



The Life of Apostle Peter With Rick Steves

Mosaic Television User's Guide
Winter 2007

Apostle Peter was an ordinary businessman who became one of Christianity's most influential figures. Peter took great risks and witnessed amazing things in the three years he spent as a follower of Jesus, and in the years following Jesus' resurrection and ascension. Christians today can learn from Peter's life and example.

This video, hosted by Rick Steves, travel guide and ELCA member, will help viewers:

- better understand Peter as depicted in the Bible, early church tradition and contemporary scholarship.
- see various sites where Peter lived, worked and died.
- enjoy great art that tells the story of Apostle Peter.

Preparation

Before watching the video

Take some time to explore what your group already knows about Apostle Peter.

- On a sheet of paper, flip chart or white board, draw two columns. In one column write: What adjective(s) would you use to describe Apostle Peter? Why do you think Jesus chose Peter to lead the church?
- In the second column, fill in answers from the group for each question.

After watching the video

- Compare the adjectives used to describe Peter with those you heard in the video. Any differences, additions, surprises?
- What parts of the life of Peter were new to you? What parts of his life offer inspiration or raise questions for you?

To explore Apostle Peter's life further, see "Additional Resources."

Peter as failure, Peter as model

In the video, Joy Schroeder said, "What we can draw from Peter is that even someone who is fallible, someone who can be a failure, is still chosen and accepted by Christ." In fact, he ends up being renamed *Petros*, or "Rock," by Jesus. Ask:

1. In your life, when have you seen failure (by individuals or by the church) used by God for good?
2. How significant is Jesus' renaming of Peter in the transformation of his character?

Rick Steves points out that the Bible depicts Peter in “shockingly human terms: at times he’s a great orator, compromiser and bold professor of the faith. At other times, he’s timid, impetuous and lacking in faith.” Ask:

3. Where do you see evidence of “Peter-like leadership” in your congregation and community?

In the video N. Clayton Croy said of Peter: “He is a guy who has fish scales on his hands, who wound up being handed the scales of ecclesial [church] justice by Jesus.” Yet Walter Taylor points out that Peter abandoned a successful business to follow Jesus. Ask:

4. Was Peter’s risk worth the reward in the end? What did he gain by changing course and pursuing a different path midway through his life?
5. What ways are you stretched by your faith to abandon your comfort zone and “step out of the boat” as Peter did with Jesus on the Sea of Galilee?

In the book of Acts, Apostle Peter is shown as a leader of the early church. The ELCA Evangelism Strategy highlights Peter’s reliance on prayer as a discernment tool: “The apostle Peter was transformed and received a new vision for mission from the Holy Spirit while in prayer (Acts 10). As a prayer church, the ELCA can be transformed to discover new possibilities for mission.” Ask:

6. How has your church embraced this call to be transformed for mission by prayer?

Peter is also shown in the second chapter of Acts to be a charismatic speaker who, on the day of Pentecost, convinces 3,000 people to follow Jesus. Arabs were among those listed as converts on that day. Today, when Palestinian Christians are asked by Americans, “When did you convert to Christianity?” they will often respond, “On Pentecost!” Ask:

7. How is Peter’s faithful example applied by your church in your community?

Additional Resources:

ONLINE

“Apostle Peter” entry at Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apostle_Peter, provides a succinct background on the life and the legend of Apostle Peter, including citations from early Christian writers about the death of Peter.

IN PRINT

Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene: The Followers of Jesus in History and Legend by Bart D. Ehrman, Oxford University Press, 2006, 304 pages, hardcover. This book by biblical scholar Ehrman explores the historical record and writings attributed to Peter.

The Chair of Peter by Friedrich Gontard, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964, 629 pages, hardcover. This history of the papacy provides background on early Christian tradition surrounding Peter’s service and death in Rome.

MOSAIC TELEVISION

The Life of Apostle Peter is the final installment of Mosaic Television, produced by the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

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