Peter the Train Lesson

Starting Line
Let’s look at Peter, the main character in our story. Peter happens to be my favorite character, probably because I am very much like him, always wanting to be in control of my own life. Young Peter the train goes on an incredible journey in our story as he passionately moves toward his single goal: to cross the bridge into the City of Promise.

Finish Line
Our goal with this lesson is to help children better understand the gospel of grace by asking questions about the different conclusions Peter came to during his journey. We will also look at the beautiful revelation Peter has when he finally understands Joshua (Jesus) is his only hope to cross into the City of Promise. It is my hope that our young readers will begin to understand that salvation—true life—is only found when we admit we CANNOT do enough on our own and ask Jesus for help.

Whistle Stops – Vocabulary
grace
saved
canyon
fender
cargo
deed
worship

The Right Track – Developing the Lesson through Scripture
Let’s look at Ephesians 2:8. I have presented the passage in three ways in the hope that children who are in various stages of learning and spiritual development will understand it. Read the version that works best for your students, and then share the concept from the story.

1. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God. (NAS Bible)
2. For by grace you and I have been saved through trusting Jesus (faith); it is not because we have done anything to earn it, but only because God gave us a gift by saving us. (paraphrase)
3. Even though Peter became strong and beautiful and did lots of good things, he could not save himself from the storm, nor could he cross over the canyon on his own. He had to trust Joshua and allow him to become his conductor in order to cross the Bridge of Grace into the City of Promise. (concept from the story)

All Aboard! – Main Lesson
I have four incredible children of my own and they are all so different, just like all of you are, but there is one thing I have noticed about them that is the same: When they were young, every single one of them wanted to do everything on their own. They did not want their mom or me to help them. They wanted to put their own toothpaste on the toothbrush, comb their own hair, and even dress themselves. You probably know how that turned out: toothpaste everywhere, hair a mess, and one of my sons wore his shorts backward for quite a while. This idea that we should not ask for help is really based on our sinful nature, on our hearts being yucky. Eventually, my
children learned to brush their own teeth, but the one thing you and I could never do on our own is find a way to please God. You see, Jesus came to help us because we just COULD NOT do enough to make up for the sin in our hearts. The only way we can become what God created us to be is by asking Jesus to help us. Just like our friend Peter in the story, no matter how hard we try, how good we look, or how many good things we do, we need Jesus to help us.

**Discussion Depot – Developing the Lesson through Questions**

I encourage you to revisit the story as students answer and discuss these questions.

1. In the story, Peter did three things he believed would help him to cross the Bridge of Grace into the City of Promise. What are the three things Peter did? (1. He worked out to become stronger. [p.5] 2. He got a shiny, new paint job and new fender to look better. [p.10] 3. He tried to do a good deed by pulling Martha’s cargo up the steep hill. [pp.14-16])
2. After becoming stronger, looking better with his new paint job, and doing a good deed for Martha, was Peter able to cross the Bridge of Grace? Why not?
3. What happened that finally gave Peter the power he needed to cross over the canyon into the City of Promise?

**Cross Ties – Developing the Lesson through Activities**

For all age levels:

Click below to download a printable coloring page that shows Peter along with his friend Simon and his new conductor Joshua as they prepare for their next adventure. Give each student a copy of the page to color. Ask students to share their coloring page and then retell the story in their own words.

**Climbing Higher Activity**

Begin by asking *Can you think of a time when you had to ask for help to accomplish a task?* (tying shoes, brushing teeth, etc.) Ask students to draw a picture of them doing the task, along with the person who helped them. Have each student share his or her drawing with the group and tell the story the picture shows. Relate the students’ stories to Joshua helping Peter in the book and to Jesus doing for us the one thing we could not accomplish on our own.

**Keep on Rolling – Developing the Lesson through Daily Application**

Ask students to watch for moments when they must ask for help in accomplishing a task. Have them practice saying “Thank you” to the person who helps them each time. Explain that saying “Thank you” is much like worship. When we worship the Lord, we are acknowledging that He has blessed up by doing for us all the things we could never do for ourselves.