



Keep Calm and Speak Boldly

(based on Acts 4:1-31)

Peter and John wanted everyone to hear the amazing story of Jesus, so they talked about Jesus to anyone who would listen. Thousands of people in Jerusalem heard their stories and became followers of Jesus too.

Still, not everyone was happy to hear what Peter and John had to say. Some of the religious leaders wanted the disciples to stop talking about Jesus. They sent temple guards to arrest Peter and John and put them in jail for the night.

The next day, there was an important meeting. All the religious leaders, rulers, and teachers were there. They stood Peter and John in the middle of the crowd and started to bombard them with questions.

It must have been scary, but Peter and John stayed calm. They knew God was with them. They knew the Holy Spirit would give them the right words to say. Finally, Peter spoke. He told these important leaders all about Jesus, how he had been killed on the cross, and how God had raised Jesus back to life.

The leaders were astonished by how brave Peter and John were. They could see that Jesus must have changed their lives. They knew that the two disciples had not done anything wrong, so they couldn't keep them in jail any longer.

“We will let you go this time, but you must never ever speak or teach about Jesus again,” the leaders threatened.

Peter and John looked at each other and smiled. “Do you think we should obey you or obey God?” they asked. “We can't keep quiet about Jesus. We won't.”

The leaders were not happy to hear these words, but they knew they couldn't hold Peter and John anymore. So they told the disciples that they would be in big trouble if they didn't keep quiet about Jesus. Then they let them go.

Peter and John ran back to their friends and told them what had happened. When the rest of Jesus' followers heard the story, they immediately gathered to pray.

“Oh God,” they prayed, “you have heard the threats that have been made against us. Please make us brave and help us keep telling others about Jesus. Please help us to show your love in everything we say and do.”

When they had finished praying, the whole house shook. Everyone was filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly went out to tell others about Jesus.



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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.
- Invite someone to stand in the middle of the room and pretend to be Peter or John. Let others ask questions about Jesus. Encourage the pretender to stay calm, even if he or she does not know the answers, and to answer boldly, if he or she does. Sample questions: “What did Jesus do when children came to see him? How did Jesus feed a crowd? What is the most amazing thing about Jesus?” Talk about how it felt to be in the spotlight.
- Peter and John could not stop telling other people about Jesus, even when they were afraid. Have everyone share something that keeps them from telling other people about Jesus. Listen to one another’s fears. Wonder together how to help each person know and tell faith stories.



Responding to God's Grace

- Invite everyone to play a password game. Each day, write a different trait or characteristic about Jesus, God, or the Holy Spirit on a slip of paper. First thing in the morning, whisper in each person’s ear what you wrote. Tell everyone that this is the password for the day. When someone enters the room or needs something from you, ask them to say the password.
- Each night gather around a Bible or a children’s Bible or story Bible. Locate the New Testament section and the first four books—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books tell the stories of Jesus. Take turns searching this section for a picture, chapter, verse, or story. Have someone read or tell a different story of Jesus each night.
- Place a large sheet of paper, pens, and pencils on a large flat surface. Invite people all week to write or draw stories on the paper that they would like to tell about God, Jesus, or the Holy Spirit. At the end of the week, have a storytelling, faith-sharing festival.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Sing “I Love to Tell the Story” loudly and boldly. Find it in the *Glory to God* hymnal, #462, or watch the YouTube video “I Love to Tell the Story by Alan Jackson” (bit.ly/TellTheStoryHymn, 2:49).
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Dear God, help me to tell one person this week something about you. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.