

Aim of lesson

To consider the danger of denying that we know Jesus.

Bible background

Luke 22:1-62

Outline of lesson

Peter's diary

Turn to Luke 22 and the workbook. Read each reference together; looking at the context and allowing the class to write up part of 'Peter's diary'. This should bring out Peter's feelings during that eventful night. Ask the class particularly to bring out Peter's feelings about Jesus as he looks back on that night – his shame at not having understood what Jesus was going through and at having denied him. You may like to have them look up John 13:4-15 to add to Luke 22:24 and John 18:10 to add to Luke 22:47-53.

Ask the class if they can see the three times that night when Peter let Jesus down.

1. When he fell asleep when Jesus wanted company in praying before his crucifixion. Jesus was to lay down his life for them. It would have helped him to have had them awake and conscious of what he was going through. Peter was more aware of his own need for sleep than of Jesus' need for his company.
2. When he cut off the servant's ear. Jesus repeatedly had to face the temptation of not retaliating with terrible treatment during the next few hours. Jesus had taught his disciples what to do when threatened or attacked (Matthew 5:39) but Peter still found it easier to retaliate than to accept suffering.
3. When he denied him. He said three times that he did not know Jesus. His reaction was to protect his own life rather than acknowledge his Lord.

And us?

Discuss with the class ways in which we can let Jesus down.

1. Is it sometimes easier to think of your own needs, of sleep, or food or recreation, rather than Jesus' need of your help in acts of kindness and company to someone who needs help or is lonely?
2. Ask the class if they find it difficult to avoid defending themselves when attacked, provoked or accused of doing something wrong. Do they quickly lay the blame on others in order to defend themselves? Is their reaction to say "I didn't do it" rather than help put something right?
3. Is it ever embarrassing to admit you go to Sunday School or that you believe in Jesus? Is it easier just not to mention it and go along with the crowd in doing something that you know Jesus would not like?

Ask the class how Peter must have felt all the time that Jesus was dead. Refer to Luke 24:34 to see that Jesus appeared to Peter on his own before the other disciples. Discuss what they might both have said.

Digging deeper

Light and dark

This section looks at who belongs to the light, and who to the darkness.

Relevance to our lives

Ask the class to pray during the week that they will not let Jesus down. Tell them to let you know next week of any situations that arise like the ones you have discussed in section 3.

Prayer

Dear Lord Jesus, please help us not to let you down. Help us not to defend ourselves and put ourselves first.

Other suggestions for activities

- The arrest and denial could be made into a recorded play. (Luke 22:47-62)
- The class could write a drama using the servants of the high priest as characters. Malchus, the servant girl and the others in the courtyard could talk about the strange events of that night.