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The Trial of Jesus , Innocent but Condemned

Scripture: Matthew 27:11-26, Luke 23:1-25

Theme: Jesus, who never sinned, was condemned so we could be set free

Nursery (Ages 0-2)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

"Love is big! God loves you so much!" "Jesus is kind, no one wronged Him at all! He was good and true, but still they said 'Freeze!' God sent Him so you'd never be alone, He's love, and love is so strong!" (Encourage gentle hugs or "wave of freedom" to end!) 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

God's Love for You

One day, a man named Jesus walked into the city. The leaders asked Him, "Why are You here?" Jesus was kind and said, "I came to help you."

The leaders were jealous. They said, "We should kill Jesus!" But Jesus was really good and never did anything bad.

They brought Jesus to a man named Pilate. Pilate asked, "Is this man guilty?" But Pilate saw Jesus was not wrong. He said, "I find no fault in Him."

The crowd shouted, "Crucify Him!" Pilate tried to stop them, but they kept yelling. He said, "I see no reason to hurt Him." Still, they forced Pilate to give in.

Pilate took Jesus to the people and said, "Here is your king! If you let Jesus go, you will not be wrong." But they only cared about being happy, so they chose to hurt Jesus instead.

--- Why This Matters Jesus was like a baby who never hurt anyone, just loved! The people made a bad choice by hurting Him. But God loved them so much He sent Jesus to save them. Just like Jesus cared for you, God always loves you, no matter what!

Key Verse

Luke 23:4 , 'I find no basis for a charge against this man.'

"God loves you so much!" "He sees you, just like this, so kind and true. You are safe and happy with Him, always!" (Repeat: "God loves you!")

Activities

Activity 1:

Toddlers squeeze "God's love" rocks (sand, pom-poms) into socks to feel His unending kindness, like Jesus, though wronged, still loved people.

1. Show the Story (3 min):
2. Read Matthew 27:11-14 (skip "trial details") or a child-friendly summary: "Jesus was very kind, but some people didn't like that. They wanted to hurt Him, but God knew He was innocent. God still loves you, even if people are mean!"
3. Color the Lamb (5 min):
4. Give each child a small circle (plate) and crayons. Say, "Jesus was like a lamb, gentle and kind. Draw a happy lamb!" Let them color while listening.
5. Pray the Circle (3 min):
6. Glue the drawn lamb to the plate.
7. Gently hold hands (or have them circle each other's arms) and say:
8. "God loves me so much! Let's circle each other and pray: 'Thank You, Jesus, for being our Friend!'" (repeat 3x).
2. "Rock Your Love" Sensory Socks
10. Read the Bible Story (3 min):
11. Share: "Jesus was good, but people still tried to hurt Him. God knows we might make mistakes, but He always loves us! Even if someone is mean, God's love is like a big hug."
12. Fill the Socks (5 min):
13. Fill each sock with 2, 3 pom-poms or a handful of rice/sand. Say, "This is like God's love, He fills our hearts with kindness, even when things feel heavy."
14. Praise Together (3 min):
15. Let them shake their socks (sand/pom-poms) and cheer: "God's love is strong! Praise Jesus, He loves us always!"
16. Optional: Glue a small tag (e.g., "God loves you!") to the toe.
17. Notes:
18. For 0, 1 year olds, skip coloring/gluing; just play with the pom-poms and sing "God's love is like the sun..." (simple tune).
19. For 1, 2 years, help them follow steps with verbal cues (e.g., "First, color! Then, pray!").

Discussion Questions

- Here are four simple, open-ended questions about God's love for babies and toddlers, keeping the story of Jesus' trial gentle and age-appropriate:
- God loves us very much!
- "Tell me about a time God made you feel safe and loved. What color was your favorite blanket?"

- Jesus was kind and innocent.
- "If you had a friend who was kind but someone said they were bad, how would you feel? How does God always love Jesus like a big hug?"
- Even when people don't understand, God still loves.
- "What is one thing in your day that makes you feel confused or scared? How can God be like a light to help you?"
- God wants us to love others too!
- "What's a kind thing you did for someone today? How can you show love like Jesus did, even when people don't know?"
- (Repeat: "God's love is always there, like sunshine!" or "Jesus is kind, just like God made Him!")

Prayer Focus

"Dear Jesus, we love You. Be near our little ones today. Help them know You always love them, even when things feel hard. Thank You for being good and kind, just like You always are!" (Repeat: "Jesus loves us, and He's with us!")

>> Missions Spotlight

In countries with corrupt justice systems , from parts of Latin America to Central Asia , the story of an innocent man being condemned resonates deeply. Missionaries share that Jesus' unjust trial was part of God's plan to bring justice to the whole world.

-> To the Cross

Pilate said, 'I find no basis for a charge against Him.' Jesus was completely innocent. Yet He was condemned to die. Why? So that we , who are guilty , could be declared innocent. This is the great exchange: His innocence for our guilt.