

Session 11: No Other Name

Acts 4:5-22, Acts 10, Galatians 2:11-14, Acts 15:7-11 | 75 to 90 minutes | Young Adult Inductive Study

PART ONE: LEADER PREPARATION GUIDE

SESSION OVERVIEW

Discovery Aim: The group follows the apostle through decades: boldness before the court that condemned Jesus, the door thrown open to the nations at Cornelius' house, a public relapse into fear of men at Antioch, and a final ringing definition of salvation as grace. They discover that conversion is lifelong: the restored man keeps being converted, keeps stumbling, and keeps rising, to the end.

Catholic Touchstone: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12; CCC 432). Held together with the Church's teaching on God's universal saving will (CCC 847-848), and lived out in a man for whom conversion was never finished (CCC 1428): the second conversion is the uninterrupted task of the whole Church.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

This session covers the most ground of any in the study: roughly two decades of one man's discipleship, chosen to teach one truth: the arc did not end at Pentecost. Keep the pace brisk in the early scenes so Antioch and the council get their time.

Scene one, Acts 4. A healing at the temple gate lands Peter and John before the Sanhedrin, and Luke names the names: Annas the high priest and Caiaphas (Acts 4:6), the same court that condemned Jesus, a few hundred yards from the courtyard fire. “Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit,” answers with Psalm 118:22 (the stone the builders rejected, the group's discovery text) and with the study's memory verse: no other name. The court's finding is the Gospel's best backhanded compliment: “they were uneducated, common men... and they recognized that they had been with Jesus” (4:13). Their boldness (*parrhēsia*) has one explanation on the record. And Peter's closing line to the court is a restored man's entire theology of witness: “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard” (4:20).

Scene two, Acts 10. Cornelius, a Roman centurion, and the vision of the sheet: “What God has cleansed, you must not call common” (10:15). Peter crosses a Gentile threshold his own formation had taught him was off-limits; “you yourselves know how unlawful it is,” he says out loud (10:28), and then watches the Spirit fall on the uncircumcised mid-sermon. His summary is a conversion within a conversion: “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality” (10:34). The point for your group: years after Pentecost, the chief

of the apostles is still being stretched, still discovering the width of “all that are far off” (2:39). Grace did not finish with him in one morning.

Scene three, Antioch, and handle it with the Church's honesty. Galatians 2:11-14: Peter (Cephas) had been freely eating with Gentile Christians until “certain men came from James”; then, “fearing the circumcision party, he drew back and separated himself,” and his example dragged others, even Barnabas, into the hypocrisy, and Paul “opposed him to his face.” Let the group name the pattern: fear of men, under watching eyes, causing a public drawing-back from the truth he knows: the courtyard reflex, decades later, in miniature. Two precisions keep this honest and Catholic at once. First, the distinction Catholic interpreters have commonly drawn (and on which even the Fathers who debated this scene converged): Peter's error at Antioch was conduct, not teaching: he never taught that Gentiles must judaize (he had taught the opposite, and Acts 15 records him teaching it plainly at the council, whichever came first in time; scholars debate the chronology); he failed to live what he knew, which is hypocrisy, not heresy. The scene is therefore no embarrassment to what the Church believes about Peter's office; it is a demonstration that the office rests on grace rather than on the officeholder's nerves. Second, the glory of the scene, which St. Cyprian loved: as Cyprian read it, Peter took the public correction. No pulling of rank, no appeal to keys; the rock let himself be rebuked by the newest apostle and was corrected. Ongoing conversion includes being correctable.

Scene four, the council, Acts 15:7-11. When the circumcision question comes to a head, Peter rises and recalls Cornelius, and lands on the sentence this study planted in its very first session: “But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:11). The man called before he was worthy, restored after he had fallen, and corrected when he relapsed, defines salvation, on the record, as grace. Let the group hear it as the summary of everything they have watched.

OLD TESTAMENT ROOTS AND FULFILLMENT

Psalms 118:22 (the live discovery text; do not preview it). Peter tells the Sanhedrin: “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner” (Acts 4:11). The group finds the psalm and weighs the wordplay: the man Jesus named Rock, preaching the rejected Stone to the builders who rejected Him. Peter will still be turning this psalm over years later when he writes his first letter; say nothing about that.

Isaiah 49:6. “I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth.” The width of the promise Peter walks into at Cornelius' door; supply it in the answer to Question 4.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

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St. Cyprian of Carthage | *Epistle to Quintus (Epistle 71)*

Writing two centuries later, St. Cyprian holds up Antioch as a portrait of Peter's greatness rather than his shame: Peter, whom the Lord chose first and on whom He built His Church, did not insolently claim anything for himself when Paul disputed with him, nor demand obedience to his seniority; he did not despise Paul for having once persecuted the Church, but received the counsel

of truth and readily agreed to the lawful course Paul urged: giving us, Cyprian says, a pattern of concord and patience, that we should not stubbornly love our own opinions but make truth's counsel our own.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. Bede the Venerable / *Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*

On the Cornelius narrative, St. Bede reads the sheet let down from heaven as the Church herself, holding every kind of creature: what God has cleansed in the waters of baptism, no man may call common, and the Spirit falling on the Gentiles before their baptism showed Peter that God's election runs ahead of human gatekeeping. For Bede the scene is the hinge of history: the door of faith swinging open to the nations through the hands of the fisherman, exactly as the keys had promised.

VOICES OF THE CHURCH

St. John Chrysostom / *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles*

Preaching through Acts, St. Chrysostom keeps returning to the wonder of 4:13: unlettered men silencing the supreme court of their nation, and the court itself supplying the explanation: they had been with Jesus. Boldness of this kind, he insists, is not temperament: the same Peter had been routed by a doorkeeper's question; it is the Spirit's gift, given to the praying, and the proof is that when the apostles were threatened, they did not ask for safety but prayed for more boldness still, and the place was shaken.

CATECHISM CONNECTION

- CCC 432: The name Jesus means God saves; it is the divine name that alone brings salvation; there is no other name given among men by which we must be saved (quoting Acts 4:12).
- CCC 434: The name invoked over the healed man is the name above every name, the name in which the disciples worked miracles.
- CCC 846-848: Those who, through no fault of their own, do not know the Gospel of Christ or His Church, but seek God with a sincere heart, may achieve eternal salvation; yet whatever grace reaches anyone comes from Christ, and the Church retains the obligation and the sacred right to evangelize all men. The exclusive claim and the universal hope are held together, not traded off. CCC 846 supplies the frame: all salvation comes from Christ the Head through the Church which is his Body.
- **CCC 1428:** Christ's call to conversion continues to resound in the lives of Christians; this second conversion is an uninterrupted task for the whole Church. Antioch is what the need for it looks like in an apostle.

THE WAY OF SALVATION (STUDY STRAND, LEADER ONLY)

MOVEMENT 11 OF THE KERYGMA: ONLY JESUS, GRACE ALONE RECEIVED, CONVERSION LIFELONG

Two resolutions land tonight. Acts 4:12 states the kerygma's exclusivity; Acts 15:11 resolves the plant from Session 1's reference card: salvation is "through the grace of the Lord Jesus." Guard the balance the whole session teaches: against once-saved-always-presumption, Peter's Antioch relapse shows that grace must be walked in daily and can be failed; against despair, his correction and recovery show that relapse is not disqualification. The Christian life is neither a finish line crossed at conversion nor a tightrope over the abyss: it is a long road walked by grace, with a Shepherd who has prayed for us and a Church that corrects us. Do not teach this strand aloud.

THREAD WATCH (LEADER ONLY, NEVER REVEAL)

- **The courtyard echo at Antioch.** Fear of men, watching eyes, public drawing-back: Question 5 is engineered so the GROUP names the pattern ("where have we seen Peter fold under a stranger's gaze before?"). Do not name it for them.
- **Acts 15:11 resolves Session 1.** The grace sentence has been on the Session 1 reference card since the beginning. If any longtime participant remembers, celebrate.
- **Psalm 118 has a future.** Peter quotes the stone tonight; he will write about it in his letter next week. Say nothing.
- **The name Cephas.** Paul calls him Cephas at Antioch: the Aramaic of the name thread surfacing in the epistles. Track silently.
- **Last week of plants.** Everything still open ("follow afterward," stretch out your hands, the three fires, 1 Peter's resolutions) lands next session. Build attendance: tell the group plainly that next week is the end of the road and not to miss it.

SESSION GOALS

1. The group discovers Psalm 118:22 behind Peter's defense and states the exclusive claim of Acts 4:12 accurately and charitably, with CCC 847-848 in hand.
2. The group names the source of apostolic boldness: not temperament but the Spirit, evidenced by the same man's earlier collapse.
3. The group traces Cornelius as Peter's own ongoing conversion: God stretching the apostle years after Pentecost.
4. The group identifies the courtyard pattern at Antioch themselves, and states both precisions: conduct not teaching; corrected and correctable.
5. The group hears Acts 15:11 as the study's thesis in Peter's own words: saved through grace.

TIME NOTE

Core session runs about 85 minutes; four scenes. Keep Acts 4 and Acts 10 moving (twelve minutes each) to protect Antioch and the council. If long: cut the Dig Deeper and one Win question. **Do not cut** Question 5 or Question 6.

PART TWO: DISCUSSION GUIDE

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, there is no other name under heaven by which we must be saved, and we bless your name tonight. Give us the boldness you gave your apostle: not nerve, but your Spirit. Stretch us as you stretched him, wider than our comfort; correct us as you corrected him, and make us humble enough to take it; and keep converting us until the road ends. Amen.

WIN: OPENING QUESTIONS

Open questions; every answer is welcome.

W1. Have you ever had to say something true in front of people with power over you? What did it cost, and what carried you through (or stopped you)?

W2. Tell us about a time you were genuinely corrected by someone, fairly, in a way that stung. What did you do with it?

BUILD: INTO THE TEXT

READ ALOUD: Acts 4:5-14

1. Look at verse 6: Annas the high priest and Caiaphas, by name. This is the court that condemned Jesus, sitting a few hundred yards from a certain courtyard. Standing before them, “filled with the Holy Spirit,” Peter builds his defense on a psalm: “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, but which has become the head of the corner” (4:11).

Live discovery: say: “Find the psalm Peter is quoting: Psalm 118, verse 22, and read verses 22-24 in pairs. What is the psalm’s story in one sentence, and why is it a devastating text to quote to THIS audience? And is there anything striking about THIS man preaching about a stone?” Let pairs report before the answer box.

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

The psalm’s story: the stone the experts rejected turned out to be the cornerstone God chose; the rejection itself became part of the building plan, and “this is the LORD’s doing; it is marvelous in

our eyes.” Quoted to the Sanhedrin it is devastating because they are the builders: the credentialed rejecters, being told that their expert verdict was overruled by God three days after they issued it. And yes, the group should catch the wordplay of the ages: the man Jesus named Rock stands preaching the rejected Stone to the builders, himself Exhibit A of what God builds out of rejected material. Jesus had quoted this same psalm about Himself in the temple courts (Matthew 21:42); Peter learned his hermeneutic from the source.

2. Verse 12: “And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.” That is the most exclusive religious claim ever uttered, and our culture's least favorite sentence. Two questions: what exactly is Peter claiming? And how does the Church hold this claim together with her confidence that God desires all people to be saved, including those who never hear the name?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

What Peter claims: salvation is not a product category with competing brands; it is one act of God in one Person, crucified and risen, and every rescue that ever reaches any human being flows from that name (CCC 432 quotes this verse). What he does not claim: that God abandons those who never had a fair chance to hear it. The Church holds both edges deliberately (CCC 846-848): those who through no fault of their own do not know Christ or His Church, yet seek God sincerely and follow the truth they have, may be saved: but if they are, it is Christ who saves them, through His Church in ways known to God alone; there is no second staircase. And that hope removes exactly none of our commission, since the ordinary path God has revealed runs through hearing, faith, and baptism, which is why the same council-attending, threshold-crossing Peter spent his life announcing the name rather than resting in generalities. The claim is exclusive about the Savior and expansive about His reach; our culture usually reverses both.

3. Verse 13: the court “saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated, common men... and they recognized that they had been with Jesus.” And verse 20: “we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.” Where does boldness like this come from? Be careful: we know for a fact it is not this man's natural temperament.

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

That is the trap the group must not fall into: calling Peter a naturally bold personality. The record says otherwise: this identical man was dismantled by a doorkeeper's question. The boldness (the New Testament's word is parrhesia: free, open, fearless speech) is the Spirit's gift, listed as such all over Acts, given to praying people: and the proof text is wonderful: when this same court threatens them, the church's prayer is not “keep us safe” but “grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness” (4:29), and the place is shaken. The court's own explanation stands forever as the credential that outranks credentials: they had been with Jesus. For the group: boldness is not a personality you have; it is a gift you ask for, and its fuel is witness (“what we have seen and heard”), which is why people with a real story to tell are so hard to shut up.

READ ALOUD: Acts 10:9-16, 25-28, 34-35, 44-48 (assign four readers in advance)

4. Years later, God is still working on Peter. Walk the Cornelius story: the sheet, “What God has cleansed, you must not call common,” the threshold of a Gentile house (“you yourselves know how unlawful it is for a Jew to associate with... any one of another nation,” 10:28), and the Spirit falling on the uncircumcised mid-sermon. What is God doing to His apostle here, and what does Peter's “Truly I perceive that God shows no partiality” tell us about the Christian life after conversion?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

God is converting the converted. Peter is Spirit-filled, restored, the preacher of Pentecost, and he still carries formation-deep assumptions about who is inside the promise, so God dismantles one, patiently, with a vision repeated three times, a knock at the door, and finally the Spirit falling on Gentiles before Peter can finish his homily or impose a single precondition. “God shows no partiality” is Peter discovering the width of the very promise he preached at Pentecost (“all that are far off,” 2:39), and Isaiah's light to the nations reaching the end of the earth through his own reluctant hands. The lesson for the room: conversion is not an event you file; the Lord keeps stretching His people past their categories for the rest of their lives, usually in the direction of somebody they had quietly ruled out. It is worth asking the group gently: who is your Cornelius?

READ ALOUD: Galatians 2:11-14

5. Now the hard scene, and this study owes you total honesty. At Antioch, Peter had been eating freely with Gentile believers, until “certain men came from James.” Then, “fearing the circumcision party, he drew back and separated himself,” dragged others with him, and Paul “opposed him to his face.” Look at the mechanics of this failure very carefully. Where in Peter's story have we seen this exact pattern before?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Let the group find it; they will. Fear of men. Watching eyes arrive, and a man who knows the truth draws back from it publicly, and his drawing-back gives everyone else permission: it is the courtyard, decades later, in miniature: the servant girl's gaze has become “the circumcision party,” and the denial has become a quiet change of table. This is one of Scripture's most sobering gifts: the pattern that broke us does not retire when we are restored; it retires when we die, and vigilance against our own signature weakness is lifelong. Now the two precisions that keep this honest and hopeful at once. First: Peter's failure was conduct, not teaching: he never taught that Gentiles must judaize; he had proclaimed the opposite, and at the Jerusalem council of Acts 15 he teaches it on the record (whether Antioch came before or after the council is debated); he failed to live what he knew, which is hypocrisy (Paul's own word), not false doctrine, and the distinction matters for what the Church believes about his office. Second, the glory St. Cyprian saw: Galatians records the rebuke, not Peter's reply, but the Church's tradition from Cyprian onward reads the scene as Peter taking the correction: no rank pulled, no keys invoked; and Peter's later warmth toward “our beloved brother Paul” (2 Peter 3:15) suggests the correction landed. Being correctable is what ongoing conversion looks like from the inside; the group should ask which they fear more: falling

into the pattern, or being told they have.

READ ALOUD: Acts 15:7-11

6. The circumcision question comes to a council at Jerusalem, and Peter rises, recalls Cornelius, and ends with this: “But we believe that we shall be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, just as they will” (Acts 15:11). You have now watched this man's entire story. Why is that sentence, from THIS man, the perfect summary of everything this study has shown us?

ANSWER (SHARE AFTER THE DISCUSSION)

Because every clause of it was paid for in scenes we have watched. Saved: by a hand on the water, a look in a courtyard, a fire on a beach. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus: not through Peter's nerve (it failed twice on the record), not through his credentials (uneducated, common), not through his ancestry (just as they will: the Gentiles, on identical terms): through grace, the word for everything he received and nothing he earned, from “you shall be called Rock” onward. The man who once boasted “I will lay down my life for you” now defines salvation with a sentence that has no self in it. When the group hears it, tell them plainly: this has been the study's hidden thesis since the first evening, waiting in the book of Acts for Peter to say it for us. Next week, we hear him say the rest, in his own letters, at the end of the road. Do not miss it.

DIG DEEPER: PARRHESIA

The Greek *parrhēsia* meant the citizen's right to speak freely in the assembly: open, fearless, unhedged speech. Acts uses it as the signature of the Spirit-filled Church, and the early Christians prayed for it by name (Acts 4:29). It is worth noticing what they did not pray for: safety, popularity, or persuasive technique. The Church's growth metric in Acts is not comfort; it is boldness plus witness, and the Lord added to their number.

DIG DEEPER: COULD PETER ERR AND STILL BE PETER?

Antioch has been argued over since the Fathers, precisely because it seems to press on Peter's office. The Church's settled instinct distinguishes the man's conduct from the shepherd's teaching: Peter behaved inconsistently with the Gospel; he did not bind the Church to error, and when the doctrinal question was actually posed at the council, he answered it with Acts 15:11. The office guards the deposit of faith; it never promised the officeholder a life without cowardice, which is, on reflection, the only kind of rock available: forgiven ones. Those who want the full biblical case for Peter's office should note it as a rich study of its own; tonight we stay with the man.

SEND: TAKING IT WITH YOU

S1. Who is your Cornelius: the person or kind of person you have quietly ruled outside the promise? What is one threshold-crossing step toward them this month?

S2. Your signature weakness, the courtyard pattern that is distinctly yours, does not retire. Who in your life has permission to oppose you to your face when it shows up, and if the answer is no one, whom will you give that permission this week?

LIVE IT THIS WEEK

1. Pray for boldness by name, once a day: "Lord, grant your servant to speak your word with all boldness." Then watch for the moment He supplies the occasion.
2. Take the first concrete step toward your Cornelius: an invitation, a conversation, a table shared.
3. Ask one trusted person to be your Paul: explicit permission to call out your signature pattern when they see it. Ongoing conversion is a team sport.
4. Next week is our final session. Bring your Bible, bring your surrender prayer, and come; the road ends somewhere worth seeing.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus, there is no other name; we stake everything on yours. Give us boldness in front of the powerful, softness at the thresholds you send us across, and humility under correction. We believe that we shall be saved through your grace, just as every soul you are seeking tonight will be. Keep converting us until we see your face. Amen.

SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE

"And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among

men by which we must be saved."

Acts 4:12 (RSV2CE)

Before you dismiss: hand out Take-Home 11 and make next week's finale unmissable: "One session left. Every thread we have been carrying lands. Bring your surrender prayer."

PART THREE: LEADER REFERENCE CARD

EVERY PASSAGE IN THIS SESSION

Primary Texts

- Acts 4:5-22, before the Sanhedrin; the stone; no other name; boldness
- Acts 10:9-16, 25-28, 34-35, 44-48, Cornelius: the sheet, the threshold, the Spirit on the Gentiles
- Galatians 2:11-14, Antioch: the drawing back and the correction
- Acts 15:7-11, the council: saved through grace

Live Discovery Text

- Psalm 118:22-24, the rejected stone become the cornerstone

Supporting Texts

- Acts 4:29-31, the prayer for boldness answered
- Matthew 21:42, Jesus quotes the same psalm of Himself
- Isaiah 49:6, light to the nations
- Acts 2:39, all that are far off (callback)

Catechism

- CCC 432, no other name
- CCC 434, the name above every name
- CCC 846-848, the universal hope held with the exclusive claim
- CCC 1428, ongoing conversion

Memory Verse

- Acts 4:12