

PETER DENIES JESUS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: JOHN 18:15-27



Even the most confident man will not stand apart from Jesus

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Peter's first denial – Peter and another disciple followed Jesus to the high priest's courtyard, where Jesus was questioned. Peter waited just outside the door. While he was there, a woman recognized him and suggested he was a disciple of Jesus. Peter answered, "I am not." This is hardly the same man who hours earlier at the Last Supper boasted, "Even if all fall away on account of you, I will not" (see Mark 14:29).

Jesus was questioned – The high priest Annas questioned Jesus about His disciples and His teaching. In His answer Jesus suggested the high priest ask those who heard Him. Jesus was struck for this answer. The irony of Jesus' remark is that one of His disciples, who heard His teaching, was standing just outside the door, denying Him.

Peter's ongoing denials – Peter denies Christ three times just as Christ predicted. Luke records in his gospel that just after Peter's third denial, the Lord turned and looked straight at Peter. When the rooster crowed Peter remembered the Lord's warning (see Luke 22:61). Luke records that Peter wept bitterly (see Luke 22:62).

WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

So often we think we can follow Jesus in our own strength. Peter thought this way. The truth is, even though we think we would do better, we are just like Peter. It is only by the grace of God that we believe. Faith is a gift from God.

Peter needed a Savior. Jesus, the one Peter denied, was moments away from the cross, where He would become that Savior and die for Peter's sin and our sin. What an amazing display of love, that Jesus would go to the cross willingly even while those closest to Him disowned Him. What an amazing Savior who died for us!

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ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 53:7

Connecting the passage to Christ:

The prophet Isaiah foretold the arrest of Jesus. Isaiah 53:7 says, "He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter; like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so He opened not his mouth."

Questions for reflection:

- How does this prophetic passage match the actions of Jesus at His arrest? (Jesus did not resist arrest and did not even say one unkind word.)
- How was Jesus oppressed and afflicted? (Jesus was mocked, beaten, falsely accused, given a crown of thorns and crucified.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.



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ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

FALSE ACCUSATIONS

Supplies:

prize for the person you are accusing, such as a chocolate bar

Have a student falsely accused of taking a pencil to illustrate the force of false accusations.

Make sure to talk to the student ahead of time. This should be a mini skit (though the class will not know it until the end when you explain it.) Do the skit in such a way as the student does not need to memorize lines, just play along.

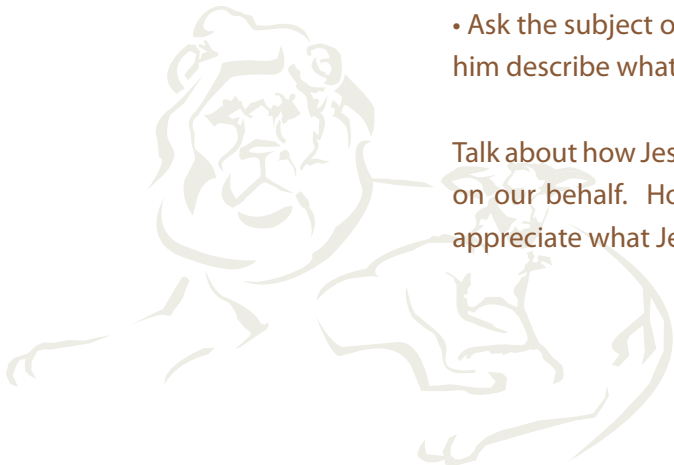
Have another teacher come in and speak to you quietly and then after you seem to agree, point out the student in question and accuse him of stealing a pencil from her pocketbook. When the student denies it, mention some common fact as proof such as, "didn't you just come down that hallway?" Keep up the charade long enough to make the point.

Then all of a sudden reveal the plan to act out the skit and thank the student for their participation and give them a chocolate bar.

Read the story of Jesus' questioning in John 18:19-27 and then ask the students the following questions:

- Did Jesus do anything wrong? (No, Jesus did not do anything wrong.)
- Ask the subject of your false accusation how it felt to be falsely accused and have him describe what was going through his mind.

Talk about how Jesus was not only falsely accused but also endured a false sentence on our behalf. Hopefully this exercise will serve to help your students to better appreciate what Jesus has done for them.



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SHARE A TESTIMONY

Invite a person who grew up in a Christian home but denied what they learned there and rebelled before giving their lives to Christ.

The objective here is to help the children understand that just because Peter was around Jesus didn't mean that he couldn't fall away. If we live in our own strength, and reject Jesus, we too will suffer the consequences. Peter's denial began in the presence of Jesus when he refused Jesus' warnings. In many ways Peter was saying, "Not me Lord. I can be strong on my own." Peter trusted himself.

Use the testimony to sober the children and help them remember that being born into a Christian home is no guarantee that they will not deny Jesus. The only guarantee is to keep following His Word. As long as we follow His Word and it alone is our confidence, we can be sure that we will not fall away.

BRING IN THE DEFENSE

Pretend to put Jesus on trial. In your class are all defense lawyers. Explain to the class that a defense lawyer is one who defends the accused. Have the class search for Scripture passages that support and defend Jesus. They could use Old Testament prophecies or New Testament stories which demonstrate that He is the Messiah. For instance they might use the fact that angels announced the birth of Jesus or that God the Father spoke at His baptism, or that the prophets said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem or born of the line of David.

See how much your students remember from past lessons.



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PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of Peter and the servant girl. Have a word-bubble over each of the two figures indicating the servant girl's question and Peter's denial of Christ. At the top of the paper have the children write: Don't deny – testify!

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

PETER SKITS

Divide the class into groups of five and have them think up and perform a skit that shows a modern day Peter, someone who is familiar with Christ but who denies Christ. The skits should be short, about one minute long. Give the students 10 minutes to think them up and practice them before the first group is invited to begin.

After watching the skits, talk about the different scenarios and how we should all be able to identify with Peter. Then talk about Peter's pride and how it was a significant component of his fall into denial.



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A LITTLE BIT MORE

Annas' questioning – Mark 14:53-65 depicts this questioning as a mini-trial with witnesses. Such trials were not normally conducted at night at the high priest's home. Law required at least twenty-three of the seventy-one members of the Sanhedrin be present to render a decision. Though Mark 14:53 records the whole of the Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, it is likely that far fewer leaders were assembled at this quickly convened trial.

