

23. Jesus is Denied by Peter



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## 23

# Jesus is Denied by Peter

**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 "Jesus is Denied by Peter" 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 by praising Jesus together, using the litany below to thank Jesus for willingly suffering for us. Teach kids their response line before you begin: **“Thank you, Jesus.”**

Thank you, Jesus, for being willing to suffer for us.

**Thank you, Jesus!**

Thank you for going to the cross alone.

**Thank you, Jesus!**

Thank you for forgiving us when we disappoint you.

**Thank you, Jesus!**

Thank you for loving us—always!

**Thank you, Jesus!**

**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 #132\* 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](http://FaithAliveResources.org).

## Easy Extra

**Arrival Activity:** Gather three pieces of paper, or make three columns on a posterboard. Write one of these words in each column or page: Feelings, Sounds, Sights. If you are meeting virtually, make three columns in an electronic document and share your screen.

Tell your group to think about and share a time they were alone and felt frightened. As they talk about their experiences, write words that describe their experiences in vertical stacks under the following categories: Feelings, Sounds, Sights.

Once everyone who would like to has shared, review the words in the word stacks and use these feelings, sounds, and sights as a lead-in to the story.

## Story: Jesus is Denied by Peter [Matthew 26:57-75](#)

NOTE: The first part of this story is repeated from session 22. If you did that session last week with your group, you might want to start by saying, **As I tell our story today, you may hear some repetition from our story last week. That will help us all remember those important details as we continue learning about Jesus' journey to the cross.**

Have your group imagine that you are Peter, Jesus' disciple. Explain that you'll be telling today's story from his perspective.

It has been a sad day. A few hours ago I was eating the Passover meal with Jesus, my teacher and friend, and his other disciples. After eating, as we travelled to our favorite garden, Jesus told us that we would all run

away and leave him tonight. I knew I would never run away and leave Jesus. I told him, "Even if everyone else leaves you, I never will!" But he told me, "Peter, this very night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't even know me." **Can you imagine how I felt when Jesus told me this?** *(Pause for responses.)*

We arrived at Gethsemane and Jesus asked us to sit while he went to pray. I tried so hard to sit and wait for Jesus to return, but I couldn't keep my eyes open. The next thing I knew, Jesus was waking me and the other disciples up. We couldn't even stay awake and alert for one hour! He left to pray again, and we all fell back asleep, even though Jesus asked us to stay awake. **I wonder how Jesus felt when he returned from praying and found us all asleep again?** *(Pause for responses.)*

He left and returned again, and this time, when he woke us, we saw a great crowd of people coming to arrest Jesus. I tried to protect him, and even used a sword to cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. But Jesus told me to put the sword away. As they started leading Jesus away, all his disciples fled. I couldn't help remembering his words, "Tonight, each of you will run away and leave me alone."

The crowd took Jesus to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. I followed, but stayed a little distance behind. I didn't want to get so close that the mob would see me, so I stayed outside in the courtyard. I was terrified, but I had to see what would happen to Jesus. **Do you think it would have been hard to follow Jesus that night?** *(Pause for responses.)*

It was cold outside, so I stood by the fire in the courtyard. Before long, a servant girl came up and looked closely at me. "You were also with Jesus of Galilee," she said. Immediately, I said, "I don't know what you're talking about." I got up and walked away.

Before long, another girl saw me. She turned to the other people on the courtyard and said, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." She pointed her finger right at me. I began to feel angry! "No, I wasn't," I insisted. "I don't even know the man."

Now I was really afraid! I tried to hide in the shadows, but I couldn't stay hidden. Soon some men spotted me and said, "You must be one of Jesus' followers. You sound like you come from Galilee, like Jesus. You've got to be one of them!" I shouted back at him, "I don't know what you mean! I swear I don't know the man!"

Just then a rooster crowed. Immediately I remembered Jesus' words: "This very night, before the rooster crows, you will say three times that you don't know me." **Can you imagine how I felt? How would you feel if you had denied knowing your friend and teacher? Do you think Jesus will forgive me?**

## Looking for More Activities for This Story?

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

- [6th-8th Grade: Honor the Name](#)
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