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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

PreK-K (Ages 3-5)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "Jesus Was Innocent, But Kindness Saved Us!" Opening (Wonder & Connection): "Whoa! Today we're going to talk about a very brave Jesus who walked the Earth long ago. Imagine a kind, gentle boy who never did anything wrong... yet someone accused Him anyway. What a mystery! Let's wonder together how He showed us how to be brave like Him." Storytime (Simplified & Repetitive): "Long ago, Jesus was brought before some very upset people. They said, 'We don't want this kind man, he's not a bad person!' But they still judged Him wrong. That sounds unfair, right? Jesus knew God loved all people, even those who didn't know it. He stayed calm even when others were angry. And guess what? Later, we learned He rose again to set us free!" Key Point (Repetition & Wonder): "Jesus was never naughty, just kind! But some people didn't know how to love, so they made a mistake. Thankfully, God saw Jesus' kindness and said, 'I forgive you!' That's why we're free to love and play, just like Jesus did." Closing (Encouragement & Prayer): "Today, let's be brave like Jesus! Even when someone says something mean, we can choose kindness, just like He did. Now let's pray: 'Lord Jesus, help us to love like You, even when things feel unfair.' Amen! Let's hug someone who needs a smile!" Volunteer Tip: Use a simple act (e.g., holding hands while singing "This Little Light of Mine") or a storybook with visuals to help little ones grasp the big idea. Keep energy high with movement! 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

The Kind Trial of Jesus

One bright morning, Jesus walked into the city with his friends, Mary, Martha, and John. The people cheered him, saying, "Welcome, Jesus!" But some bad men whispered, "Who is this? He could even make us healthy!" The leaders

feared him because he taught with such kindness and power. So they brought Jesus to the chief priest to ask him questions. "Tell us, is this really you?" they asked. Jesus smiled and said, "Yes, I am!" But they still didn't believe him.

The leaders told the crowd, "We have found no wrongdoing in Jesus. Why are you hurting him?" But many of the people said, "He's a good man!" The leaders didn't listen. Instead, they asked Pilate, the Roman ruler, to judge Jesus. Pilate said, "I find no crime in him." The people shouted, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Pilate tried to say no, but the crowd was so loud that he couldn't stop them. "You take him," he told them, "but I find him innocent."

Even though Jesus was innocent, he was taken away by bad men. The people felt sad for him. Later, they would remember his kindness and wonder how a good man could be treated this way. Jesus' story shows us that even when someone is wronged, we should still be kind and believe in goodness.

This story matters because Jesus loved everyone, even when others didn't love him back. His kindness and peace still shine bright today, reminding us to trust in God and be gentle, just like Jesus was.

Key Verse

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

The Good Shepherd's Kind Word Once, a kind man named Pontius Pilate stood before some scary rulers. They said, "We have found this man wrong and bad!" But Pilate looked deeply and said, "I don't see anything bad about him." Oh, what a brave and wise thing to say! Pilate was like a big, gentle adult who checks and asks questions before making big choices. He saw that this man was not mean or hurtful, just kind and full of love. "Find no basis" means he didn't find anything to blame him for at all! This made Pilate wonder, "Who really is this person?" He didn't know then, but he trusted his heart and said what he thought was true. That's how we can be brave too, when we tell the truth and stand for what's right! Even when people are scared, we can say, "I don't see anything bad here." Just like Pilate, let's be kind and trust our own hearts! What a wonderful, brave word!

Activities

Activity 1:

Kids act out a fair trial game to explore why Jesus was judged unfairly, while learning justice and mercy.

1. Show the Bible story: Ask, "Did Jesus do anything wrong?" (Let them say "No!"). "He was kind and innocent!"
2. Cut thorns: Give each child a strip of red paper. Have them cut thin, wavy shapes (like thorns) to glue onto a crown base.
3. Glue & decorate: Let them stick the thorns on and color the base (like a crown). Ask, "What did Jesus wear on his head?" (Point to their crown.)
4. Share love: Read "God loves you so much" (from a short verse). "Jesus was tried wrong, but God was right!"
2. "Justice Game: Free or Guilty?"
6. Set up the game: Place plates for judges. Give each child a toy and a crayon.
7. Tell the story: "Jesus had no crime. A king said he was guilty, wrong!" Show how unfair it was.
8. Act it out: Kids act as "Jesus" (sits quietly), while judges (adults) debate. One judge says, "He's guilty!" Others say "Free!"
9. Discuss: Ask, "Why did Jesus get wrong answers?" "God's love is always fair!" End with "Jesus is innocent, but we love Him!"
10. Key Themes: Wonder + Repetition
11. Use "Innocent!" and "Wrongly judged" often.
12. Repeat: "God's love is always true!" (from their crafts/game).

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions to help little ones explore The Trial of Jesus, with gentle wonder and simple repetition:
- What Do You Wonder?
- When Jesus walked on earth, some people didn't like him at all. Why do you think some people get mad when someone says or does things that aren't nice? What could make a grown-up feel sad or even angry? What nice things can we do to make others feel happy?
- Fair or Not Fair?
- Jesus was kind and always helped others, but some people didn't understand. If you had a friend who made mistakes sometimes (like forgetting to share or saying unkind things), how would you help them feel better? Why do you think people in the Bible story didn't listen to Jesus, even though he was kind?
- Kindness and Power
- Jesus didn't have much money or big toys, but he had a great heart. What things make you feel happy or important, even if they're small? Why do you think some people get upset when someone else has something they want? Can you think of a time someone helped you even though they didn't get anything in return?
- Wondering About Forgiveness
- Jesus loved everyone, and he even forgave people who hurt him. If you made a mistake, like taking a toy that wasn't yours, what would you like to say to make it right? Why do you think God forgives us, even when we're sad or say bad things? What does that tell us about kindness and love?
- Tips for discussion:
- Use hands-on objects (e.g., pretend crowns, "judge" chairs) to act out parts of the story.
- End with: "What would YOU do if you saw someone being treated unfairly? Let's pray together!" (e.g., "God, help us to be kind like Jesus.")
- Repeat phrases like "Why do you think...?" to guide their answers without pressure.

Prayer Focus

Prayer for Little Hearts and Wondering Minds Dear God, Help us see with big, kind hearts. When Jesus walked the earth, he was always gentle and full of love. Even though some people didn't understand him, we know he was truly innocent. Help us to trust that God sees everything and cares for us always, just like Jesus did for all of us. Oh God, Make our hands and hearts like Jesus', soft and brave. Help us to speak and act with kindness, even when others don't. Remind us that no matter what happens, God is always with us, keeping us safe and loving us more than we know. Wonderful God, Tell us your story with joy! When Jesus was wrongly judged, he still chose to love. Help us to wonder: Why did Jesus stay? Why did he forgive? Teach us to trust that God's love is the strongest thing in the world, stronger than fear, stronger than anger. With all our hearts, Thank you, God, for a world full of kindness, even when it's hard to see. Help us to be like Jesus today, full of wonder, love, and trust in You. Amen!
 --- P.S. You can repeat the last sentence together: "Help us to be like Jesus today, full of wonder, love, and trust in You."

>> 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.