship service to the Prayer of Confession and the Assurance of Pardon (or Forgiveness). What is happening in each of these parts of the service?



Responding to God's Grace

- ✦ Watch the YouTube video “Peter’s Denial–2000 Film—Jesus Christ Superstar” (bit.ly/PetersDenial2000, 1:47). How does this more modern interpretation of the story help you understand Peter’s actions and feelings?
- ✦ Invite each person to write or draw a prayer of confession for something you have done that let someone down.
- ✦ Sometimes we deny Jesus by pretending not to know him. Talk together about some ways that you pretend not to know Jesus. Then talk about ways that you can show others that you love Jesus.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- ✦ Read some assurances of God’s forgiveness: Psalm 103:8–12, Romans 8:34, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Romans 5:1, and 1 John 1:8–9. Choose one and memorize a phrase that reminds you of God’s love for you always.
- ✦ The rooster is a reminder of *repentance*, which is sorrow for an action and a desire to do better. Do an internet image search for “rooster coloring page.” Choose one or more roosters to print and color. Display them somewhere you can see them to remind you that you can do better!
- ✦ Pray this prayer each day this week:

Gracious God, when I turn my back on you or a friend or a family member, help me remember that I can always turn back to you. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.