**GROWING TOGETHER:** FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Session 4 of 4

# Good Friday

### MEETING AIM

To explore the events of Good Friday and wonder about what they mean for us today.

### BIBLE PASSAGE

John 18-19

### BACKGROUND

This session plan is intended for use either in-person or online, depending on how you’re meeting. Adapt the activities to fit your situation.

Jesus and his disciples have shared the last supper together and Judas has betrayed Jesus’ whereabouts to the chief priests. At the end of the last session, we saw Jesus being arrested in the garden of Gethsemane. Be ready for a range of responses to today’s passage. Those with little or no church background may never have heard this story. To encounter a loving and forgiving Jesus and then hear how he was killed could be a shock! Even those who have grown up in a church community may never have explored this story in any depth. You might need to have a time when children can ask you questions or express how they feel as part of your session.

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### STARTING OUT – 5 mins

Start your time together with some simple refreshments (if you can). Chat about what the children have done this week and ask them what they would do if a friend ended up in trouble.

### INTRO ACTIVITY – 10 mins

**You will need:** hot-cross buns; paper plates; knives and butter (optional)

Share out the hot-cross buns with the children. Ask if anyone knows why we eat these at this time of the year. What do they remind us of? How much of the story can they tell? Share thoughts and ideas as you eat the buns. (Be aware of food hygiene and allergy issues.)

### BIBLE STORY – 10 mins

**You will need:** cards with the Bible passages below written on; a toy sword; a picture of a gate in a wall; a toy rooster; a Roman helmet; a whip or rope; a small cross; some kind of scented ointment; bandages; Bibles

Before you start, place the Bible passage cards with their props around your room so that you can take the children on a journey and relate different parts of the story at each spot. Have your Bible in hand, but you probably won’t need to read every single verse. Show the prop and plot the main points of the story at each moment. Let the group ask questions if they want to.

Station 1: John 18:1-11 (toy sword)

Judas leads the soldiers to Jesus, they arrest him. Simon Peter cuts off a soldier’s ear.

Station 2: John 18:12-18 (picture of a gate in a wall)

Jesus is taken to the high priest. Peter eventually gets let into the courtyard outside but, when questioned, denies knowing Jesus.

Station 3: John 18:19-27 (toy rooster)

Jesus is questioned by the high priest. Peter is asked twice more if he’s one of Jesus’ guys. He says no. The rooster crows, just as Jesus had said it would.

Station 4: John 18:28-40 (Roman helmet)

The high priest turns Jesus over to the Roman official, Pilate. Pilate can’t see what the problem is and wants to release Jesus. The people say no.

Station 5: John 19:1-16 (whip or rope)

Pilate has Jesus flogged to try to keep the people happy, but they want him dead. Pilate starts to get frightened by the crowd and disturbed by his conversation with Jesus. Eventually he hands Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified.

Station 6: John 19:17-37 (cross)

Jesus is crucified, the soldiers gamble for his clothes. Jesus tells John to look after his mum and then he dies. The soldiers come to make sure he’s dead because they want to get the body down from the cross before the Sabbath.

Station 7: John 19:38-42 (scented ointment and bandages)

Two secret disciples of Jesus come and take Jesus’ body to a tomb and lay him in it.

### CHATTING TOGETHER – 5 mins

Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

* How does this story make you feel?
* What’s unfair in the story?
* How would you have felt if you were Peter after you’d denied knowing Jesus?
* Did Pilate act in the right way? How could he have acted differently?
* How do you think Jesus’ disciples felt at the end of this story?
* Why is Jesus dying on the cross important to us today?

### CREATIVE TIME – 10 mins

**You will need:** junk (such as boxes, foil, egg boxes and yogurt pots); sticky tape; scissors; glue sticks

Ask the group to reflect on the different bits of the story they’ve just walked through, and the props you showed them at each point. Ask them to create a junk model of one of those props. As you work, encourage them to talk about why they’ve chosen that object to model.

### PRAYER – 5 mins

**You will need:** paper; pens or pencils

Give out the pens and paper, and ask the children to write a note to Jesus saying how they feel about him dying on the cross. If you’re working at home or in-person at church, you could stick or nail these notes to a wooden cross (two branches tied together would be fine). Otherwise, ask the children to hold their notes in their hands.

Ask the children to talk to God about what they’ve heard and how they feel.

**JENNY CHEUNG**

is a mum, church planter and choir-nut! She pioneers The Voice Project Scotland – a missional expression inviting children and their families to find their voices and sing together with others.