

LESSON PLAN

DARKEST DAY

Mark 14:57-68; 15:1; Luke 23:1-16; John 18:12-19:38

Lesson Memory Verse: John 19:30 “Jesus . . . said, ‘It is finished’: and He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”

Lesson Aim: Teach the children that Jesus finished the work needed to pay the penalty for our sins when He died on the cross.

Lesson Plan: Use the KEY – HE – SEE – WE – BE plan (explained in the Introductory Notes).

KEY (for Attention): What kind of weather do you expect when it gets very dark outside during the daytime? Yes, you expect a bad storm. Dark, dark clouds make people afraid because bad storms usually come when the clouds are black and hide the sun from us.

The darkest day this world has ever known was the day God sent darkness over the land from noon to three o'clock (Luke 23:44). There was a terrible storm on that day, but it was a different kind of storm. It was a storm that was followed by an earthquake. In our lesson today we want to talk about that storm. Let's see if you can guess what storm I'm talking about from the memory verse I'm going to read.

HE (for Authority): Read John 19:30. Yes, Jesus was on the cross and the storm was the pain that He suffered in His body and in His soul when He suffered and died on the cross for our sins. He took our sins in His own body and bore the punishment that we should have suffered. Think of it! God's Son suffered in the place where we should have suffered. Finally, He “gave up the ghost” which means He died. Just before He died, He said, “It is finished,” which meant that all His work for our salvation was now finished. The storm that Jesus was experiencing on the cross for our sins was finished. Now we can be saved from the punishment for our sins.

SEE (for Apperception) and WE (for Application): PLEASE do not read these comments until you have read the Scripture for this lesson. First let the Holy Spirit teach you directly from His Word. In our lesson we are going to learn about the storm that Jesus endured before He went to the cross and while He was on the cross.

I. Betrayal by Judas

The storm began in last week's lesson. What did Judas do to start this storm? Yes, he betrayed Jesus with a kiss and had Him arrested by some soldiers who took Him to the Jewish leaders that wanted to kill Him. Read John 18:1-11.

II. Trial before Annas

Then Jesus was taken to Annas, a high priest deposed by Rome, but still considered the high priest by the Jews (John 18:12-13, 19-24). Here Jesus was struck by one of the officers because He asked Annas a tough question (18:21).

III. Trial before Caiaphas

Now Jesus was sent to Caiaphas (Mark 14:57-68; 15:1). Here false witnesses lied about Him and what He said. Finally Jesus told them that He was the Christ, God's Son. This was true, but Caiaphas called it a lie and said Jesus had spoken blasphemy. Now they condemned Jesus to death and they spit on Him. Then they covered His face and hit Him and told Him to tell which one had hit Him. Then they hit Him some more. Jesus suffered much from the hands of these cruel men. He did this that He might pay for all of our sins.

IV. Denial by Peter

All the while Jesus was being tried by Annas and Caiaphas, Peter was denying that he even knew Jesus (John 18:15-18, 25-27). How many times did Peter deny Jesus? Yes, three times. Do you think Jesus knew what Peter was doing? Why do you think He knew? That's right! He had told Peter that he would deny Him three times before the rooster would crow that morning. Do you think Peter's denials hurt Jesus? Yes, I'm sure it hurt Him very much, just like our denials hurt Him today. It was a part of the storm that Jesus suffered that day.

LESSON PLAN

V. First Trial before Pilate

Next, Jesus was taken before Pilate (John 18:28-38; Luke 23:1-4). He was questioned by Pilate who said he found no fault in Jesus.

VI. Trial before Herod

But when Pilate heard Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to King Herod who ruled over Galilee (Luke 23:5-11). King Herod wanted to see Jesus and hoped He would perform a miracle for him. The chief priests and scribes said many things to Herod against Jesus, but Jesus kept quiet. Then Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus and put a gorgeous robe on Him and sent Him back to Pilate.

VII. Second Trial before Pilate

Pilate tried to release Jesus by offering to free Him or Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a wicked robber and a murderer (John 19:40; Mark 15:7), so Pilate thought they would free Jesus over Barabbas, but he was wrong. The Jewish leaders immediately chose Barabbas to be freed and demanded that Jesus be crucified (John 18:339-40). These people loved a robber and a murderer more than Jesus. How do you think Jesus felt when they did this and after all the good He had done for these people? But Jesus knew He had to die for the sins of the people that He loved.

Now Pilate had Jesus whipped (John 19:1). Then the soldiers mocked Jesus by putting a crown of thorns on His head and by placing a royal robe over His shoulders and by shouting, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Then they hit Jesus in the face (John 19:2-3; read Matt 27:27-31 for more description). What a terrible way to treat Jesus. This was the storm He faced before He went to the cross!

Pilate still tried to release Jesus and said he could find no fault in Him, but the Jews demanded that Jesus be crucified. So after much wavering, Pilate finally listened to the Jews and ordered Jesus to be crucified even though on three occasions he said he could find no fault in Him (John 19:4-16).

VIII. Crucifixion on Golgotha

Now they took a heavy cross and made Jesus carry it as far as He could to Golgotha (John 19:16-17). When He could carry it no farther, they made Simon carry it for Him (Luke 23:26). When they got to Golgotha, they crucified Jesus. What does it mean to crucify someone? (Let the children answer, if they can. Nails were driven through His wrists and through His feet. Then the cross was lifted up and dropped in a hole in the ground. When He hung on the cross, it was very difficult to breathe. Dying on a cross was the cruelest way to execute a person.)

He was crucified with two thieves. They took away his clothes and gambled for them. He was thirsty from the loss of so much blood. He died of a broken heart, because the people He had created and loved so much were doing all these horrible things to Him. This storm of hate struck Jesus with full force.

WE: How would we like to go through a storm like Jesus went through? Not one of us would want that to happen to us, yet Jesus endured it and died for us that we might not have to die and go to Hell. We ought to thank Jesus every day for doing this for us.

BE (for Action): Have the children bow their heads and ask them these questions. Do you believe that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer and die on the cross for your sins? If you believe this, raise your hand. Have you thanked Jesus for suffering and dying on the cross for your sins? If you have, raise their hand. Have you received Jesus as your Savior and know for certain that you will go to Heaven some day? If you know this and have no doubts about it, raise our hand. If you believe Jesus died for you and you want to receive Him as your Savior, raise your hand. (Be sure to deal with any child that is ready to receive Jesus as Savior.) Conclude the lesson with a prayer of thanksgiving to God for His great gift of salvation.