



Date: _____

Series: Pass the Promise
Fall Year 1, Lesson 19

Jesus Restores Us

Primary Scripture: John 21:3-19

Key Verse: John 21:17b, "Jesus told him, 'Feed my sheep.'"

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Children often feel rejection after failure. They may see no way out of a situation either of their own making or of circumstance. Yet, God comes to us through the Word and this Bible event to extend his grace and restoration. What better message can we extend to God's children than there is absolutely nothing they do that God cannot forgive. Our God is a gracious God, full of mercy and compassion for each of us.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: Jesus took all of Peter's rejection (and ours) so he could give Peter (and us) forgiveness.

Jesus in us: Jesus helps change us, and the Holy Spirit fills us, so we can be courageous for him.

Jesus through us: After failures, God still wants us to be his ministers.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the Presenter is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Supplies:

- *wilting flower trick—order from <http://www.magictricks.com/accessories/droopflow.htm>*

Today, boys and girls, we are going to talk about failure and what it means to be restored. Most of you know what failure means but we may have to learn what being restored means. Let's use this flower to demonstrate. What are some common ways that people fail God or make mistakes that make him sad?

Make the flower wilt a little for each failure the children mention.

Just like when this flower wilts a little for each failure mentioned, we too might feel wilted on the inside when we have let God and ourselves down. It feels like life goes right out of us, kind of like this flower looks like the life goes out of it when it wilts.

Let's talk about how God takes care of our failures. I will need a volunteer. Will you please help me restore this flower. Let's do the same thing God does for us when we have failures. When we have failures and are sad about them and tell God about them, he can restore us. This is what he says:

Repeat after me. "I love you." (I love you.) "Jesus gave his life for you." (Jesus gave his life for you.) "And now he lives in you." (And now he lives in you.)

Through God's words and truth, the Holy Spirit breathes new life into us. Look what happens. Volunteer, please blow gently on the flower. Just like this flower, God can restore us.

As the volunteer blows, the flower resurrects to new life.

If you have failures today, I want you to know that as you worship God, he is going to come and help you with those failures and breathe new life into you. He restores us even when we have done something really bad.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Do you have some things in your life that are failures or sins? Did something make you wilt on the inside like that flower starting to wilt? Are there things that you see about yourself that you really don't want God to see? Have you been trying to hide those things?

We will sit very quietly and picture these things. Let's ask Jesus to come in and look really close at the things that are in our hearts.

Close your eyes and ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart. Let's pray together now.

Dear Jesus, so often I have failed you. I have not been proud of the way I acted or talked. Jesus, please forgive me. Restore me. Make me like new again. I belong to you and I want you to have my whole heart. Thank you for dying for me and forgiving all my sins and failures. Help me live a restored life that is growing strong in you every day. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Guess what, boys and girls. If you prayed this prayer and asked God to restore you, he did. You are new and fresh and clean. He is ruling in your heart. What a time to rejoice. Isn't it great to know with every beat of your heart, God truly loves and forgives you and saves you!

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Supplies:

- penny

Hold up a penny and say:

Is this very much money? No, but God can use it. He cares about the heart of the person who gives it. God delights in a heart for Jesus, or those who are thankful and want to give. Then God can use little things like this penny in big ways. An example of this is a penny drive. Have you had a penny drive in your school where kids brought their small change and put it in a large can or jar? Think about how all that small change added together became a lot of money.

That's how it is with God. He will use what we give him, especially when we give from the heart, and make it so much bigger.

Talk about the current mission or where your offerings are going.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies:

- *masking tape*
- *spoon for every group of six to ten kids*
- *ping-pong ball for every group of six to ten kids*

Split into teams of six to ten kids each. Make two lines with masking tape on the floor about 20 feet apart. Divide each team in half and have them stand behind the lines facing each other in single file. Explain that the first person from each team will carry the ping-pong ball on a spoon as quickly as possible and hand the spoon with the ping-pong ball to the person waiting in line on the other side. If the ball falls off the spoon, the person who dropped it must pick it up from where it fell, “restore it,” go back to the beginning, and start over. Each team should keep track of how many times the ball falls off the spoon.

Do not tell the children, but the winner will be the team whose ball fell off the spoon the most times.

After all have finished or a set amount of time is done, end the game by asking the children how many times the ball had to be restored. The team who had been restored the most is the winner.

This game was a lot of fun. It reminds us that no matter how hard we try to do well, there will be times when we mess up or fail. But we become winners when Christ restores us.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Supplies:

- *costume for Peter*
- *campfire. Use an electric log fire, place logs around a red light, or play a video of a fireplace burning*
- *table*
- *six chairs*
- *adult to speak as the teacher from offstage*

Peter Is Restored

Dramatic Presentation

A short rehearsal would be needed beforehand.

Presenter: Today's Bible event begins in Mark 14:66. This records a time when Peter had a great failure before Jesus. You see, Peter was known as the "Rock Man." He was always bragging about how strong he could be. He once said that even if everyone else denied Jesus, he never would.

But Jesus told him that within that very night, Peter would deny him, not just once, or twice, but three times. Peter said, "It could never happen to me. I would never do it. After all, I'm the 'Rock Man.'"

Did Peter have a failure? He sure did. I'm going to read about it here in Mark 14:66 and as I do, I want you to imagine what Peter must have felt like when he had this failure.

We begin with Peter in the courtyard after the soldiers had taken Jesus away and arrested him. I wonder what he felt like...

Peter: *(Enters and interrupts.)* So you wonder what I felt like, huh? Well, how would you feel if you had the worst failure of your whole life? Let me tell you how you would feel. You would feel terrible. That's just like me. Give me that Bible. I'm Peter and I would like to tell you what happened in my own words. *(Recounts the story of Mark 14:66-72. As he does, he walks towards the simulated campfire.)*

I stood in that cold courtyard, sadly gazing into the fire and remembering all my times with Jesus. Jesus was my very best friend. I had let him down by not staying with him when they came to arrest him. It was pretty dark by that fire. It kind of matched how I was feeling inside.

There was just enough light for a servant girl to recognize me. She knew my accent and said I talked like someone who came from the area where Jesus lived, Galilee. I was scared. What if they arrested me, too? Why couldn't I have been stronger or braver? I didn't want to go to jail or, even worse, die.

So it just came out. I said I didn't know this man, Jesus. The fire didn't even warm me anymore and I moved to get away. A rooster crowed but I was so scared that I didn't hear it. Then later, by the gate, the servant girl said again that she recognized me as one of Jesus' disciples. Now, even though I wasn't near the fire, it seemed to be burning me up.

I didn't know what to do, so I told her I didn't know Jesus. I denied him. I decided to move to a different fire and warm myself. While I was there, I was going to listen for news about Jesus.

It wasn't long before some of the men heard me talking and pointed out that it was obvious I was one of Jesus' disciples. My accent gave me away. I had to convince them I didn't know Jesus. I cursed at them and swore that I didn't know him. My anger and fear were burning through me like fire.

Then a sound caught my attention. A rooster was crowing in the early morning. Jesus' words came rushing back to me. I had done just what he said. I had denied him three times.

Can you imagine how I felt after my failure? I suppose you boys and girls have never denied or failed Jesus before, so you wouldn't really understand.

Presenter: *(Enters.)* **Boys and girls, do you believe that is true? Have you ever had a failure before Jesus? Let's look at Rick. Maybe something happens to him similar to what happened to Peter. This is Rick and his friends at school.**

(Six kids are sitting in chairs around a table pretending like they are writing during a school class. Rick is at the front.)

Teacher: *(Voice from offstage.)* Now boys and girls, all of you will be doing a project with a partner. In this science project you will have to come up with an experiment from chapter nine and make a report on it. You must do this together with your partner.

You will have some time to work in class, but then you might have to work at home together on this as well. It is a special project. Would you like to go ahead and pick whom your special partner might be?

(The kids respond yes and are eager to pick their partners.)

Teacher: You may get up from your table and find your partner.

(The kids can talk to each other - spontaneous conversation - as they pick their partners. One girl does not get up from the table. It is soon obvious why. The kids start talking about who would be Bug-eyed Betty's partner. As she overhears their conversation, she sinks lower and lower into her chair.)

Rick: Bug-eyed Betty goes to my church and you know what, she is even weird there.

(As the kids are finally locating their partners, the teacher's voice is heard from offstage again.)

Teacher: Now boys and girls. Does everyone have a partner?

(All are nodding their heads except Betty.)

Teacher: Well, it looks like you all have a partner but... Betty, you need a partner too, don't you? Rick, would you please be her partner?

(Rick's gaze is full of surprise.)

Teacher: Good!

(A chorus of teasing follows from the kids. Everything from "Ooo" or "Rick and Betty sitting in a tree, K-I-S-S-I-N-G" or "Bug-eyed Betty is one of those church going kids. She believes in all that goofy Jesus stuff. She is nothing but a goody two shoes." ... Rick finds it much easier to go along with the teasing than to stick up for Betty.)

Presenter: Freeze!

(All characters are frozen.)

Presenter: Well, maybe we do have failures. Maybe we do deny Jesus sometimes, even by our actions.

(The Presenter walks over and taps Rick on the shoulder. He becomes alive and steps out of the frozen scene.)

Presenter: Rick, what was happening here?

Rick: Well, it was really unfair that I got put with Betty. None of us like her.

Presenter: Why was that unfair?

Rick: Well, none of the other kids have to work with her and now they are all teasing me about it. It made me mad.

Presenter: If you are feeling bad, how do you think Betty feels?

Rick: Oh, it probably doesn't bother her because it happens to her all the time.

Presenter: Do you remember the other week at church when Betty prayed and asked God to give her a friend? Do you think this doesn't bother her?

Rick: Well, it probably bothers her some, but it still isn't fair that I have to work with her.

Presenter: Do you think that everything Jesus went through was fair? You know, he didn't complain when God didn't give him a king and queen as parents. He didn't have the most famous people as his disciples. They were fishermen and tax collectors. Jesus loved all people, no matter how popular

Rick: You know, I am beginning to see that I have failed Jesus when I wasn't kind to Betty. In fact, I was very cruel. What can I do about this?

Presenter: Let's go ask an expert.

(As the Presenter takes Rick over to Peter, the rest of the cast exits offstage.)

Peter: Rick, I understand completely how you feel letting Jesus down by denying him and going along with the group to make fun of Betty. Let me tell you how Jesus touched my life and helped me after I denied him. *(Walks toward the simulated campfire.)*

When Jesus went to the cross, I was scared. I ran and hid. Three days later, he appeared to us and showed that he was alive. He truly was the Son of God to do that. But I knew that he remembered it was I, the "Rock Man," who denied him. But a couple of weeks later, early in the morning I was out fishing with my friends. We had caught nothing all night long. We were tired and frustrated. There was a man on the shore and we didn't know who he was.

He called out to us, "Friends, have you caught any fish?"

"No," we answered. Then he said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some."

When we did what he said, we couldn't even haul in the net because there were so many fish. John looked at me and said, "It's the Lord. It's Jesus." When I heard that, I put on my garment and jumped in the water to swim to him.

(Follow with John 21:3-19 for Peter's telling of this account. It can be shortened considerably but needs to be told around the fire because, though Jesus didn't say anything about Peter's denial, he was cooking fish on a fire that was similar to the campfire Peter stood around the night he denied Jesus. It reminded them both of the night Peter disowned Jesus. Yet, Jesus reinstated Peter when he told him to take care of his sheep. Peter could hardly believe that Jesus would still want him to be on his side.)

Rick: Wow! Do you think Jesus might give me another chance?

Peter: Sure! I'm sure of it! He restores us even when we have done something really bad.

Rick: *(Speaks to God.)* Dear Lord Jesus, I'm sorry I denied you. I guess I was embarrassed. Since they were making fun of Betty, I thought they might make fun of me, too. In a way, I was denying you. Just like you forgave Peter and let him still serve you, would you forgive me and let me still serve you? In Jesus' name. Amen.

Peter: That's great, Rick. Why don't you give it another try. *(Exits.)*

(The other kids enter. Rick crosses the stage and runs into his group of friends. Again they begin to make fun of him and Bug-eyed Betty. This time Rick defends her and points out her good qualities. The kids are astonished by his reaction. He moves past the group to Betty and begins a kind conversation with her. The group watches in amazement and then begins to leave. One or two kids stay behind, impressed at what Rick has done.)

Presenter: Just like Peter or Rick, we sometimes reject God or his ways. But Jesus took all of Peter's rejection (and ours) when he died on the cross so he could give Peter (and us) forgiveness.

Even after failures, God still wants us to be his ministers. He restores us when we repent and turn back to him. Jesus then helps change us, and the Holy Spirit fills us so we can be courageous for him.



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Have kids share times they had rejected Jesus, and how he forgave them and they felt restored.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

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