

Living Stones, Chosen People

Grades
5-6

CORNERSTONE • EASTER 5 • YEAR A

1 PETER 2:2-10



5

What's happening in this story?

The focus here is on life in Christ, as Peter addresses a community of new believers. He uses two distinct metaphors for how God “raises” us in faith. First, Peter compares new Christians to newborn babies, needing milk in order to grow. Secondly, Peter calls us “living stones” built on Jesus, the “living stone” and foundation of our lives. God will form us into a “spiritual house”—a place of love and life for all—but this can only happen when we let God use us together.

What does this story mean for kids?

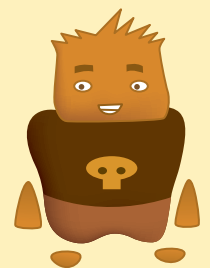
Kids may have experienced rejection and may know firsthand how hard that is. But being rejected by peers does not mean one is rejected by God. On the contrary, just as God loves Jesus, the rejected “living stone,” and chose him for important and holy work, so God loves and has chosen us. Over and over this passage reminds kids—and adults—that by God’s doing, we are precious and holy; we are named “God’s own people.”

What is the Lectionary Connection?

This passage from 1 Peter was written to brand-new Jesus-followers when the church was less than a century old. Just as babies eagerly accept milk, we are urged to receive ongoing spiritual food—for the sake of our own Easter life and so that, together, we can become a strong “spiritual house” of faith.

AGE LEVEL TIP

At this age, kids are beginning to understand that faith is more than just going to church, Sunday school, and youth group. This lesson can help them see that they are a work in progress, and that God can do great things in them—even when they fail.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- White paper
- Pens
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Scrap paper
- Construction-site hard hat

WHIRL SUPPLIES • **WHIRL NRSV BIBLES** • **DVD** • **WALL CHART** • **LEAFLETS**

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Create a “wall” out of “bricks” made of 8.5 x 11-inch sheets of paper. Write “Jesus” on one and tape it at the bottom of the wall, then have each kid write their name on their own brick and tape it above so the Jesus brick is the wall’s base. (It will look like you’re seeing the vertical edge of the wall.)

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today’s date, church season, color, and icon.

This is week five of the Easter season. Today our theme is Cornerstone, and we’re going to explore the different ways Jesus provides strength and is the foundation for God’s work in our lives. There is spiritual construction constantly going on inside us, so let’s draw a construction-site hard hat on the Wall Chart. Let’s build a tower of hands. Have a kid place their hand on a table and have the next kid place their hand on top. Add a second layer with your other hand and see how high the tower reaches.

Pass out leaflets and pens.

If you were going to build a house, you’d need to have some kind of a plan first, right? The same is true as you build a life: you need a strong foundation and a sense of direction. On your leaflet, fill in the foundation with things from the categories you see

listed. Give kids time to work. **How does a strong foundation help you? What gives your life a strong foundation?**

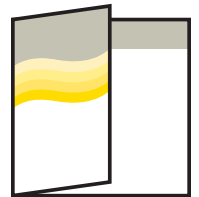
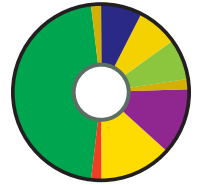
Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

You don’t need a foundation to build something. In fact, things get built without foundations all the time. But if you want to build something that will last, you need to start with a solid foundation. Let’s watch this video.

View Episode 11, “Totally Tubular,” on the Whirl Year A Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What expectations do the kids have for the dance competition?**
- **Does Ruby’s prayer put too much pressure on Gabe? Why or why not?**
- **Have you ever stumbled when the attention was on you? What happened?**
- **What foundation did the original dance team build?**
- **What kinds of things are you doing to build your faith?**



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find 1 Peter 2:2-10.

Do the Easter 5 Preview Activity together on page 1436 and compare responses.

Read 1 Peter 2:2-10 in this creative way together:

First Peter is written as a letter of encouragement, reminding its readers of God’s goodness and urging them to follow Jesus’ teachings, even—or especially—in the face of hardship.



The section we’re reading today cites scripture and prophecy to point out Christ’s strength as our foundation and provide people with a new perspective on their identity in Christ. Let’s stand on our chairs while we read to get a new perspective of our own. Ask for four volunteers and give each one section of scripture to read aloud: verses 2–3, 4–5, 6–8, and 9–10.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Why is milk important to infants? What do you think of when you hear the words “pure, spiritual milk”?**
- **When you’ve suffered rejection, how does knowing that Jesus was also rejected help you?**
- **What does it mean to say that Jesus gives you a new identity?**
- **Why do you think the author calls us “living stones”?**
- **This section ends by talking about experiencing mercy after we had received no mercy. What do you think we’re supposed to do with that?**

BIBLE BIT

Some scholars believe this letter was written by someone else because it uses a vocabulary well above that of a common Galilean fisherman.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you have time to watch the video again, pay attention to how Gabe feels when the stunt fails. What happens next? When have you felt that you let other people down?

OUR CHURCH

Following Jesus enough to risk failure requires a tremendous amount of faith. In your church, who continually tries new things to help people grow closer to Christ?

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out pens.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. It's a cool image—to think about yourself being made of “living stone,” and that God is shaping you, along with other believers, into something bigger and stronger than you could be on your own.
2. But what if God was building you into a *skyscraper*? How would that happen? How is it already happening?
3. On your leaflet, you'll see the blueprints for a skyscraper still under construction. The bottom block is the foundation. Today's scripture reminds us what this is, right? It's Jesus. Go ahead and write “Jesus” in that block.
4. Now, think over the events in your life so far. What is God doing in your life that is helping you *grow*? Brainstorm some noteworthy events in your life that mark times of spiritual growth. Some of them will be good things: baptism, church camp, and so on. But one of the great things we learn from this scripture is that even when we stumble or are “rejected by mortals,” like Jesus was, God still builds us up. Sometimes we grow the most after we suffer a loss or a setback.
5. Write your most noteworthy events in the blocks of your skyscraper, building on the foundation of Jesus. Add more blocks if you need them, and don't worry if you can't fill them all.
6. After kids have a chance to work, ask them to share a construction status report. **Where are you heading? What heights are you reaching? Look at the other buildings around you; who are some of the others who are leaning on you?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

So far today, we've looked at the importance of a strong foundation, and also at some of the ways God is building on that foundation in our lives. It's a lot of symbolism. What do you think it really means for Jesus to be our foundation? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

A priest (or pastor) is responsible for sharing God's gifts with other people. This scripture calls us “a royal priesthood,” which means we can't just soak up blessings—we have to pass them on. Write down some ways you can pass on the blessings you've received from God.

Send kids out.

On pieces of paper, have kids write “You're a blessing.” On the count of three, have them slide them to the person on their left.

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for choosing us and building us up. Help us to rely on the solid foundation of Jesus, even when we feel like giving up. Amen.** Thank kids for thinking in symbols today to learn more about their lives of faith. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.