

# A Reason to Build

## Lesson 9

Unit Three: Building According to Code  
Scripture: John 13:36-38; 18:17, 25-27; 21:15-17; Acts 4:18-20  
Life Focus: God's great mercy drives His plan for His church.

### Fresh-Start Fables

Even the simple stories we were told as children valued the idea of being able to start over. Snow White was not doomed forever after eating the poisoned apple—her prince gave her a new start. Pinocchio was not fated to wear the badges of his misbehavior and dishonesty forever—he was allowed to become a real, live boy. As we take wrong turns on the road of life, we recognize the value of a do-over and long to taste that grace.

The account of the apostle Peter is a true story that demonstrates the value of a fresh start. His *resolution* never to deny Jesus was followed by his *retraction* shortly thereafter. But Peter was *reinstated* as an apostle by Jesus and made the most of the opportunity after he was *restored*.

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### Hide It in Your Heart

As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.

—Acts 4:20

For a pre-session or take-home activity, lead kids in memorizing this key verse, using the puzzle found on your *Young Teen Resources* CD.

#### John 13:36-38

<sup>36</sup>Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?"

Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later."

<sup>37</sup>Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

<sup>38</sup>Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!"

#### John 18:17, 25-27

<sup>17</sup>"You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter.

He replied, "I am not."

.....  
<sup>25</sup>Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "I am not."

<sup>26</sup>One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" <sup>27</sup>Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

#### John 21:15-17

<sup>15</sup>When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"

"Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my lambs."

<sup>16</sup>Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep."

<sup>17</sup>The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

#### Acts 4:18-20

<sup>18</sup>Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. <sup>19</sup>But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! <sup>20</sup>As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."

### Today's Challenge

*Remember do-overs? When we made a mistake in a childhood game, we asked for another chance. Participate in these activities to examine a do-over God gave to Peter and find out how we can ask for the same thing.*

#### Step 1

##### Setting the Stage

*Recognize the value of being able to make a fresh start.*

#### Step 2

##### Searching the Word

*Summarize the story of Peter's failure and reinstatement.*

#### Step 3

##### Making It Real

*Discuss the importance of having a fresh start with Jesus.*

#### Step 4

##### Living It Out

*Ask Jesus for a fresh start in a specific area of your life.*

## Encountering God's Word

### RESOLUTION John 13:36-38

After Judas left the scene at the last supper, Jesus told the remaining disciples that it was time for God to be glorified through the Son in what was about to occur (John 13:31, 32)—humiliation, death, and resurrection.

Since the disciples could not immediately follow Him, Jesus laid out what He *did* expect of them. They were to love one another the way He had

**Peter promised to remain loyal to Jesus.**

loved them (vv. 34, 35). Remember that earlier, around that very table, the disciples argued about who had the greatest position

among them (Luke 22:24-30). Jesus made it clear that He did not need to depute a successor who would take His place. What was necessary was a community of equals bound by His love.

Peter missed that point. Instead, he seemed to continue his campaign for leadership by insisting that he was the most loyal of the disciples, willing to give his life if necessary (Mark 14:29, 31; John 13:37). Jesus responded, telling Peter that He knew that such devotion would wither in the heat of danger (Mark 14:30; John 13:38).

How easy it is for believers to try to prove that we are superior to others! All Jesus asked of Peter and has asked of us is to love others for whom He also died.

### RETRACTION John 18:17, 25-27

As Jesus predicted, Peter quickly broke his promise of loyalty. When Jesus was taken before the high priest, Peter was not allowed in the high priest's courtyard at first because he was not recognized as being a disciple (John 18:15, 16). When another disciple (whom we usually assume to be John) brought Peter inside, Peter was asked, "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" The question assumed a negative answer, and Peter took the easy way out—his first denial (v. 17). His second denial was similar (v. 25).

**Peter broke that promise by denying Jesus.**

Then, as Peter continued to warm himself by a charcoal fire, a final challenge came. One of the high priest's servants, having been with the mob that arrested Jesus and being related to the man Peter wounded, asked a more pointed question. "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Peter again denied Jesus and heard the predicted rooster crow (vv. 26, 27).

At times we, like Peter, find it convenient to deny our association with Jesus' disciples. Sometimes we just don't want to be labeled as belonging to Christ's church. Other times we want to avoid unpleasant consequences that may come with that association.

### REINSTATEMENT John 21:15-17

After His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the disciples in Galilee, as promised right before His arrest (Mark 14:28). Led by Peter, seven disciples went out on the Sea of Galilee and tried, without success, to fish at night (John 21:1-3).

Jesus carefully orchestrated a scene that would remind Peter of the day Jesus first called him to be a disciple (Luke 5:1-11). In both situations, Peter and his fellow fishermen spent a fruitless night in the boat. But at Jesus' command

in both cases, they made a miraculous haul with a single pass of the nets (Luke 5:4-7; John 21:6).

**Jesus gave Peter another chance to be loyal to Him.**

Soon Peter found himself around a charcoal fire, similar to the one where he had denied Jesus (John 21:9). Jesus wanted Peter to remember his call to be a disciple, and Jesus also wanted Peter to remember those three denials. Just as Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus would give a threefold reinstatement (vv. 15-17). Following each of Peter's confessions of love, Jesus responded by commanding Peter to show Christ's love to others.

### RESTORATION Acts 4:18-20

Failures can be important elements in the learning process. Peter obviously learned his lesson. The change between the disciple cowering by the fire and the bold messenger of the living Christ in the book of Acts is remarkable.

After healing a man who was lame, Peter and John again were questioned about their relationship to Jesus. This time they were not questioned by servants in the high priest's courtyard. They were interrogated by the high priest himself and by other rulers, elders, and teachers of the law! But in this case, Peter did not cower in fear. In fact, he boldly refused to keep silent about the power

**Peter made the most of that second chance.**

of Christ that he had witnessed (Acts 4:18-20). The man who once backed away from his promises because he was afraid of a servant, now had the courage to face down rulers who could put him to death!

As we grow older, we find that life has little relationship to the fantasies and fairy tales we loved as children. But one thing we read in those stories can be true: Our failings can be forgotten, and we can be given a chance, like Peter, to have a fresh start.

**Life Focus:** God's great mercy drives His plan for His church.  
 Use one of the following activities to help your students recognize the value of being able to make a fresh start.

## QUICK STEP Animation Situations

Have the class turn to page 36 in their student books and take the quiz found there. (Or you can use the CD to do this activity as an interactive game.)

The quiz concerns cartoon characters who have been in bad situations but then got fresh new starts. After everyone is finished, go over the answers: 1=g, L; 2=c, J; 3=d, N; 4=a, K; 5=f, P; 6=h, M; 7=b, O; 8=e, I. Then discuss:

- Although these cartoon examples were obviously fictional situations, we've all had times when we wished we could get a new start. Describe a time when you thought to yourself, *If only I could just start all over again*. What would you have done differently in that situation?

- Have you ever had the opportunity to have a fresh start? Did you use the opportunity to do things better? How did it make you feel?

Lead into Bible study by saying: We're all thankful for times when we get a second chance. Today we're going to look at the life of Peter and see the second-chance opportunity he got to make a fresh start.

## Try Again!

Give students paper and pens. (No pencils. You don't want them to be able to erase!) Give them the task of drawing something that's hard to draw, such as the United States or the Mona Lisa. Tell them they must show you their originals—they can't cross out, start over, or turn their papers over on the back. See how everyone did. Then invite someone who would like to try another challenge to come to the board. Give that student another hard challenge, but this time allow the student to erase and try again if he messes up.

Ask: Did it frustrate you not to be able to start over when you messed up? Name a time when you messed something up but then you got a second chance. (It can be serious or funny.) How did it feel to get a fresh start?

Lead into Bible study by saying: We're all thankful for times when we get a second chance. Today we're going to look at the life of Peter and see the second-chance opportunity he got to make a fresh start.

## The Scene

For an opening activity based on a current events, download The Scene online. Go to <http://www.21stcc.com/> and click on "Downloads." There you'll find a free article with discussion questions to begin this week's lesson.

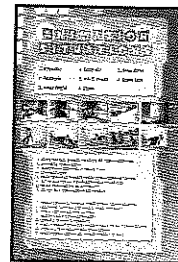


**Time**  
10 minutes

quiz

### Materials

Young Teen Student, pens (or Young Teen Resources CD, audiovisual equipment)



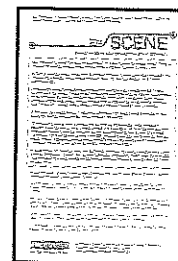
object lesson

**Time**  
10 minutes

### Materials

paper, pens, whiteboard, dry-erase markers

news



## Step 2 Searching the Word

**Life Focus:** God's great mercy drives His plan for His church.

Use one of the following activities to help your students summarize the story of Peter's failure and reinstatement.

### Time

20 minutes

creative  
writing

### Materials

Young Teen Student, Bibles, pens



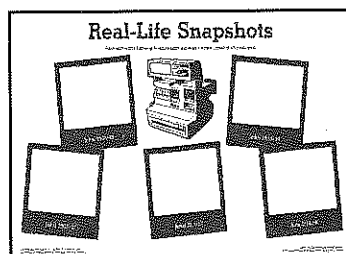
### Time

20 minutes

art

### Materials

copies of *Young Teen Resources* Sheet 7B, pencils, Bibles



### QUICK STEP Peter's Fresh Start

Divide the class into groups of three to five students. Turn with them to page 37 of the student book. Students are to read the sections of the lesson Scripture listed there and imagine that they are filming a TV miniseries based on today's lesson text. They should read each section of the text and complete the key dialogue from each episode. Finally, they should suggest a working title that summarizes the action for each episode.

As groups work, move among them to help them with their assignments. Refer to *Encountering God's Word* to help them understand and summarize the action of each Bible episode.

When group work is completed, allow groups to share and explain their responses. Comment as necessary to make sure each step of Peter's journey of faith is explained clearly.

Close this section of the lesson by saying: **The account of the apostle Peter is a true story that demonstrates the value of a fresh start. His resolution never to deny Jesus was followed by his retraction shortly thereafter. But Peter was reinstated as an apostle by Jesus and made the most of the opportunity after he was restored. Let's look at the value for people today of having a fresh start in Jesus.**

### Real-Life Snapshots

Before class, photocopy Sheet 7B for each student.

Distribute the copies and pencils. Scripture references are listed under the Polaroid-like film frames. Students are to read these texts. Then they are to sketch a simple line drawing of what happened in each text. (If you would prefer, turn this art activity into a skit activity! Divide the class into groups, asking each group to pose a tableau—a silent, still scene from one of the sections of the lesson text.)

As students work, move among them to help them with their assignments. Refer to *Encountering God's Word* to help them understand and summarize the action of each biblical snapshot.

When student work is completed, allow teens to share and explain their drawings. Comment as necessary to make sure each step of Peter's journey of faith is explained clearly.

Close this section of the lesson by saying: **The account of the apostle Peter is a true story that demonstrates the value of a fresh start. His resolution never to deny Jesus was followed by his retraction shortly thereafter. But Peter was reinstated as an apostle by Jesus and made the most of the opportunity after he was restored. Let's look at the value for people today of having a fresh start in Jesus.**

**Life Focus:** God's great mercy drives His plan for His church. Use one of the following activities to help your students discuss the importance of having a fresh start with Jesus.

## QUICK STEP Blunder Babble

Turn with students to page 56 in the student books. There is a letter that a teen girl wrote as if writing to the apostle Peter. Ask: **How would Peter respond to this letter, based on what we just read in today's Scriptures? Pretend you are Peter, and write a response to this letter. Make sure to include things that happened in Peter's life when he failed but received a fresh start from Jesus.** Students may work in pairs or small groups.

After students have had time to work, allow volunteers to share their letters. Discuss with your students how they can respond to friends who have failed and need forgiveness and the grace of Jesus.

Lead into the final lesson step by saying: **Just as Jesus offered Peter another chance, He offers us another chance too.**

## Scenes from a Basket

Before class, write on slips of paper some scenarios of situations when people messed up. (Some suggestions are: a teen who got caught . . . lying to parents; gossiping about a friend; cheating on a test; sneaking out of the house; stealing from a store.) Put them in a basket for students to draw from.

Break students into small groups of two or three and have each group choose a scenario from the basket. Students should then create a brief skit based on their scenarios. One student will be the person who failed in some way. The person who failed must try to seek a fresh start from a loved one. The other student(s) should then act as the friend or family member who was hurt. That person may choose whether or not to grant a second chance to the first student.

After a few minutes, allow the groups to perform. Then discuss: **How do people react when they've failed?** (They may get depressed and feel as if they can never be right again. They may try to cover up their failure. They may seek forgiveness and overcome that failure and be a stronger person for it.) **Why are people tempted to hide the fact that they've failed? How hard is it to seek forgiveness? Do you think most people really believe that Jesus can forgive them and offer a brand-new start? How could you convince people of this?**

Lead into the last lesson step by saying: **Do you believe Jesus can give you another chance? He can and He will! Just as Jesus offered Peter a fresh start, He offers that to us too. Let's take some time to think about fresh starts we need.**

**Time**  
20 minutes

**creative writing**

**Materials**

Young Teen Student, pens, paper



**Time**  
20 minutes

**drama**

**Materials**

slips of paper, pen, basket

## Step 4 Living It Out

**Life Focus:** God's great mercy drives His plan for His church.

Use one of the following activities to help your students ask Jesus for fresh starts in specific areas of their lives.

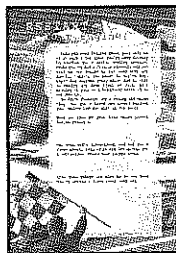
**Time**

10 minutes

**self-evaluation**

**Materials**

Young Teen Student, pens



**Time**

10 minutes

**object lesson**

**Materials**

easy children's puzzles (enough for each student to eventually have one puzzle piece to keep), markers

### **QUICK STEP** Restart Your Engine!

Have students turn to page 38 in their student books. The theme of this activity is that life can be like a race. Sometimes failures will knock us out for a while. But God offers us a new chance to restart our engines and get back in the race! The student book page has thought-provoking questions for students to consider a recent failure and then to seek God's forgiveness. There is room for them to write their prayers and make some new goals for themselves. You may want students to spread out around the room to work on this activity alone.

After some time, come back together and close in a group prayer.

Distribute ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine*. You can either print these articles and hand them out or e-mail them to your students each week.

### Putting Back the Pieces

**Say:** Today we've seen the example of Peter, who failed but was given a fresh start by Jesus. We all fail, and we will again. Pass out a puzzle piece to each student. When we fail, we are broken. But God can use those broken times to teach us and make us stronger. He can rebuild us and then use us, even in our broken state, to make us part of the big picture. And it will turn out to be beautiful!

Tell your students to turn over their puzzle pieces and write something such as "God gives me a new start" or "God can take me broken and make me whole" and then keep their pieces with them this week as a reminder of today's lesson.

If there's time, have the students work together and complete the puzzles. Or have races to see who can put the easy puzzles together the fastest. Afterward, make sure all students get their correct puzzle pieces back so they can take them home. Close in prayer.

Distribute ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine*. You can either print these articles and hand them out or e-mail them to your students each week.

## ENCOUNTER™

Here's what's in ENCOUNTER—*The Digital Magazine* this week:

- "Uniquely You"
- "The Longest Jump"
- "Of Rocks and Stones and People"