Night of Betrayal and Prayer



Scripture Reference: Matthew 26:30-56

Suggested Theme: God never fails us even when people do. We can talk with God when things are hard.

Memory Verse: “God is our protection and our strength. He always helps in times of trouble.” Psalm 46:1, ICB

Story Overview:

As the time of His death drew near, Jesus told His followers that they would soon lose faith and leave Him. Even as Jesus then prayed through the night, His closest followers fell asleep instead of keeping watch. Afterwards, when Judas led an angry group to Jesus, Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested. Although His followers had been dismayed at Jesus’ earlier statement, they now did exactly as He had said. They all left Him and ran away.

Background Study:

Betrayal propelled the events leading up to the arrest and eventual crucifixion of Jesus. The leading priests and Jewish elders were jealous of the crowds following Jesus and, therefore, planned to set a trap for Him when the time was right (Matthew 26:3-6).

While these men plotted, one of the twelve apostles, Judas Iscariot, approached them and offered to turn Jesus over to them for thirty pieces of silver (Matthew 26:14-16). In the conversation, Judas brought up the subject of payment. We know Judas had a problem with money and had already been stealing from the accounts he kept for the disciples (John 12:4-6).

This plotting had gone on even before Jesus and his followers shared the Last Supper. Jesus knew that Judas would betray Him, but He also knew that His other followers would be tested in their own way. When the group left the supper and made their way to the Mount of Olives, Jesus shocked his followers by saying that their faith would waver and they would leave Him.

Peter, in particular, was horrified by the thought of this. “All the other followers may lose their faith,” he said to Jesus, “but I will never lose my faith.” Jesus then informed Peter that he would indeed eventually deny Him three times before the rooster crowed (Matthew 26:33-35). Of course, Jesus was correct. This is covered in the lesson The Trial of Jesus.

Jesus knew that His death was fast approaching and that He would face it alone. He was filled with deep sorrow and pain. Others would leave Him, but He knew He could turn to His Father during what was about to be His darkest hour. Jesus spent the next hours in prayer. He poured His heart out to God. He genuinely did not want to go through the emotional anguish and physical suffering He was about to experience. Even so, He totally submitted to God’s will.

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“Then Jesus went away a second time. He prayed, ‘My Father, if it is not possible for this painful thing to be taken from me, and if I must do it, then I pray that what you want will be done.'” Matthew 26:42, ICB

Even as Jesus was pouring out His heart to God in prayer that night, His followers were letting Him down. He asked Peter, James and John to stand watch while He prayed, but they fell asleep. Jesus woke them three different times as He continued to pray.

Judas and a group of people carrying swords and clubs arrived on the scene in the darkness. Judas identified Jesus using the agreed-upon signal of a kiss. Kissing a teacher (rabbi) was a common greeting from a student, but Jesus knew what this kiss meant.

Peter rashly tried to defend Jesus by striking the servant of the High Priest with a sword and cutting his ear. Jesus put a stop to this right away. Jesus could have called upon every power in the universe if He had wanted to defend Himself. Jesus was not arrested because He could not defend Himself. He was arrested because He was submitting to God’s will that He go to the cross.

In Luke’s version of this event, he records Jesus healing the servant’s ear (Luke 22:49-51).

Events then happened just as Jesus said they would. Sadly, as Jesus was being taken away, all of His followers ran away.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Ask the children to share the names of their friends. Discuss how their friends help them and how they help their friends. Ask, “If you were hurting, would your friends help you?”

In today’s lesson, we are going to learn about a time when Jesus was hurting. Let’s find out what Jesus’ friends did.

The Story:

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. He followed Jesus and listened to the things Jesus preached. Judas was Jesus’ friend at first, but then he decided he did not want to be Jesus’ friend. In fact, he did something very bad to Jesus.

There were some other people who did not like Jesus. These men were leaders of God’s people, but they were not good leaders. They did not like that people listened to Jesus instead of them. They hated Jesus. They hated Him so much that they wanted to kill Him.

Judas went to these Jewish leaders to make a plan to hurt Jesus. “If you pay me thirty pieces of silver,” Judas told them, “I will show you where Jesus is.”

When someone gives information to an enemy that causes their own friend to be in danger or get hurt, that is called BETRAYAL. So, for thirty pieces of silver, Judas “betrayed” Jesus.

Of course, Jesus knows what will happen even before it happens. He knew that Judas was going to betray Him.

Jesus also knew something else. He knew that He was going to die on the cross soon.

When Jesus was with His followers, He told them something shocking. He told them that ALL of them would leave Him very soon and that He would be alone. When He really needed friends, they would lose their faith.

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What? How could this be? His followers loved Jesus. They said they loved Him so much that they would even die for Him. Peter even said, “All the other followers may lose their faith, but I will never lose my faith.”

But Jesus knew the future, and He knew it was true. Jesus looked at Peter and said, “Peter, you will leave me. You will deny me three times before the rooster crows in the morning.” Peter was so sad.

After this, Jesus and the disciples left and went to a place called Gethsemane. It was in a place where olive trees grew.

Jesus was filled with sadness and wanted to pray to God. Even though His friends would leave Him, He knew God was His very best friend. He could always talk to God.

Jesus asked Peter, James and John to come with Him. When they got to a place where they could be alone, Jesus told Peter, James and John to wait and stand guard while He prayed by himself. “You should pray, too,” Jesus said. “Bad things are going to happen and you will need courage to obey God and do the right thing.”

Jesus prayed to God. He asked God to help Him do the right thing. “I do not want to suffer and die on the cross, but I will do it if you want me to do it.” Jesus did not have to get His own way. He wanted to do things God’s way.

Jesus went back to His friends. He had asked them to pray, but they were not praying. Guess what they were doing instead? They were sleeping. Jesus told them to wake up.

Jesus went back and prayed two more times. Each time He prayed, He told God that He would obey and do what God wanted. But sadly, each time He came back, Jesus found Peter, James, and John sleeping. This was a terribly difficult time for Jesus, but His friends did not even understand or stay awake and pray.

The last time Jesus told them to wake up was because a crowd of people were coming with clubs and swords. Guess who was leading the crowd of people? It was Judas. He was bringing the people to arrest Jesus.

“How will we know which man to arrest?” the people in the crowd asked Judas.

“Jesus is my teacher. Just watch,” Judas said. “I will kiss Jesus. Then you will know which one to arrest.” So Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss.

The men with the clubs and swords arrested Jesus and started to take Him away. Peter was very upset. He couldn’t believe they were going to arrest Jesus. Jesus had never done anything wrong! Peter pulled out a sword and tried to protect Jesus. He cut off the ear of the servant of one of the Jewish leaders.

Jesus told Peter to stop fighting. Of course, if Jesus had wanted to, He could have called up all of the power in the universe to stop the arrest. But Jesus knew that being arrested was what God wanted. Jesus allowed Himself to be arrested without even trying to get away.

Do you remember when Jesus said all of His followers would run away and leave Him alone? That is exactly what happened. They all ran away so they would not get arrested.

Jesus had known what would happen all along.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible, but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

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Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
https://www.freebibleimages.org/illustrations/gethsemane-peter/

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- What did Jesus do in the Garden of Gethsemane? (Pray)
- How did Jesus feel as He was praying? (Full of sorrow)
- Three apostles were supposed to keep watch while Jesus prayed. What did they do instead? (Sleep)
- Who betrayed Jesus to the Jews? (Judas)
- What did Judas get for betraying Jesus? (money)
- Who tried to use his sword to fight the crowd arresting Jesus? (Peter)
- Who ran away when Jesus was arrested? (Jesus' disciples)
- Why did Jesus let Himself be arrested? (He knew it was God's plan for Him to be arrested, and this would let Jesus be able to save the world)
- What did you learn about God in this story?
- What did you learn about Jesus in this story?
- What did you learn about people in this story?

Reflection:

- What do you think Jesus looked like when He was praying? What did He sound like?
- How do you think the disciples felt when Jesus woke them up and they realized they'd been sleeping instead of praying or keeping watch?
- How do you think Jesus felt when He saw His friends were asleep instead of praying or watching?
- How do you think Jesus felt when He was praying to God in the garden?
- Have you ever felt full of sorrow (sad) like Jesus did in the garden?
- Who do you talk to when you are sad?
- Jesus didn't want to be arrested or crucified, even though He knew it was God's plan. Have you ever thought or felt that way about God's plan?
- Jesus didn't want to be arrested or crucified, but He still wanted God's plan to happen more than He wanted to disobey. When have you obeyed God even though it was really hard or you didn't want to?
- Jesus loved His friends the disciples, but when He wanted their help and support, they didn't help Him. Have you ever let your friends down? Have your friends let you down?

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- How is God different from our friends and family? Why will God never let us down?
- There is only one person who will never leave us- God. Have you ever felt that God was near you or close to you? Tell us more.
- How does God show us He loves us and is our friend when we are sad or going through something difficult?
- What is something you feel sad or anxious about? Have you prayed and told God about those things? (Suggestion: spend time praying, or talk more about prayer)

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- God is Listening When We Pray (Song) English/Cebuano
- Read Your Bible, Pray Everyday Song
- J-E-S-U-S Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- If you know someone at your church who is known to have a dedicated prayer life, ask them to visit the group and talk to the children about prayer.
- Discuss situations where the children might need the courage to help their friends. Have a chain prayer. Everyone sits in a circle and joins hands. Begin the prayer by asking God to give you the courage to do something. Squeeze the hand of the child next to you, and that is their cue to pray next. Each child prays in turn. You can finish the prayer.
- This lesson is one of several that tell the story of Jesus' Death, Burial and Resurrection. These events are often grouped or taught together and called "The Passion Week." If you or the children want to explore this group of events, you can look below at the related lessons:
  - Triumphal Entry
  - The Last Supper
  - A Night of Betrayal and Prayer

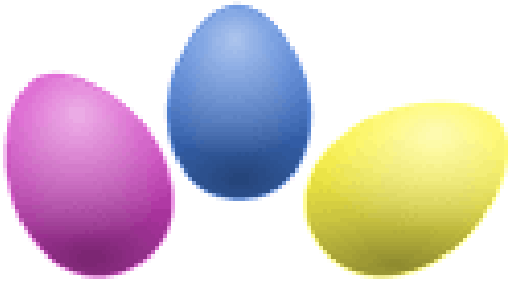
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- The Trial of Jesus
- Jesus is Crucified
- Burial and the Resurrection

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Prayer Chain: Write specific prayer requests on small rectangular slips of paper. Staple the ends of the papers together to form links of a chain. Connect the links to form a chain of prayer requests. The children can take these home and hang them somewhere in their room to help them remember what to pray for. More ideas for teaching prayer at Prayer in Bible Class
- This story is part of a bigger story about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. A simple way to tell the story is to open plastic Easter Eggs one at a time.



Each egg reveals something about the story. If you tell stories about the death, burial and resurrection over a few weeks, you might try repeating this method weekly. The children will really know the story after this! Click here to learn how to do it.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and worksheets about the Garden of Gethsemane and Peter’s denial found (Calvary Curriculum)
- Craft: Prayer pail with popsicle/craft sticks (lubirdbaby.com)
- Beautiful video clip of a little girl singing “Gethsemene.” Claire Crosby

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Date

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