

Session 23

Rhoda

The children are encouraged to spread the Good News about Jesus with joy.

Text: Acts 12:1-19, Revelation 3:20

Supplies:

- ✍ Various loose items that can make interesting noises
- ✍ A blanket
- ✍ A rose or a picture of a rose (for Rhoda)
- ✍ Pieces of material/scarves for the play
- ✍ Copies of the door
- ✍ Cardboard, glue, scissors, a hole punch
- ✍ Pieces of ribbon/wool/string and other decorations



WELCOME

What sound is behind the door? We are going to play with sounds in this game. Beforehand, find a few items that make a very specific and easy-to-identify sound, such as a stapler, scissors, a teaspoon in a cup, paper that is torn or crumpled, a zip, or a telephone. Make a cardboard door and use the items to make sounds behind the door. Once the children have guessed what the item is, the door can be opened and the children can see if they were able to guess it correctly.

Who is behind the blanket? Divide the children into two groups. Hang a blanket between the two groups so that they cannot see each other. Give each child a turn to come forward to the blanket and make a noise. The other team must then guess who it was that made the noise.



WORSHIP

Sing two songs together.

Sing the **theme song** and do the **settle down ritual**.



WORD

Use some old clothes, some pieces of material, or even scarves to dramatize the story.

- Peter
- Rhoda, a young servant girl who had faith
- A group of people praying

One day there was a very important prayer meeting on the top floor of the house where a young girl, Rhoda, worked. Rhoda (her name means "rose") was a young girl who worked as a servant in the house of a woman called Mary (but not Jesus' mother or Mary Magdalene, another Mary). The church prayer meeting was on the highest floor and was going till late at night. Peter, the well-known disciple and apostle, had been locked in jail also that

time, because he had tried to spread the Good News about Jesus. The governor, Herod (not the same Herod who wanted to kill Jesus), wanted to kill Peter.

What the people praying didn't know, was that their prayers had been answered! A miracle had happened at the jail, and the jail's doors had been opened, so that Peter was on his way back through the dark streets of Jerusalem to Mary's house where they were praying. This was not at a time when people would normally knock on other people's doors, and the Christians who were there were all rather scared that they might also be thrown into jail.

When someone knocked on the door, it was Rhoda who went to find out who was there. "Who is it?" she asked. "It's me, Peter!" said Peter. Rhoda recognized the voice on the other side of the door and immediately knew that it was indeed Peter! She had listened to many of his sermons and knew him well. She was so excited, she even forgot to open the door for him and ran to tell all the others about the news!

She quickly ran up the stairs to where the people were praying. "Everyone, Peter ... Peter is here! He is downstairs at the front door!" she called.

"Oh, come on, you must be crazy," the people in the room told her. They were too busy praying for Peter. "But, he is really here!" Rhoda continued. She could not keep quiet about the good news. "Well," the people upstairs thought, "It must be his ghost who has come to tell us that he had died, and so it is too late." But Rhoda did not give up. She continued to insist that Peter was there, and between all the arguing, finally, everyone else heard the knock on the door.

They were all so very surprised when they opened the door and Peter was standing there. Peter held out his hand to quieten everyone down. When everyone was silent, he told them the story of how he was freed from prison while they were praying for him. He then told everyone to tell others about what had happened, and then he left into the night.

We don't know the rest of Rhoda's story. This is the only part of her story we read about in the Bible. What we do know, however, is that she was very brave to interrupt the important prayer meeting with her news. But because her story was so important, and it was such good news, she went in and told everyone anyway. She had such strong faith to hold onto the truth, even when others told her she was crazy. She is an amazing example of a brave young person.

The children now get a chance to reflect on the story:

1. I wonder which part of Rhoda's story really stood out for you.
2. I wonder if you can tell anyone about something that made you so excited that you could not keep quiet about it.
3. I wonder if you can tell the story of a time when your (or someone at home's) prayers were heard.
4. I wonder how you would convey the message of this story to someone else.



WORKING AND PLAYING TIME

- ◆ Let the children make a prayer book: Let the children trace their hands on cardboard or poster board. They can also trace exactly the same shape on some sheets of paper in order to compile the inside of the book. Everything can be cut out and put together as a booklet. Punch a couple of holes in the side in order to tie it all together with string, ribbon or wool. Ask the children to think of some prayers that they can then write down inside the prayer book.
- ◆ Hand out copies of the door and help the children make and decorate their own doors. Write the passage of Revelation 3:20 on it.
- ◆ Use the previous “craft” to extend a simple invitation to those children who have not yet opened the “door” to their hearts. (Talk about the good news that Rhoda went to tell the other believers praying upstairs. We also have Good News to tell; we have the story of Jesus to tell. God sent Jesus down to earth because He loves everyone and wants to save us from sin. Revelation 3:20 says that God wants us to make a decision to be His children, just like opening a door when someone knocks. If someone has not yet made a decision to follow Jesus, they can talk to the leader or facilitator afterwards.)
- ◆ The children can use the scarves, clothes or material to act out the story again.

Close with the blessing.



Rev 3:20:
“Here I am! I
stand at the
door and
knock. If any-
one hears my ●
voice and
opens the
door, I will
come in and
eat with him,
and he with
me.”