

Peer Pressure: Peter & Pilate

Bible Verse

Pilate wanted to please the crowd. So he set Barabbas free. Then he ordered his soldiers to beat Jesus with a whip and nail him to a cross. (Mark 15:15)

Teacher Enrichment

This is the fifth lesson in the LENT series which explores the last days of Jesus' life. Understanding the events leading up to and including Jesus dying on the cross helps us grasp the magnitude of Jesus' sacrifice for us. As we prepare to celebrate Jesus' resurrection at Easter, each week will examine the significance of an event and the actions of the people involved.

The crowd's sentiment for Jesus had changed quickly. Only a few days earlier, Jesus had rode into Jerusalem to the tune of loud praises and palm branches being laid at His feet. Now He had been arrested and was facing death. Two men would confront the fury of the crowd and both would make a decision to cave to peer pressure. Peter, Jesus' disciple, would deny knowing Jesus out of fear of his own punishment. Pilate, Jesus' arrestor, would go against his better judgement and sentence Jesus to death at the direction of the crowd. Both of these men knew they were making the wrong choice. Hours earlier, Peter had even adamantly stated he would *never* deny Jesus. But we all know peer pressure can be a powerful force. Our own fear and desire to be liked can lead us into situations we just *knew* we would never end up in.

This lesson will teach children to turn to God for strength when faced with peer pressure. Children will explore peer pressure situations and formulate tools and scripture verses to help them stand up, follow their own path and make Christian decisions.

Before Class Begins

- ◆ Place the Sign In sheet and a pen where parents can see it upon arrival.
- ◆ Place the Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards and pens where students can see them upon arrival.
- ◆ Check that you have supplies for this lesson:
 - Arrival Activity, Peter coloring sheet – 1 per child
 - I Know Jesus craft sheet – 1 per child
- ◆ Place an arrival activity at each place on the table.

Welcome

SUPPLIES: Sign In sheet, Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards, Attendance chart, stickers, pens, Peter coloring sheet, crayons

- ◆ Greet each child individually as they arrive. Introduce yourself by name.
- ◆ Help children find or add their name on the attendance chart. Provide each child with a sticker to place in today's column on the attendance chart.
- ◆ Encourage children to complete a Joy or Concern card if they have a particular joy or concern they would like to express. Collect completed Joy & Concern cards.
- ◆ Encourage children to complete a Time or Talent offering card if they gave their time to God or used their talents to serve God or others during the previous week. Children should keep their own completed Time and Talent cards.
- ◆ If children bring monetary offering, they should keep it with them.
- ◆ Direct children to complete **Peter coloring sheet**.
- ◆ Encourage conversation among the children and with you! Get to know the children in your classroom by asking about their week including school, activities and families. Introduce new children to each other and encourage friendships.

Children's Worship

SUPPLIES: Sign In sheet, Joy & Concern cards, Time & Talent cards

- ◆ The Children's Worship Leader will direct your class to come to Ruth Hall at 9:20 or 11:05.
- ◆ Bring the Sign In sheet and completed Joy & Concern cards to Ruth Hall. Hand the Joy & Concern cards to the Children's Worship leader as you arrive.
- ◆ Have children bring their completed Time & Talent cards and any monetary offering.
- ◆ If additional children arrive while in Ruth Hall, have parents complete the Sign In sheet and remind parents that pickup is in Room 107.
- ◆ Encourage children to participate in Children's Worship and provide re-direction if necessary.
- ◆ Assist the Children's Worship leader as needed.
- ◆ At the conclusion of Children's Worship, have children line up and return to Room 107.

The Lesson

SUPPLIES: Bible, I Know Jesus craft sheets, crayons

- ◆ Gather all the children in a circle on the carpet. As you are able, sit on the floor with them or use a chair as part of the circle.

SAY: Today we learned about Peter. Peter was one of Jesus disciples and he thought he would never, ever say he wasn't Jesus' friend. But then Jesus was arrested and Peter got scared.

ASK: When people asked Peter if he knew Jesus, what did Peter say? (*No*) How many times did Peter say no? (*Three*) And what animal crowed after Peter said no the third time? (*Rooster*) What sound does a rooster make? (*Cock-a-doodle-do*)

SAY: We are going to read from the Bible and hear about Peter again. This time when we read, I want you all to Cock-a-doodle-do each time that Peter says he does not know Jesus. (*Have children practice crowing like a rooster*)

- ◆ Read Matthew 26:69-75.
- ◆ Have children crow after each denial and when the rooster crows.

Matthew 26:69-75, CEV

Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came up to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." But he denied it before them all, saying, "I do not know what you mean." **(Cock-a-doodle-do)** And when he went out to the entrance, another servant girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." And again he denied it with an oath: "I do not know the man." **(Cock-a-doodle-do)** After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you too are one of them, for your accent betrays you." Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, "I do not know the man." **(Cock-a-doodle-do)** And immediately the rooster crowed. **(Cock-a-doodle-do)** And Peter remembered the saying of Jesus, "Before the rooster crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

SAY: Peter was Jesus' good friend, but he was too scared to stand up and say he knew Jesus. We should never be afraid to say we know Jesus. We should never be afraid to follow Jesus and make good choices. Even when other people are telling us to do something wrong, we should say "I know Jesus. I follow Jesus!" Let's practice saying that, "I know Jesus! I follow Jesus!"

Have children practice the phrase a few times. Let them get excited and say it loud!

SAY: I'm going to read a few statements of other people telling us to do something wrong. We don't want to follow the crowd, we want to follow Jesus. We want everyone to know that we know Jesus. After each one, say it loud "I know Jesus. I follow Jesus!"

- ◆ Read each statement and then lead the children in saying "I know Jesus! I follow Jesus!"
 - I don't like Sally and you shouldn't either. Don't play with her.
 - We should steal the ball from the playground. No one will ever know.
 - You should lie to your mom. I do it all the time and it's no big deal.
 - Your backpack isn't very cool. If you don't get a backpack like everyone else's, I won't be friends with you anymore.
 - My family never goes to church. You should stay home too and play with me.
 - Bobby is so weird. I don't care if he's on our team, none of you should give him the ball.

- Only babies listen to their parents. You should come to the playground with us anyway.
- You should let me copy off your test. The teacher isn't looking.

SAY: When people tell us to do things we know are wrong, we should always follow Jesus. You may not actually yell this out loud (although you could!), but you can say it in your head and remind yourself that you know Jesus and you follow Him. It will help you make the right choice. One more time – “I know Jesus! I follow Jesus!”

SAY: As a reminder, we are going to make a craft that says “I know Jesus! I follow Jesus!” The craft also has a path leading to a cross. The cross represents Jesus. I want each of you to draw yourself on the path to show how you are following Jesus.

- ◆ Show children the sample craft.
- ◆ Give each child an I Know Jesus craft sheet.
- ◆ Direct children to draw themselves on the path and then color/decorate the rest of the craft sheet.

Closing

- ◆ Lead the children in a closing prayer. You may say your own prayer, ask one of the children to say a prayer or use the one below.

God,

Help us stand up to others when lead us away from Jesus. We know Jesus and we always want to follow Jesus!

Amen

- ◆ If time remains before parents arrive, encourage children to return to their Peter coloring sheet if they did not complete it. Also encourage conversation between children and with you. This is another opportunity to build relationships with the children in your classroom!

I Know Jesus!

