

Bible background

Matthew 26:1-5, 14-16, 47-75; Matthew 27:1-50; Luke 23:34; John 19:38-42

Aim of lesson

To show that although Jesus was let down by his friends and tormented by his enemies he never stopped loving them.

Preparation required

Get hold of a blackboard, whiteboard or a large sheet of paper, with some appropriate writing materials.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. Consider briefly all the people Jesus had helped. He had healed sick children and grown ups, people who had died, people who were blind, lame, or with other diseases. He had fed them when they were hungry; he was kind and gentle to everybody.
2. Explain that although Jesus was so kind, and had helped so many people, there were some who did not like him. Mostly they were people who were selfish or greedy, and did not want to behave as Jesus had taught them. So they plotted to kill him. As the lesson proceeds, draw (or get the children to draw) on your board, or large sheet of paper, all the people who should have been kind to Jesus but were unkind instead. Tell briefly how Judas went to some of these people and asked them to give him money if he led them to Jesus when he was alone.
3. Summarise how Jesus was arrested, and how Peter was so afraid that he pretended not to know Jesus. Tell the children how people who had seen his kindness and heard his gentle words now shouted to have him killed.
4. Briefly tell how:
 - (a) The court sentenced him to death and handed him to the Roman soldiers.
 - (b) They spat on him, beat him and put a crown of thorns on him, then nailed him to a wooden cross.
 - (c) Jesus could have used the power God had given him to save himself and destroy his enemies. But he did not; he prayed for them instead.
5. Explain that not everyone deserted Jesus, however. There were many women who had believed in him who did not run away. And then Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus went to Pilate and put the body in a cave in a garden. Explain that although Jesus had died, he did not stay dead, and it is a happy story that you will tell them more about next week.
6. Teach the song 'Wicked Men Took And Crucified Our Lord'.
7. Teach Jesus' prayer on the cross 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing'. Ask the children to draw the groups of people that ill-treated Jesus in the 'thought bubbles' on the activity sheet. Use this to emphasise the greatness of Christ in praying for those who had treated him so badly. They could include the disciples who ran away, Peter who said he did not know him, the soldiers who beat him and crucified him, the mob who arrested him or the people at the court who said he should die.

Alternative activities

1. Make a garden in a seed tray, using sand/soil, plant cuttings, stones etc. Use play figures to be Jesus and disciples, and Judas and guards.
2. Circle time: Talk about things we do which are a) unkind b) kind Can the children remember someone who was kind to Jesus? Someone who was unkind to Jesus?
3. The children could draw pictures of these people and sort them into two groups: kind/unkind. Which group would they like to be in?
4. Build the High Priest's house and courtyard out of Lego or blocks. Add some play figures or make them from modelling clay.

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children what they should do when someone treats them badly.

Prayer

Ask the children what they should say when they are badly treated.

Verse

'Pray for those who ill-treat you.' Luke 6:28.

Song

Wicked men took and crucified our Lord (Tune: Were you there)

The image shows the musical notation for the song. It consists of four staves of music in a treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The notes are as follows:
Staff 1: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4.
Staff 2: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4.
Staff 3: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4.
Staff 4: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4.
Chords are indicated above the notes: D, DMAJ7, Em, A, D, D, G, D, G, D, Em, A, D, G, D, G, Bm, G, A, G, D, DMAJ7, Em, A7, D.

- v.1 Wicked men took and crucified our Lord (repeat)
They killed Jesus, Jesus who cared for them
And always showed them kindness
Wicked men took and crucified our Lord.
- v.2 After they had arrested him at night (repeat)
They killed Jesus, Jesus who cared for them
And always showed them kindness
Wicked men took and crucified our Lord.
- v.3 After soldiers had spat upon his face (repeat)
They killed Jesus, ...
- v.4 On his head they had placed a crown on thorns (repeat)
They killed Jesus, ...
- v.5 Then they took him and nailed him to a cross (repeat)
They killed Jesus, ...
- v.6 On his cross Jesus prayed for those bad men (repeat)
They killed Jesus, ...

Music: Traditional.