

22. A Sad Night



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A Sad Night

Leader Notes:

- View [this session's focus](#), faith nurture goals, leader devotional, and story symbol (click on the story symbol to download or print).
- For the full set of DWELL Flex story symbols use the link in the sidebar.
- Need this as a PDF? Just [print this page](#) and choose to save/print as a PDF.

Take a few moments to greet the children and let them know how glad you are to see them.

I love exploring God's story with you. Let's get ready to do that together.

Breathe

Use this time to focus your attention on God.

Do this with me: calm your head, heart, and hands as you slowly breathe in . . . and out. *(Demonstrate a few deep "in and out breaths" with eyes closed.)*

Tell and Wonder

Let's enter God's story together. Here's the story symbol for the part of God's story that we'll be spending time in today. I wonder what clues it gives us about the story we're about to hear? *(Show the story symbol. Accept any answers without giving away whether or not the kids have guessed correctly.)*

Listen closely as we read the story together to see which story our symbol represents.

Read "A Sad Night" aloud (below), pausing throughout to allow children to answer the wondering questions.

NOTE: *It's always a good idea to read through the story beforehand so you'll be able to tell it well.*

You can also read the story from a children's Bible or a simplified translation of Scripture like the New International Reader's Version (NIRV). Remember to pause throughout to allow time to wonder.

Pray

Conclude with prayer. Tell the kids that they will participate in the prayer, thanking Jesus for being willing to die for each of us. Invite them to add their names after you say your own in the prayer, which might go

something like this:

Dear Jesus, Thank you for being willing to go to the cross for us. You died for us: [names]. Amen.

See [5 Ways to Pray with Kids](#) for other ways to pray.

Respond

Select and do one or more of the response activities from God's Big Story card #131 or check out [5 Ways to Retell a Bible Story with Kids](#) for some fun ways to retell this story. Include older kids in the retelling by having them read the story aloud while the younger children act it out.*

**God's Big Story cards can be ordered from FaithAliveResources.org.*

Easy Extra

Create a book together about this part of God's story. Start by retelling the story, coming up with a short sentence that describes each part of the story. Create one book by having the children work together writing the sentences, and drawing pictures to show each part of the story. Or have children create individual books, going a page at a time and working together to recall what part of the story comes next.

Once you've completed all the pages of your book, add a cover and a back page and staple it together. Read the story together. If you made one book, consider making copies so that each child can take it home to share with their family.

If you're meeting virtually, brainstorm the sentences with your group and then message each child, assigning them a part of the story to draw. Ask the children's parents to email you their page when it's complete. Combine all of the pages into one book which your group created together even though they're apart. Email or mail a copy of the book to each child.

Story: A Sad Night [Matthew 26:36-56](#)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26. Tell the children that this is where the story begins. Read the first part of [verse 31](#), where Jesus tells his disciples they will all become deserters because of him tonight. Share with the children that this will happen in our story today.

Jesus was very sad. It was late at night. Jesus and his disciples were walking toward the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus knew this was going to be a difficult night. He knew that he would soon be leaving his friends. He would be nailed to a cross. He would suffer and then die. But he willingly went ahead anyway.

Jesus looked around him. It was good to have his friends with him as he faced this sad night. **I wonder if you feel braver or stronger when you have your good friends around you.** *(Pause for responses.)*

As they walked, Jesus said something so shocking that his friends stopped walking and stood perfectly still. "Listen," Jesus said, "tonight, each of you will run away and leave me alone."

Peter stared at Jesus. "Never!" he said. "Even if everyone else leaves you, I never will!"

Jesus looked back at Peter and said, "Peter, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't even know me." "No!" Peter hollered. "I won't. Even if I have to die with you, I will *never* say I don't know you." All the other disciples agreed. They planned to stay with Jesus—no matter what happened.

Soon Jesus and the disciples entered the beautiful garden of Gethsemane. Jesus often came to this garden, away from the noise and busyness of the city, to think and pray. Jesus said to the disciples, "Sit here and wait for me. I'm going up the path a little way to pray."

Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him. They were Jesus' closest friends. Jesus leaned close to them. "Listen," he said. "Tonight I am very sad. Please stay and keep watch with me so I won't feel so alone."

Then Jesus walked to another part of the garden. He fell with his face to the ground and prayed to God. "Father, please. If it's possible, don't let me go through the terrible suffering that is planned for me. But if I must, I will do what you want, not what I want to do."

Jesus got up and walked slowly back to Peter, James, and John. They were sound asleep! Jesus shook Peter, waking him up. Jesus said, "Couldn't you stay awake with me even for one hour?" **I wonder why they didn't stay awake.** *(Pause for responses.)*

Once more, Jesus walked away. Once more he knelt down and prayed, "Father, if it's not possible for me to avoid suffering on the cross, I will do what you want me to do."

Again Jesus returned to the disciples. **What do you think he found when he got there?** *(Pause for responses.)*

Yes, his friends were asleep again.

So Jesus left them again and walked away to pray. Then, sad and alone, he returned to his friends. They were still asleep! "Wake up!" Jesus said. "The time has come. See the angry men coming toward us—the ones carrying torches and swords and clubs. They are coming to arrest me."

While Jesus was still talking, Judas—one of Jesus' own disciples—came running up the hill. He was with the angry mob. Jesus stood quietly waiting.

Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek. "Greetings, teacher," he said. This kiss was not a kiss of friendship. It was a sign he had told the mob he would use. That way, they would know for sure which person was Jesus and arrest him.

Jesus spoke gently to Judas. He said, "Friend, do what you came to do." **What does it tell you about Jesus that he still called Judas his friend even though he knew what Judas was doing?** *(Pause for responses.)*

When the angry mob saw which man Judas kissed, they grabbed Jesus and arrested him. The disciples were scared and they all ran away, leaving Jesus alone with the angry crowd. **I wonder what they were afraid of.** *(Pause for responses.)* **I wonder how Jesus felt when all his friends left him.** *(Pause for responses.)*

Draw the kids' attention back to the story symbol. Ask how the story symbol reminds them of today's story. After talking about the sadness of Jesus in the story, and the way the story may make us feel, be sure to point out that Jesus loves us so much that he was willing to be left all alone by his friends, to be captured by a mob and to die on the cross for us. That's amazing!

Looking for More Activities for This Story?

Click below to access the full age-specific *Dwell* session for this story:

- [1st-2nd Grade: A Sad Night](#)
 - [6th-8th Grade: Who's Listening?](#)
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