

LESSON 36

Peter Denies Jesus

MATTHEW 26:69-75



BIBLE TRUTH

EVEN THE MOST CONFIDENT MAN WILL NOT STAND APART FROM JESUS

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 26:69–75 from the Scriptures or read story 114, “Peter Denies Jesus,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

False Accusations

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prize, such as a chocolate bar
- ✓ an adult helper

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Bring in the Defense

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Peter and the Servant Girl

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 20 MIN

Peter Skits

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Peter hid the truth—Peter and another disciple followed Jesus to the high priest’s courtyard where Jesus was questioned. While he was there, a woman recognized him and asked if he was a disciple of Jesus (John 18:15–17). Peter denied Jesus. This is hardly the same man who had earlier boasted, “Even though they all fall away, I will not” (Mark 14:29).

Jesus had no witness—The high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. Jesus suggested that the high priest ask those who heard him (John 18:21). One of the officers then struck Jesus. The irony of Jesus’ remark is that Peter, who heard Jesus’ teaching and could have come to his defense, stood in the courtyard, denying him.

Peter denied Jesus—Peter denied Christ three times just as Jesus had foreseen. Peter had begun the evening with the confident, proud declaration, “Though they all fall away because of you, I will never fall away” (Matthew 26:33). Jesus had warned Peter about his pride. Now in the courtyard of the high priest, one of the servants who had witnessed Peter’s earlier attack on a fellow servant, recognized and challenged Peter (John 18:26). Peter, now afraid, denied knowing Jesus and even called down curses on himself to prove his truthfulness (Matthew 26:74). Guilty of assault for cutting off a man’s ear, Peter was filled with fear. Instead of placing his hope in Jesus he placed his hope in himself and lied for his own protection.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Jesus’ Questioning

Mark 14:53–65 depicts Jesus’ questioning as a minitrial 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 that the whole of the Sanhedrin were looking for evidence against Jesus, it is likely that far fewer leaders were assembled at this quickly convened, late-night trial.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

So often we, like Peter, think we can follow Jesus in our own strength. 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. Peter needed a Savior. Yet he was blind to the power of his sin. It wasn't until the rooster crowed that Peter realized what he had done.

Jesus was hours away from the cross where he would die for Peter's sin and for the sin of everyone who puts their hope in him. Like Peter, we need God to open our eyes to our sinful condition. 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!

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 26:69–75 from the Scriptures or read story 114, "Peter Denies Jesus," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

False Accusations

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ prize, such as a chocolate bar
- ✓ an adult helper

This object lesson will illustrate the force of false accusations. After setting it up with him or her ahead of time, falsely accuse a student of taking a pencil. This should be a miniskit (though

the class will not know it until the end when you explain it). Ad-lib the skit so the student does not need to memorize lines, but 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. 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.

Reveal that you are only pretending. Thank the student for participating and give them a chocolate bar. Have the class share their reaction to the skit. Ask if they ever believed the accusation was true.

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.)

(To the student who participated in the skit)
- **How did it feel to be falsely accused? Describe what was going through your mind.**

How could false accusations against Jesus be used to turn public opinion against him? (Remind the class of how they felt when you accused the student of stealing the pencil. If some of the class believed you, even though you were making it up, don’t you think the people hearing the religious leaders accuse Jesus might believe he was guilty?)

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

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESON 2 **20 MIN**

Bring in the Defense

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ Bibles for the class

Pretend to put Jesus on trial. Explain to the class that it is their job to defend Jesus. Have the class search for Scripture passages that support and defend Jesus. They could use Old Testament prophecies or New Testament stories that demonstrate that he is the Messiah. For instance, they might use the fact that angels announced his birth or that God the Father spoke at his baptism or that the prophets said the Messiah would come from Bethlehem and be born of the line of David.

Here are a few Scripture references to feed the class in case they have trouble: Isaiah 7:10–14; Isaiah 53; Matthew 2:1–8; Matthew 16:14–20; and John 10:7–18.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

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.

ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Peter and the Servant Girl

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a picture of Peter and the servant girl. Have a word bubble over each of the two figures indicating the servant girl’s accusation (“You were with Jesus!”) and Peter’s denial of Christ (“I do not know the man!”). At the top of the paper have the children write: Don’t deny—testify!

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **20 MIN**

Peter Skits

Divide the class into groups of five and have them create and perform a skit that shows a modern-day Peter—someone who is familiar with Christ but who denies him. The skits should be short, about one minute long. Give the students five minutes to create and practice them before the first group begins. Here are a few ideas:

Friends start talking about what they did on the weekend. Each one slept in and watched TV. When they ask you—the modern-day Peter—what you did, instead of admitting that you went to church, you lie and say you slept in and watched TV too.

You are sitting in science class and the teacher calls on you to explain how humans evolved. You want to tell the teacher that God created humans, but instead you say they evolved over millions of years by beneficial mutations.

You are playing with a bunch of friends when one kid chimes in, “I have to visit my dad this weekend and he goes to church and believes in God. My mom tells me God doesn’t exist. Do you guys believe in God?” Since each of the other kids say they don’t believe, you also say you don’t believe.

After watching the skits, talk about the different scenarios and how we should all identify with Peter. Then talk about Peter’s pride and how it contributed to his denial of Jesus.