

The Case of the Amazing Answer

Acts 12:1-18

**Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

“Our story is called: The Case of the Amazing Answer. Here is your listening assignment.” Read from Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment signs, but questions are summarized below:

Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to find out:

1. **Who was in trouble? Who prayed for him?**
2. **What was God’s amazing answer?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Ephesians 6:18, HCSB:**

“Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints.”

I need to find out:

1. **What kinds of things did God’s people ask God to do?**
2. **How did God answer these prayers?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:

I found six clues, but only 4 of them are in the story.

They are: a flower, a servant girl, a rug, a jail, leaders, and an angel. *Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.*

I need to figure out:

1. **Which four belong in our story?**
2. **What amazing thing did God’s people ask God to do for Peter? How did God answer their prayers?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.

Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.

The Case of the Amazing Answer Acts 12:1-18

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture. Tip: Stack pictures in numerical before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture. OR, if using the Story Scenes to tell the story, disregard the storyboard picture references listed below.

Life was exciting for Christians in the big city of Jerusalem. (SB1) They had been telling the good news of Jesus to all who would listen, and many people not only listened, but believed! (SB2) Just weeks after Jesus had risen from the dead and gone back to heaven, hundreds, even thousands of people, turned away from disobeying God and trusted in Him as their Savior. (SB3) These new believers joined the other Christians as they gathered together to worship God and love one another.

This made the Christians so happy! They wanted everyone to be saved from God's punishment for their sins. They wanted everyone to be forgiven so that they could know and love and enjoy God forever. How exciting it was to see the Holy Spirit work in the hearts of so many people that they might be saved!

But life wasn't just exciting for these Christians. It was dangerous, too. For while THEY were happy about all of these new believers, there were others in Jerusalem who became very, very angry about it... and they planned to do whatever they could to STOP more people from putting their faith in Jesus.

(SB4) Perhaps angriest of all the angry people were the important Jewish leaders in Jerusalem They did NOT believe that Jesus was God's Son, the Savior. They thought Jesus was just a fake.

"We must stop those Christians from telling people about Jesus. They are ruining everything," these important leaders told each other. And so, they began to send soldiers to hurt the Christians and put them in jail. They even began to kill some of them.

But no matter what those important leaders did, the Christians kept on doing the very things those important leaders did not want them to do: (SB5) They gathered together to worship God. They prayed together. They shared with each other the amazing things God was doing. They listened to preaching from God's Word, the Bible (SB6) They gathered together to love one another, too. They cared for each other's needs, making sure everyone had enough food and clothes and anything else they needed. And when they left their gatherings, what did they do? (SB7) They kept on telling people about Jesus, that even more might be saved.

"GRRRR," those important leaders were so mad! They must stop these Christians, but how? All Jerusalem waited to see what would happen.

It did not take long to find out. (SB8) King Herod, the Roman king over Jerusalem had been looking for a way to make friends with the Jewish leaders. The people of Jerusalem didn't want a Roman king. They were hard to rule. But if he could make the Jewish leaders happy, they could help the people be happy with him, too. Getting rid of these Christians was just the chance he was looking for. (SB9) So, King Herod sent his soldiers to arrest Christians. He even let them kill James, one of Jesus' first disciples! Oh, no!

(SB10) Now it was the Jewish leaders who were happy. King Herod liked this. His plan was working. So, he decided he would capture and get rid of another, even more important leader of the Christians. You might even be able to guess his name. It starts with a "P" and he was one of Jesus' closest friends.

Can you tell me his name?

(SB11) His name was Peter! (SB12) Yes, King Herod knew catching Peter would make those Jewish leaders really, REALLY happy! No telling what he could get them to do for him, if he got rid of Peter for them. "Catch Peter and put him in jail," King Herod ordered his soldiers. (SB13) And that's just what they did. They found Peter and (SB14) took him to jail!

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

“Guard Peter carefully! Chain him to two soldiers,” the soldiers were told. “And put two extra soldiers outside the door of his jail room, just to be sure!” King Herod ordered. “We don’t want Peter to escape! I will bring him out to the people in a few days and decide what should happen to him then. Perhaps I will kill him like I did James,” Herod said.

(SB15) What would the Christians do now? Their enemies were getting so strong! They had killed James and now Peter was in jail! What would they do if Herod killed him, too? Should they stop gathering together? Should they stop telling people about Jesus? No, they shouldn’t! Could they try to get Peter out of jail? No, they couldn’t! Then what COULD they do???

What do you think will happen?

(SB16) The believers knew what to do. They gathered together and they asked the one person for help who could always help. Do you know who that was?

Can you guess?

It was God!!!!

Yes, the believers gathered together and prayed and prayed and prayed. “Please God, help Peter to be brave. Please God, free Peter from jail. Please God, help us to keep on telling people about Jesus,” they asked Him.

Day after day, night after night, Peter stayed in jail. And day after day, night after night, the little church of believers keep on gathering together to pray for him, but still nothing happened. Did God not hear them? Was He not listening? Did He not care?

What do you think?

Yes, God heard them. He was listening, and He cared. But He was doing everything in His perfect way and in His perfect time.

At last it was the very night before King Herod would bring Peter out before the people and probably kill him. (SB17) Once again, the church gathered to pray--this time at Mary’s house (the mother of John Mark). “Please God, help Peter to be brave. Please God, free Peter from jail. And please God, help us to keep on telling people about Jesus,” they prayed. And at last, God answered their prayers with a

What do you think He answered their prayers with now? With a “yes” or a “no”?

With a great, big, amazing YES! Let’s see what God did.

Deep in the jail, Peter slept, still tied to two soldiers with chains. Outside his jail room, two soldiers still kept guard. They wanted to make sure this night of all nights that Peter did not escape!

(SB18) But suddenly, a light shone in the room and who do you think God had sent to help Peter?

Who do you think?

It was an angel from heaven!

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

The angel struck Peter on the side and woke him saying, **“Get up quickly.”** (SB19) **“Clank!”** off the chains fell from Peter’s hands and to the ground, by God’s power. **“Get dressed and put on your sandals. Wrap your cloak around you and follow me,”** the angel urged Peter.

(SB20) Peter did just what the angel said. Peter got dressed, then followed the angel through the door, right past the guards, and to the iron gate outside the gate without anyone noticing them. Then **“CREAK!”** the iron gate opened for them all by itself, by God’s power. They passed through the gates and into the dark streets of Jerusalem. Isn’t God amazing!

The angel left Peter just as suddenly as he came. (SB20) Peter stood there alone in the dark quiet streets in amazement. The Lord had rescued him! He was free!

Where should Peter go? What should Peter do? Who should Peter tell?

Can you guess?

Peter knew EXACTLY where to go and what to do and who to tell! He would tell the other believers!

So (SB21) Peter went straight to the house where the believers had gathered to pray for him, but the door was locked! **“Knock, knock!”** Peter rapped on the door of the gateway until Rhoda, the servant girl came. **“It’s me! Let me in!”** Peter whispered to her.

(SB22) **“It’s Peter! It’s Peter! I know his voice! God has rescued him,”** Rhoda exclaimed. But she was so excited that she ran back to the others and told them the news, forgetting to let Peter in!

“You are crazy! It can’t be Peter! Peter is in jail!” they told Rhoda. How funny that the believers were praying for God to rescue Peter, but didn’t believe He had really done it!

But when Peter kept knocking and they opened the door, of course, it was Peter! Peter motioned for them to be quiet. He had escaped, but how long would it be before his enemies came looking for him? They must be careful!

(SB23) Then Peter shared with the little church the amazing way God had answered their prayers. No enemy could stop God’s people with God answering their prayers! God’s plans would always win! (SB24) How they all praised God that night for all of the amazing things that He had done!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who was in trouble? Who prayed for him? Peter was in trouble. The little church of believers prayed for him to be rescued.

2. What was God's amazing answer? God sent an angel to free him from jail and bring him safely back to them.

For You and Me:

God is the same God today as He was back in Bible times. He wants His people to keep on asking Him to do amazing things. One of the first amazing things we can ask Him to do is ask Him to help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This is how we become God's people. God loves to answer this prayer and many other ones just as amazing!

**Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:
Our Bible Verse is Ephesians 6:18, HCSB:**

"Pray at all times in the Spirit with every prayer and request, and stay alert in this with all perseverance and intercession for all the saints."

1. What kinds of things did God's people ask God to do? To rescue Peter from being killed.

2. How did God answer these prayers? God sent an angel to free him from jail and bring him safely back to them.

For You and Me:

God is the same God today as He was back in Bible times. He wants His people to keep on asking Him to do amazing things. One of the first amazing things we can ask Him to do is ask Him to help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This is how we become God's people. God loves to answer this prayer and many other ones just as amazing!

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a flower, a servant girl, a rug, a jail, leaders, and an angel. Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

1. Which four belong in our story?

The servant girl, jail, leaders and angel belong. The flower and the rug do not.

2. What amazing thing did God's people ask God to do for Peter? How did God answer their prayers?

They asked Him to rescue Peter from jail and from being killed. God sent an angel to free him from jail and bring him safely back to them.

For You and Me:

God is the same God today as He was back in Bible times. He wants His people to keep on asking Him to do amazing things. One of the first amazing things we can ask Him to do is ask Him to help us turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. This is how we become God's people. God loves to answer this prayer and many other ones just as amazing!

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:****Why Do God's People Go to Church?****To Worship God and Love One Another...****By Telling What God Has Done and Praying!**

God's people especially love to share how God saved them. Each one has a special story of how they heard the good news of Jesus, said no to disobeying God and trusted Jesus as their Savior. And it's no wonder they love to tell their story because it is the best day of their life!

We, too, can be God's people when we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our own Savior. It will be the best day of our life, too! There's nothing better than being forgiven by God and having special closeness with Him! Ask Him to help you have this!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for saving Your people, the Church. We praise You for Your faithfulness shown to Your people throughout all of time.
- C** God, sometimes we don't want to hear about all the wonderful things You have done for Your people, or even the wonderful things You are doing for them today. Sometimes we just want to think about ourselves. We need a Savior!
- T** God, thank You for Your Word, the Bible, that tells us about the great things You did for Your people who lived long ago. Thank You for all You do for Your people today, all around the world. Thank You for letting us hear of Your mighty works and how they help us to keep trusting in You and living for You. Thank You for hearing our prayers to do even more.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to love hearing about the mighty things You have done, long ago and today. Help us to praise You more because of what You have done. Help us to trust You and live for You. Help us to encourage others who gather together with us.

In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.