

Jailbreak!



The persecution of the church intensifies as one of Jesus' original disciples—James—is put to death by Herod. Then Peter is arrested, but an angel helps him escape. Soon afterward, Herod takes credit for acclaim he doesn't deserve, and dies.



(Needed: Three hymnals)

Hand out the top portion of the reproducible sheet, "Truth or Dare." Have kids answer the questions without looking in their Bibles. Tell them that these questions all come from the passage you'll study today. Call on a "volunteer" to answer question one. The volunteer can stay seated if he/she gets it right. (Answers: [1] a; [2] c; [3] c; [4] c; [5] d; [6] c; [7] a; [8] b; [9] b; [10] d.) If wrong, however, he/she must do one of the dares that you choose. These are listed on the bottom of the sheet. If the dares listed don't seem appropriate, come up with your own. Explain that anyone can appeal to the group to be excused; group members respond with thumbs up (to let the person off) or thumbs down (to make him or her go through with it). Majority wins. More than likely, not many people will be excused. Continue with the other questions following the same procedure. Use this to show that some people seem to enjoy seeing others suffer.

DATE I USED THIS SESSION _____ GROUP I USED IT WITH _____

NOTES FOR NEXT TIME _____



1. Have you ever been glad to see someone else suffer or mess up on something? Or have you ever joined in with a group of people giving someone a hard time? If so, describe the situation. Why do people sometimes enjoy seeing others suffer?

2. Unfortunately, some people seem to thrive on the sufferings of others. In this case, King Herod had put James, one of Jesus' original disciples, to death. The Jewish leaders were so happy about it that Herod went out and arrested Peter right away (vss. 1-4). Be honest . . . if the government suddenly began hauling in Christians for arrest or even death, what do you think you would do? What did the first-century church do (vs. 5)? (Though they were meeting behind locked doors [vs. 13], they were gathered together, praying about the situation.)

3. This appeared to be a maximum security prison. Read verse 6. If you were Peter, and got to make one phone call from jail, who would you call, and what would you say? How worried was Peter? (Even though security was tight and things probably looked pretty grim, Peter doesn't appear to have been too worried, considering the fact that he was sleeping.)

4. What woke him up (vs. 7)? (He was struck in the side.) What would be the first thing to go through your mind if this happened?

5. Peter didn't really believe what happened next (vss. 7-10). Why not? (Peter had received visions from God previously [10:9-16]. Perhaps he thought this was just a nice dream.)

6. When did Peter finally realize that he had actually been rescued (vs. 11)? (After the angel left and he was standing, free, on the street a block from the prison.)

7. Keep in mind that the church members have been holed up, praying for Peter (vss. 5, 12). What do you think of their response when he showed up unexpectedly (vss. 12-15)? (The one person who heard him was so excited that

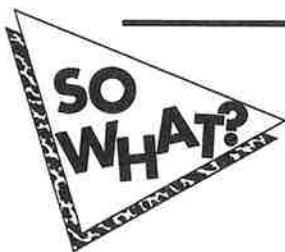
she forgot to open the door. But the others refused to believe that he was truly there.) **Why do you think they didn't believe, since that's exactly what they were praying about?** (Perhaps they didn't believe Peter would [or could] be delivered prior to his trial. Maybe they were praying for Peter, but not necessarily for his release.)

8. Do you ever pray for things you don't actually believe will happen? If so, give some examples.

9. What result did Peter's escape have on the church (vss. 16, 17)? (Astonishment at God's power.) On the guards (vss. 18, 19)? (Execution.)

10. But Herod, the leader whose pride had caused so much trouble for so many people, was about to go too far. People had learned to flatter Herod to get what they wanted, but what happened in this instance (vss. 19-23)? (He was praised for being a god, and didn't dispute it. Consequently, the true God struck him down on the spot and Herod died a humiliating death.)

11. After all the events in this chapter, the Word of God continued to spread (vss. 24, 25). What effect do hard times have on you?



Challenge group members to avoid making the same mistake Herod made of assuming he alone was responsible for the position and power he had been given. Encourage kids to mention things they've been given (talents, possessions, accomplishments, etc.), and then spend some time in prayer, giving God the credit for these things.

TRUTH OR DARE

1. Who was king at the time the chapter opens?
 - a. Herod
 - b. Agrippa
 - c. Claudius
 - d. Festus
2. Who was the first of the original disciples to be martyred?
 - a. Judas
 - b. Peter
 - c. James
 - d. John
3. During what Jewish holiday was Peter thrown in jail?
 - a. Pentecost, the Feast of Weeks
 - b. Tabernacles, the Feast of Booths
 - c. Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread
 - d. Hanukkah, the Feast of Dedication
4. How many soldiers guarded Peter?
 - a. none
 - b. 6
 - c. 16
 - d. 26
5. How did the angel wake Peter up?
 - a. a bright light
 - b. a loud noise
 - c. an earthquake
 - d. he hit him
6. Who answered the door when Peter arrived at the house where people were praying?
 - a. Mary
 - b. Phyllis
 - c. Rhoda
 - d. No one—the people inside were too afraid
7. Who was a trusted personal servant of King Herod?
 - a. Blastus
 - b. Bacchus
 - c. Barsabbas
 - d. Barak
8. Why did Herod die?
 - a. He cursed God
 - b. He didn't praise God
 - c. He didn't make sacrifices to God
 - d. He withheld money from God
9. How did Herod die?
 - a. Knifed in the back by his own guard
 - b. Eaten by worms
 - c. In his sleep
 - d. Bow and arrow
10. Who did Barnabas and Saul take with them when they left Jerusalem?
 - a. Peter
 - b. Timothy
 - c. Luke
 - d. Mark

D A R E S

1. Do 20 push-ups.
2. Sing "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" as loud as you can.
3. Hold a hymnal in each hand with arms outstretched for two minutes while balancing a third hymnal on your head. (Continue with the other questions in the meantime.)
4. Imitate a pig for 30 seconds.
5. Balance on one foot with eyes closed for one minute.
6. Tell about your first kiss (or get down on one knee and kiss the hand of someone else in the group).
7. Tie everyone's untied shoes.
8. Impersonate a famous person until someone guesses who it is.
9. Whistle a television theme song until people guess it—no laughing.
10. Draw your self portrait—using your feet only!