



SESSION

3

Good Friday



MEETING AIM

To hear the story of Jesus' death.



BIBLE PASSAGE

Luke 22:47-23:56



BACKGROUND

The story of Jesus' betrayal, trial and death can be an upsetting one for younger children and yet it is central to our faith. They learn that Jesus loves them and is their friend, and then they hear the story about how he was abandoned by his friends and then killed, even though he did nothing wrong. As we explore this story with younger children we need to tread the line between discovering the events of the story while not distressing them. However, helping children to engage sensitively with this story will help them to build a picture of the gospel from an early age.

CIRCLE TIME



Welcome all the children and share out any refreshments you have. Chat about what the children have done this week. What good times do they want to share? Ask the children about their friends. Who are they? What lovely things have they done together? Have these friends sometimes done things that upset them? Share an appropriate story of how a friend disappointed you or made you sad but then you managed to make up.

HAPPY OR SAD



You will need: a card for each child, with a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other

Give each child a happy/sad face card and ask them to think about the situations you're going to describe and decide whether that would make them happy or sad, and show that side of the card:

- Your mummy gives you a new cuddly toy
- You have a sore tummy and you have to stay in bed
- You go out for ice cream
- It's raining, but you want to go to the park

- Your grandad falls over and has to go to hospital
- Your best friend tells lies about you

You could add your own ideas too. The children might want to say that they would feel something other than happy or sad. Let them express those ideas if they have them. Ensure that the children know that these situations are pretend.

BIBLE STORY



You will need: cards from Happy or sad; *The big Bible storybook* (SPCK)

Gather the children together and make sure every child has a card from Happy or sad. Say that you're going to tell them a story about Jesus and they have to decide if that makes them happy or sad.

Explain that there were some people who didn't like Jesus. They wanted to find a way to get rid of him. Jesus made them angry, and they didn't like what he was doing. One of Jesus' friends, called Judas, decided to help the people who didn't like Jesus. He led them to the place where Jesus was and they took Jesus away.

Ask the children if that makes them feel happy or sad and to show that side of their card. The children may want to chat about this a bit more. Let them, if they're engaging with the story.

Remind the children that Peter was one of Jesus' best friends. Read the story 'Peter lets Jesus down' from page 204 of *The big Bible storybook*. Show them the picture of Peter and the girl by the fire. Ask the children if that makes them feel happy or sad and to show that side of their card. Again, let the children talk about this, if they would like to.

Go on to read the story 'Jesus dies' from page 205 of *The big Bible storybook*, showing them the picture of Jesus. Once more, ask the children if that makes them feel happy or sad and to show that side of their card. As before, let the conversation flow if the children want to chat.

It's important not to leave children with no idea about the next part of the story, so say that this story is very sad, but it's not the end. Something very surprising happens in the next part of the story, but that is for the next session!

CHATTING TOGETHER



Chat about the story asking these questions, encouraging everyone to join in if they want to:

- What did you notice about this story?
- What made you happy? What made you sad?
- If you were one of Jesus' friends, how would you feel?
- What do you want to say to Jesus?

CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: lolly sticks; short lengths of string; pens

Give each child two lolly sticks and a piece of string. Help them to tie the two sticks together into a cross shape. If this will be too fiddly, then you could use a spot of PVA glue to fix the two sticks together. Help the children to write their names on the cross.

Show them how to hold the cross in their hands. Explain that some people hold a cross when they pray to help them focus on what Jesus did for them. Tell the children, in the simplest way possible, what the death of Jesus means to you.

PRAYER



You will need: *The big Bible storybook*

Show the children the picture from page 205 of *The big Bible storybook*. Remind the children of the story and ask them to hold the cross from Creative response in their hands. What do they want to say to God because of what they have heard today? Some children will be happy to think about this, others will want to tell you. Run this activity in the way that will most benefit your group. After a minute or two of quiet (or chat), close with a prayer like this one:

*Father God,
This story makes us sad,
But thank you that there is a happy ending.
Be with us when we are sad.
Help us to talk to you when we are upset.
Amen.*

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