

JESUS' TRIAL

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RESURRECTION BELIEVE FAITH LIFE FIRM PERSECUTION

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Matthew 27:11-26; Mark 14:53-63; Luke 23:4-12; John 18:12; 19:16

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students to stand firm in their faith, despite persecution.

MEMORY VERSE

"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die'" (John 11:25-26a, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

One of the characteristics of most preadolescents is that they are perseverant. When they believe in something or make a decision, they defend it with intensity. Today's lesson will make them aware of the perseverance of Jesus, who remained firm even in the midst of the most terrible persecution.

The story of Jesus' unjust judgment will help them understand that, even if they face opposition and danger, if they remain steadfast in their faith in God, he will help them emerge victorious.

Take advantage of the perseverance of your students to encourage them to defend their faith with love and wisdom before those who question them.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read John 18:12 and 19:16. In a matter of hours, Jesus was arrested and brought before Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, and Herod, and

sentenced to death. They may have taken him to Annas during the night. This violated Jewish religious laws, and showed the urgency of the Pharisees, priests and leaders to condemn him.

Although Jesus was innocent, the Sanhedrin used the testimony of false witnesses to indict him and subject him to an illegal trial. They accused him of blasphemy for saying he is the Son of God. According to Roman laws, blasphemy was not punishable by the death penalty. However, the temple leaders also accused him of treason, which justified his death on the cross.

When Jesus was facing Pilate, the governor showed some degree of respect for him, and was convinced of his innocence. Again and again he told the people that he did not find a reason to punish Jesus. Hoping to satisfy the crowd who wanted to see Jesus dead, he ordered that they beat him. He thought that after that punishment he could let him go free. But it was not like that. Although they saw Jesus tortured and suffer, the Jewish people and leaders would not be satisfied until they saw him on the cross.

All of Pilate's attempts to release Jesus were futile. When the chief priest accused him of going against Caesar, Pilate surrendered Jesus into the hands of the enraged multitude for fear of losing his position.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Who was Pilate?

Without saying the name of the character, tell your students the following biography:

This man was the Roman governor of the province of Judea (26-36 AD). He is infamous for his intervention in the judgment and execution of Jesus Christ.

As governor of Judea, he had absolute authority over all citizens who were not Romans. But in many cases, especially those related to religion, they were judged by the Sanhedrin, which was the council and supreme court of the Jews. After the Sanhedrin court decided that Jesus Christ was guilty of blasphemy, they sent Jesus to the Roman court, because they could not dictate a death sentence.

When the governor refused to condemn him to death, the Jewish priests presented other false accusations against Jesus. Then the governor interrogated him alone. Impressed by the dignity and frankness of Jesus' answers, he tried to save him (John 18:38-39; 19:12-15), but the fear of a Jewish uprising finally made him accept the demands of the people. Therefore, Jesus was crucified.

Ask them: What is this character's name? Listen to answers and congratulate those who answer correctly. Tell them that in today's story they will study about the judgment made against Jesus in front of this Roman governor.

Persecution

State or write on the blackboard the word "persecution" and its definition. Ask your students to give some examples of persecution suffered by Christians around the world. (For example, in certain countries, Christians cannot congregate, and if they do, they are imprisoned. In some rural areas, Christians are expelled from the community because of their faith.) Tell them that in today's story, they will learn from a man who endured persecution and remained firm until the end.

TEACH THE LESSON

Prior to the session choose and prepare several students to dramatize the suggested theater script for this lesson. Each one will represent a character, changing their voice so that it is as real as possible. If you have tunics or costumes, they can wear them, and organize a small stage performance.

While your students read and dramatize the script, ask them to pay close attention to the way the crowd treated Jesus.

Based on Mark 14:58 - 65; John 18:19 - 19:16.

Part 1: Judgment by Annas and Caiaphas

Characters: Narrator, Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas, witnesses, chief priest, Sanhedrin.

Narrator: Jesus was arrested in the garden of Gethsemane, where he had been praying. The soldiers took him to Annas, the ex-high priest, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the new high priest.

Annas: Who are those men who follow you? What lies did you tell them so that they would believe in you?

Jesus: I spoke openly and always taught in the synagogues or at the temple. I didn't say anything in secret. Why are you asking me? Wouldn't it be better ask those who heard me?

Chief Priest: (Hitting Jesus) Is that the way you answer the high priest?

Jesus: If I said something wrong, tell me, but if I told the truth, why did you hit me?

Narrator: After listening to him, Annas sent him tied up to Caiaphas. In the house of Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin were assembled. These leaders sought to find any evidence against Jesus. Many wanted to sentence him to death. The problem was there was no reason to kill him, although false witnesses had told lies about him.

Witnesses: This man said, "I will tear down this temple made by hand, and in three days I will build another not made by hand."

Caiaphas: Do you have something to say?

Narrator: Jesus was silent.

Caiaphas: Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?

Jesus: I am. And you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.

Caiaphas: (Tearing his robe) Blasphemy! We do not need any more witnesses. You yourselves have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?

Chief Priest: He's guilty! The punishment must be death!

Narrator: Then they began to spit on Jesus' face and hit him with their fists.

Chief Priest: Tell us, who hit you? Show us that you are the Messiah and tell us who hit you.

Part 2: Trial before Pilate

Characters: Narrator, Pilate, Jesus, temple officials, crowd.

Narrator: It was very early in the morning when they took Jesus before Pilate.

Pilate: What are you accusing this man of?

Chief Priest: He is guilty. We would not have brought him before you if we were not sure that he is a criminal.

Pilate: Then judge him by your own laws.

Chief Priest: We can not sentence him to death, but it is the punishment he deserves for his crimes. He is destroying our nation, and betraying Rome because he incites the people not to pay their taxes to Caesar. In addition, he claims to be the Christ, the king of the Jews.

Narrator: Meanwhile, Jesus remained silent.

Pilate: Are you the King of the Jews?

Jesus: Is that what you think or did others tell you about me?

Pilate: Your people and chief priests delivered you to me. What did you do?

Jesus: My kingdom is not of this world; if it were my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders; But my kingdom is not from here.

Pilate: So, are you king? Jesus: You say I'm a king. For this I was born and for this I have come to the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.

Pilate: What is the truth? (Pilate leaves to talk to the Jews) I find no basis for a charge against him.

Narrator: It was customary for a prisoner to be released at the time of Passover.

Pilate: Do you want me to free the King of the Jews?

Crowd: No, not him! We want Barabbas!

Narrator: Barabbas was imprisoned for inciting a rebellion in the city, and for murder. Pilate: Whip Jesus! Maybe with that they remain calm.

Narrator: The soldiers, obeying Pilate's order, whipped Jesus until blood spilled from his back. Some soldiers made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus.

Pilate: Jesus is innocent. I do not find any fault in him.

Crowd: Crucify him! Crucify him!

Pilate: You take him and crucify him, because I find no basis for a charge against him.

Chief Priests: We have a law, and according to that law he must die because he claimed to be the Son of God.

Pilate: (Addressing Jesus) Where are you from? Do you refuse to talk to me? Do you not realize that I have the power to set you free or to crucify you?

Narrator: Pilate was looking for a way to set him free.

Jesus: You would have no authority over me if it were not given to you from above.

Chief Priests: If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.

Pilate: Here you have your King!

Crowd: We do not want him! Crucify him!

Pilate: Shall I crucify your King?

Chief Priest: We have no king but Caesar.

Narrator: Then Pilate handed Jesus over to them to be crucified.

Then ask them: How did Jesus respond to the accusations? How do you think he felt while all this was happening?

CONNECT THE LESSON

A true story

Have your students sit in a circle, and tell them the following story.

Li Ying was a young girl when she decided to do the church's work. From the day she accepted Christ in her heart, she knew that the path would not be easy, especially since she lived in a country in which Christianity is restricted. When she entered university, Li Ying decided to study journalism. After many years of study, she graduated and started working. However, she knew that she should use her talent for God's work. Therefore, although the authorities prohibited it, she decided to publish a Christian magazine. Soon after starting the printing and distribution of the magazine, Li Ying was arrested for violating laws, and thereafter sentenced to 15 years in prison. Part of her punishment was to remain completely silent. She could not say a single word to her fellow prisoners. In addition, she had to work 16 hours a day, making handicrafts that were to be sold in tourist markets.

Invite your students to reflect on this story, and help them understand that Christian persecution is much more serious and more frequent than they imagine.

Letters to Li Ying

Provide them with paper and pencils so they can write something they would like to say to someone like Li Ying. When they are finished, place all the letters in a basket or on the table, and form a circle to intercede for sisters like Li Ying who suffer because they believe in Christ.

Invite them to remember Li Ying in their daily prayers, as well as thousands of Christians who, like her, suffer every day because of their faith. (For more information on this and other stories of persecuted Christians, visit the page www.persecution.com or www.christianpersecution.com - Both websites belong to "The voice of the martyrs.")

Will you stand firm?

Use Student Activity Sheet #329 to challenge the students to stand firm during trials.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

You can play the invisible word game to help them learn the verse. Start by writing the verse on a chalkboard or whiteboard. Say the verse together, aloud. Then erase a word and say the verse again, inserting the erased word in the appropriate place.

Continue erasing one or two words and repeating the verse until all the words are erased. You could give a small prize to the child(s) who can say the verse once all the words are erased.

(If you do not have a chalkboard or whiteboard, write the verse on sheets of paper, one word on each sheet and tape it to the wall. Then, instead of erasing a word, take a word off the wall.)

WRAP-UP

Pray

Lead the group in prayers of thanksgiving that Jesus was willing to suffer for us.

Encourage

Encourage the group to continue working on the memory verse, and conclude by singing songs of praise.

Invite

Remind the group that in the next session they will study the lesson about Jesus' death. Encourage them to attend on time and to invite friends.