

For Sunday 1st November 2026

Passage: Acts 15:1-35



St Peter's

COLCHESTER

St Peter's Kids Resources

Welcome to the resources for St Peter's Kids.

Each Sunday, Seekers and Diggers will normally explore the same Bible passage or theme as the rest of the church, in ways that are right for their different ages.

Our hope is to help the children:

- engage seriously with the Bible;
- grasp one clear central truth;
- understand why it matters;
- respond appropriately to God;
- enjoy being together and build good relationships.

How to use these resources

These are resources, not a script. Please use your knowledge of the children and your own strengths as a leader, and feel free to adapt what is here. You certainly do not need to use everything suggested.

A simple, engaging conversation about the Bible can be far more valuable than an elaborate activity. The aim is always to help the children understand, remember and respond to God's word.

Seekers and Diggers

- Seekers – Reception to Year 2: keep things short, concrete and interactive, using repetition, movement, visual material and questions they can genuinely answer.
- Diggers – Years 3 to 6: give children real opportunities to read the Bible, notice things in the text, think, question, discuss and respond. Aim for material that stretches them without feeling childish.

What about craft?

Craft can be a great way to reinforce the Bible teaching or help children respond, but it is entirely optional. If you enjoy using craft and it genuinely helps the session, please do. If it does not, there is absolutely no need to include it.

Summary

- Some people say Gentile Christians must keep the law of Moses in order to be saved.
- Paul and Barnabas strongly disagree.
- The apostles and elders meet in Jerusalem to consider the issue.
- Peter reminds them that God has already welcomed Gentiles who believe.
- The central conclusion is that salvation comes through the grace of Jesus.
- The church writes to Gentile believers and encourages them.
- Key verse: “we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus” – Acts 15:11.
- Aim: To help the children understand that Jesus saves us by grace. We cannot earn our place in God’s family.
- Keep returning to: **Jesus saves us. We do not earn it.**

Things to notice in the passage

- The disagreement is serious.
- Some people are saying: *Believing in Jesus is not enough. Gentile Christians must also keep the law of Moses if they want to be saved.*
- Paul and Barnabas disagree strongly.
- The apostles and elders meet to work out what is true.
- Peter reminds them what God has already done: God has given the Holy Spirit to Gentile believers, and God has cleansed their hearts by faith.
- Peter then asks why they should place a burden on Gentile believers that neither they nor their ancestors had been able to bear.
- Verse 11 gives the heart of the chapter: **Salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus.**
- James agrees that Gentiles should not have unnecessary obstacles placed in their way.
- The church then sends a letter explaining the decision.
- The result is encouragement and joy.

Possible approach for Seekers

Keep it very simple: **Jesus saves us. We do not earn it.**

You could begin with the idea of earning something.

Ask:

- What sorts of things do we earn?
- Can you earn a sticker?
- Can you earn pocket money?
- Can you earn a prize?

Then ask: Can we earn God’s love?

Explain that some people in Acts 15 were saying: “Trusting Jesus is not enough. You must do extra things as well.”

But the apostles said: No. Jesus saves us by grace.

Grace means God gives us what we do not deserve.

We do not become Christians because:

- we behave perfectly;
- we know enough Bible answers;
- we come to church enough;
- we are better than other people.

We belong to Jesus because he saves us.

You could repeat together: **Jesus saves us. We do not earn it.**

Possible approach for Diggers

Start with the question: What makes someone a Christian?

Let the children suggest answers.

Then explain the argument in Acts 15.

Some people are effectively saying: Jesus + keeping these extra rules = saved.

Paul, Barnabas, Peter and James insist: Jesus' grace = saved.

Read verse 11 carefully.

Questions:

- What were some people saying Gentile believers needed to do?
- Why was this such an important disagreement?
- What evidence does Peter give that God had accepted Gentiles?
- What does Peter say about salvation?
- What is grace?
- Why is adding extra conditions to the gospel dangerous?

Then make an important distinction.

Grace does not mean: "It does not matter how Christians live." It means: We obey God because Jesus has saved us, not so that Jesus will save us.

You might write:

- NOT: Obey → God accepts me.
- BUT: Jesus saves me → therefore I want to obey him.

Connecting it with St Peter's

Church should be a place where very different sorts of people can belong because they belong to Jesus.

We must be careful not to add our own tests:

- wearing the right clothes;
- knowing the right words;
- having the right sort of family;
- liking the same music;
- being confident;
- already knowing how church works.

The gospel says that sinners are welcomed by grace through Jesus.

That should affect how we welcome people too.

Possible activities

- **Earned or gift?** Sort examples into things normally earned and things freely given.
- **Jesus plus?** Write "Jesus + _____" and discuss things people might wrongly think are necessary to make God accept us.
- **Welcome challenge:** imagine a child visiting church who knows nothing about Christianity. What might make them feel they do not belong?
- **Grace gift:** give each child something small without requiring them to earn it, then use it to explain grace.
- **Memory phrase:** "saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus."

A note for leaders

This is one of the most important gospel passages in Acts. The issue is not that God's law was bad; the issue is whether keeping the law is the basis on which sinners are saved and welcomed into God's people.

Do not allow the session to become merely: "Christians should get along when they disagree." The disagreement matters because the gospel matters.

The question is: What is necessary for somebody to be saved?

The answer is not:

- Jesus plus religious achievement.
- Jesus plus belonging to the right culture.
- Jesus plus keeping enough rules.

The answer is: The grace of the Lord Jesus.

Obedience matters deeply in the Christian life. But obedience is the fruit of salvation, not its price.

So the pattern is:

1. We cannot save ourselves.
2. Jesus saves us by grace.
3. We receive salvation by faith.
4. Because Jesus has saved us, we learn to live as his people.
5. We welcome others on the same basis on which God welcomed us: grace.

Prayer

- Thank God that salvation is a gift of grace.
- Thank Jesus for doing what we could never do for ourselves.
- Ask God to forgive us when we try to prove ourselves better than others.
- Pray that St Peter's would be a church where people are welcomed warmly.
- Pray that children would grow up knowing that Jesus is enough to save them.