


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

A dark night in the garden

The Garden of Gethsemane, from Luke 22; Mark 14; John 18

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

- ☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.
- ☉ Briefly recap the main point of the previous story: “Last time we learned that Jesus knew he had to die to rescue us. He is the Servant King and the Passover Lamb. We also memorized a verse in which Jesus told his disciples about his death.”

- ☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Mark 8:31 — ‘The Son of Man must be killed and after three days rise again.’”
- ☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “That verse comes from the book of Mark. Mark tells the story of Jesus’ life. It answers two important questions about Jesus: ‘Who is Jesus?’ and ‘Why did Jesus die?’”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To answer the questions “Who is Jesus?” and “Why did Jesus die?”

Materials: Crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Ask them to write their name at the top of the handout.
2. Say: “On your paper you can see a picture of Jesus praying. There are also the two questions on your paper: ‘Who is Jesus?’ and ‘Why did Jesus die?’ To get the answers, fill in the missing words by unscrambling the letters you see beneath the blank spaces. You can work in pairs. You have 5 minutes. Ready?”
3. Give the children 5 minutes; then ask someone to read each of the questions and answers aloud. You may also want to write the answers on a blackboard to help those who are struggling.

4. Ask the children to hold their handout above their head as you walk around the circle collecting them. As you do so, say: “Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Servant King, the Messiah, the Son of Man, God’s Chosen King, died to take the punishment for our sin.”
5. Ask: “Who can tell me what sin is? Correct, it is when you ignore God, or run away from God, or think you can live without God, or make something else your god. We are all trying to run away from God. We all sin and so we all need Jesus to rescue us. In today’s story we learn more about why Jesus died. Ready?”

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 294–301 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD3 track 9.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Jesus had known all along that he would suffer and die. He told his disciples so, very graphically, on numerous occasions. It is important to note that Jesus' death is all part of God's plan. Nothing happened by accident (Acts 2:23).

Yet in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus was clearly shaken by his sufferings. In Mark 14:33, we read, "he began to be deeply distressed and troubled," and in verse 34, Jesus said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death." He asked in verse 36, "Take this cup from me." Throughout the Gospels we see the enormous power and dignity of Jesus. He claimed to be judge of all the earth, the eternal Son of God. His assurance of his sonship is always absolute. What, then, can we conclude from the fact that he trembled before his death?

The only possible reason that he shrank from his execution is that he was going to suffer a more terrible death than anyone else ever has suffered or will suffer, and in the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus seems to get a foretaste of the agony of that suffering and separation. The death of Jesus was qualitatively different than any other death. Jesus would face more on the cross than suffering at the hands of his friends (who abandoned him) and enemies (who tortured and killed him). The physical pain was overshadowed by the spiritual experience of cosmic abandonment by the Father. Jesus is "distressed," "overwhelmed," even though the crucifixion hasn't yet begun. The words *abba* and "cup" help explain why.

Abba is an Aramaic diminutive term for "father." It is the equivalent of our term "daddy" or "papa." "The cup" is an Old Testament metaphor for the wrath of God on sin. Ezekiel 23:32–33 reads, "You will drink ... a cup large and deep; it will bring scorn and derision ... the cup of ruin and desolation"; and Isaiah 51:22 reads, "the cup that made you stagger ... the goblet of my wrath." Jesus was going to experience that "cup." The wrath of God was going to be the torment of separation from his *abba*.

We know something of this pain. The more intimate and important a relationship, the more torturous it is when it is severed. For example, if your friend says, "I reject you," it is bad, but if your best friend or your spouse says, "I reject you," it is far worse. This helps explain both the depths and nature of Jesus' suffering on the cross. God forsook Jesus on the cross. We cannot imagine the intimacy and life-giving love that the Father and Son had together. It was total, eternal, and infinitely richer than any love we can know. Their intimacy was from all eternity. The loss of it was an infinite and unique pain. And Jesus is experiencing a foretaste of that in the garden.

Yet, even though Jesus knows what his mission will cost him, even though there is still time to pull out (after all, everyone was asleep and the betrayer had not yet arrived)—Jesus stayed. The very idea of a single figure bearing the punishment for all our sin is staggering. Nahum 1:6 reads: "Who can withstand his indignation? Who can endure his fierce anger? His wrath is poured out like fire; the rocks are shattered before him." It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Yet that is precisely what Jesus did. For us.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand how and why Jesus died.

Materials: 2 papers – one with the word “YES” and the other with the word “NO” written on them; a way of taping the papers to the walls; crayons; copies of the handout from the first activity.

1. At the end of the story, say: “All this was God’s rescue plan and Jesus knew all about it. I’m going to ask you some questions about this story and about Jesus’ death. I will then say ‘Go!’ If the answer to my question is ‘yes,’ run to the wall with the word ‘yes’ on it; if the answer is ‘no,’ run to the wall with the word ‘no’ on it. Ready?”
2. Tape the papers with the words “yes” and “no” to opposite walls as you say this.
3. Ask the questions in the table below, saying “Go!” after each one. When the children have picked a wall, comment on the accuracy of their choice (e.g., “You are all correct!”) and then ask them to sit back down in the circle. Say “Ready?” and ask the next question.

QUESTION	WALL
Were Jesus and his disciples in a garden?	YES
Jesus asked the disciples to stay up with him and pray. Did they?	NO
Did the disciples fall asleep?	* YES
Did Jesus know it was time for him to die?	YES
Did Jesus and his Father plan the rescue and Jesus’ death from the beginning?	YES
Was there any other way for Jesus to rescue us, other than by dying?	NO
Did Jesus cry out and pray in the garden about his death?	YES
Did Jesus end his prayer by saying to God, “Whatever you say, I will do”?	YES
Were the soldiers who arrived in the garden led by Judas, Jesus’ disciple?	* YES
Did the soldiers want to arrest Jesus?	YES
Peter took out his sword and tried to defend Jesus. Did Jesus need defending?	* NO
Did Jesus let them arrest him?	* YES
Had Jesus ever done anything wrong?	NO
Did Jesus’ disciples stay with him?	* NO
Did the soldiers take Jesus to the Leaders to be put on trial?	YES
When the Leaders ask Jesus if he is the Son of God, does he disagree?	NO
Were the Leaders angry at Jesus?	YES
Were the Leaders allowed to kill prisoners?	NO
Would the Leaders’ plan to have the Romans kill Jesus work?	YES
Was this part of God’s plan?	YES

NOTE: * Indicates questions to skip if you are running out of time.

4. At the end of the activity, ask everyone to sit back down in the circle and say: "Jesus knew he would have to die to take the punishment for our sins. The Leaders made a plan to kill Jesus. But this was always part of God's rescue plan for us."
5. Give each child their copy of the handout from the first activity and a crayon.

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher and a section of the walls assigned to them. Each teacher can then help their circle understand the story.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: "We all sin. We all need Jesus to rescue us. Jesus died to take the punishment for our sin."

Say: "Jesus knew he had to die. It was the only way to bring us back to God."

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: "What did we discover about Jesus from today's story?"

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God for his rescue plan and thanking him that Jesus loves us so much that he died to take away the punishment for our sin.

Ask the children to thank God in prayer for who Jesus is and for why Jesus died.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: "Jesus knew he was going to die. The verse we recited at the start was from one of the times when Jesus talked about his own death."

☉ Announce the verse: "So, your verse to practice at home is Mark 8:31— 'The Son of Man must be killed and after three days rise again.'"

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.

WHO IS JESUS?

M _____
 C _____ SSIEHA
 RHSIT
 _____ OF GOD
 NSO
 S _____ KING SON OF _____
 ERNAV T NAM
 GOD'S CHOSEN _____
 NGIK

WHY DID JESUS DIE?

JESUS DIED TO TAKE THE P _____
 FOR OUR S _____. MUSIENNTH
 NI

Jesus in the Story

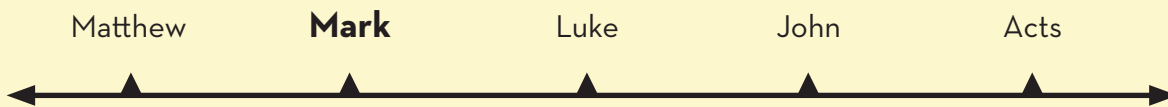


What did you discover about Jesus from this story?

Jesus

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

The Son of Man must be killed and after three days rise again. (Mark 8:31)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. We learned that Jesus knew he had to take the punishment for our sins. It was the only way to bring us back to God.

Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Mark, using the diagram above.