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# Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

*Scripture: Matthew 26:47-68, John 18:1-14*

**Theme: Jesus was betrayed but He went willingly**

*1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Jesus Was Betrayed, But He Went on with a Smile" (Matthew 26:47-68, John 18:1-14) 1. God Loves Us Even When We're Not Perfect Teach kids that Jesus knew people would betray Him, just like a friend might say hurtful things today, but He trusted God's plan. Show a picture of a garden or a sunset to illustrate how even when things look scary, God is there. Ask: "How can we trust God even when things feel wrong?" Encourage them to pray for courage, like Jesus did when He faced trouble. 2. Jesus' Heart Was Big, Not Small Describe how Jesus didn't run or cry when Judas handed Him over. Instead, He let it happen because He loved us even more than Judas did. Use a story like The Boy Who Cried Wolf to contrast, Jesus never deserted His mission. Challenge kids: "What's one thing you'd do even if people said mean things?" (Example: sharing with a friend who teases.) 3. Betrayal Doesn't Mean God Is Absent Remind them that God's love is like a shield. When Jesus was arrested, His enemies thought they'd win, but Jesus knew God was working. End with a prayer or song about trusting God in tough times. Share that they can be brave like Jesus, even when it's hard, to follow His example. Encouragement for Volunteers: Keep it hopeful! Focus on Jesus' love over drama. Use simple props (e.g., a crown of thorns cut from paper) and repeat: "Jesus trusted God, and He trusts you!" Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

## Bible Story

### Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

One night, Jesus was with His friends in a garden near Jerusalem. He prayed and prayed to His Father in heaven, asking for help in a time of trouble. Then, one of His disciples, Judas, had a heavy bag of coins in his hand. Jesus had already told His friends that Judas would betray Him, he would turn Him in to the leaders for money. Judas did it

secretly, whispering to the chief priests and soldiers as they waited outside. "The one I kiss will be the man you're looking for," Judas said. He kissed Jesus, and the soldiers grabbed Him. "Is this the man?" they asked. Jesus, though He knew what was coming, let them take Him.

Jesus was led away like a guilty criminal, but He didn't fight back. He let the soldiers and priests mock Him, wearing a crown of thorns and calling Him "King of the Jews." The priests laughed at Him and spit on Him, just as God had warned His people would happen in the Bible. Jesus carried His own cross to the place called Golgotha, where He would be crucified. Before that, though, He had to face His greatest betrayal: being betrayed by one who was supposed to love Him best.

Judas felt terrible after what he had done. He threw away the money he got for betraying Jesus and went to the leaders, begging to make things right. But it was too late. Jesus had already suffered and died to take away our sins. Even though Judas didn't realize it, his choice showed that even when we do wrong, God can still use us for good in His plan.

**Why This Story Matters:** This story teaches us that even when people betray or hurt Jesus, His love never fails. Jesus was betrayed, but He still died for us so we could be forgiven. When we make mistakes, we can ask for forgiveness, just like Judas did, even if it's hard. And just like Jesus, we can trust that God's love is stronger than our mistakes. Would you like to pray together about how Jesus' love helps us?

## Key Verse

### John 18:11 , 'Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given Me?'

Jesus' Kindness and Trust Jesus was always kind, even when things were hard. In John 18:11, He's walking toward the garden where His friends would arrest Him. As He steps into the water to cross a small stream, a soldier points out to Jesus: "If You're the One, show us by drinking this cup!" Jesus knew what was coming, He was about to face the worst pain of His life, but He chose to trust God anyway. You might ask, "Why would Jesus drink something so painful?" Well, Jesus knew God had a plan. Just like how you trust your mom or dad even when things feel scary, Jesus trusted God to take care of Him. He didn't run away or get upset, He trusted that God would help Him, just like He always does for you when you're afraid or sad. This verse reminds us that Jesus didn't let fear stop Him. Instead, He stayed strong because He knew God loved Him and had a good plan. When you're feeling nervous or unsure, like about a big test, a new friend, or even the toughest day, you can ask God to help you trust Him too. Just like Jesus drank the cup (meaning he trusted God), you can trust God to be there for you! Sometimes, trusting God might mean waiting a little longer for what you want, but Jesus knew God's way was always better. Maybe today, you can pray: "God, help me trust You like Jesus did." You don't have to know all the answers, just believe that God will take care of you. Jesus showed us how to be brave and kind, even when it's hard. Let's try to do the same, trusting God, being gentle, and following His love in our own lives!

## Activities

### Activity 1:

Students use paper to create shadow puppets of Jesus and Judas, then act out the scene quietly to explore how fear and love shape choices.

1. **Introduce the Story:** Read aloud a shortened version of Judas' betrayal (focus on Matthew 26:47, 50). Ask: "Why did Judas betray Jesus?" (Hint: He was afraid for himself or confused about God's plan.)
2. **Create a Petition:** Give each child a sheet of paper. Ask them to write/draw a "petition" (like a request) they would ask Jesus to protect Himself before the arrest. Example: "Dear Jesus, please don't get hurt!"
3. **Glue & Share:** Glue their petitions to paper to make a class "booklet." Discuss: "How did Judas' feelings make his decision wrong?" (Point to John 18:5: "Jesus said, 'No one takes my life from me. I lay it down of my own accord.'")
4. **Reflect:** Close with prayer, thanking God for His love even in hard times.

2. "Silent Shadow Puppets" (Storytelling & Emotional Connection)
6. Explain the Puppets: Show how paper cutouts can make "shadows" on the wall. Say: "Today, we'll make puppets to act out Jesus' arrest."
7. Design the Puppets: Each child draws Jesus (crossed arms) and Judas (holding a coin). Glue onto black paper. Cut out with scissors.
8. Shadow Play: Hold up the puppets at arm's length, then act out the scene (e.g., Jesus calming Judas, then arrest). Use soft voices.
9. Discuss: Ask: "How did Judas feel when Jesus said, 'I could ask my Father to help me' (John 18:11)?" Compare to John 18:4: "Jesus trusted God even when afraid."
10. Why These Work:
11. Petition for Justice ties betrayal to prayer and discernment.
12. Shadow Puppets make emotions tangible for young kids.
13. Both keep it simple, use cheap materials, and link to Scripture! Let me know if you'd like adjustments.

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6-8) about Jesus being betrayed and arrested, designed to encourage reflection and thoughtful conversation:
- 1. Why Do You Think Judas Betrayed Jesus?
  - "In the Bible story, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. That seems really sad and confusing. What do you think made Judas do something like that? What could have been going through his heart? How do you think Jesus felt when He knew Judas was going to hurt Him? Can you think of a time when someone close to you might have done something wrong or hurtful, and what made them do it?"
  - (Encourages students to explore motives, empathy, and biblical emotions.)
- 2. What Would You Have Done If You Were There?
  - "Imagine you were one of Jesus' friends sitting at the table when Judas kissed Him. What would you have done? Would you have tried to stop Judas? Would you have run away? Or maybe you would have just stood there in shock, wondering how this could happen. What do you think you would have felt, like fear, sadness, or maybe even anger? Why do you think it's okay to feel those emotions, even when something sad happens in the Bible?"
  - (Encourages personal reaction, emotional awareness, and understanding of biblical actions.)
- 3. How Can We Handle Mistakes Like Judas Made?
  - "Judas made a terrible mistake by betraying Jesus, but we all make mistakes too, like forgetting homework or telling a lie. How can we learn from mistakes like Judas's? What can we do to make things right, even if we know we should have done something differently? Do you think Jesus would be mad at Judas? Why or why not? How can we show kindness and forgiveness, even when people hurt us?"
  - (Encourages forgiveness, repentance, and practical application of faith.)
- 4. What Does It Mean to Be Brave Like Jesus?
  - "Jesus was arrested in the middle of the night, and even though He knew what was going to happen, He still trusted God. Judas betrayed Him, but Jesus didn't get angry or run away, He stayed strong. What does it mean to be brave like Jesus? Can you think of a time when you felt scared or nervous, but you still did what was right or brave? How can you be brave in small things, like telling someone you love them or standing up for a friend?"
  - (Encourages courage, faith, and practical applications of biblical principles.)
- These questions can be adapted to include simple illustrations, group discussion, or follow-up journaling to deepen the lesson! Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific classroom setup?

## Prayer Focus

*Prayer Focus: Trusting Jesus Even When He's Betrayed (Teacher: Gather the children in a quiet space. You can pray this together as a group, or have each child pray a small part aloud.) Dear God, We come to you today like Jesus did, feeling afraid and confused. Even when friends didn't understand, like when Judas led Jesus away in the dark, we know you always love us and keep us safe. Help us to trust you, just like Jesus did, even when things feel scary. (Pause to pray silently or let kids repeat after you.) When people don't act the way we hope, it's hard to believe they care. But Jesus chose to trust even when he was betrayed. He knew God was with him, just like we can trust you to be with us. Help us to remember that, even when others let us down, you're always there to help us and guide us. (Point to the class or hold up a hand for a moment of quiet reflection.) Today, let's ask for courage to follow Jesus, just like he did. When we feel nervous about doing something hard or kind, remind us: God is with us, always. Help us to say, "I trust you, God," like Jesus did, even when things don't make sense. Amen. (Optional extension: After praying, you could ask the class, "What's one way we can trust God today, like Jesus did?" Let kids share simple answers, like "being kind to someone who doesn't understand" or "praying when scared.") --- Why it works for kids: - Emotional connection: Uses familiar feelings (afraid, confused) to relate to the story. - Simple trust: Focuses on God's presence, not just "never get betrayed." - Action step: Ends with a call to prayer, making it interactive (e.g., "How can we trust God today?"). - Repetition: Phrases like "God is with us" reinforce the lesson.*

### >> Missions Spotlight

In many cultures, betrayal by a friend is the deepest wound. Missionaries working in tribal areas of Papua New Guinea, where tribal betrayal has been common, share that Jesus understands betrayal, and forgave even His betrayer.

### -> To the Cross

Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss. Peter drew a sword to fight. But Jesus said, 'Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels?' Jesus went to the cross willingly. No one took His life, He laid it down.