



SESSION **4**

Good Friday



MEETING AIM

To explore the events of Good Friday and consider what they mean for us today.



BIBLE PASSAGE

John 18-19



BACKGROUND

Jesus and his disciples have shared the last supper together and Judas has betrayed Jesus' whereabouts to the chief priests. At the end of the last session, we saw Jesus being arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Be ready for a range of responses to today's passage. Those with little or no church background may never have heard this story. To encounter a loving and forgiving Jesus and then hear how he was killed could be a shock! Even those who have grown up in a church community may never have explored this story in any depth. You might need to have a time when children can ask you questions or express how they feel as part of your session.

+ CIRCLE TIME



As you begin the session, invite the children to sit together in a circle and pass around a simple object. When a child has the object, they can share their response to the question. Sometimes it's helpful to have a sand timer so that you have time for each person to share if they want to. If a child doesn't want to say anything, they can just pass on the object. Ask the children what they would do if a friend ended up in trouble.

+ HOT-CROSS BUNS



You will need: hot-cross buns; paper plates; knives and butter (optional)

Share out the hot-cross buns. Ask if anyone knows why we eat them at this time of the year. What do they remind us of? How much of the story can they tell? Share thoughts and ideas as you eat the buns. (Be aware of food hygiene and allergy issues.)

+ BIBLE STORY



You will need: cards with the Bible passages below written on; a toy sword; a picture of a gate in a wall; a toy rooster; a Roman helmet; a whip or rope; a small cross; some kind of scented ointment; bandages; Bibles

Before the session, place the Bible passage cards with their props around your space so you can take the children on a journey and relate different parts of the story at each spot. Keep your Bible in hand, but you probably won't need to read every single verse. Show the prop and plot the main points of the story. Let the children ask questions if they want to.

Station 1: John 18:1-11 (toy sword)

Judas leads the soldiers to Jesus and they arrest him. Simon Peter cuts off a soldier's ear.

Station 2: John 18:12-18 (picture of a gate in a wall)

Jesus is taken to the high priest. Peter eventually gets let into the courtyard outside but, when questioned, denies knowing Jesus.

Station 3: John 18:19-27 (toy rooster)

Jesus is questioned by the high priest. Peter is asked two more times if he's one of Jesus' guys. He says no. The rooster crows, just as Jesus said it would.

Station 4: John 18:28-40 (Roman helmet)

The high priest turns Jesus over to the Roman official, Pilate. Pilate can't see what the problem is and wants to release Jesus. The people say no.

Station 5: John 19:1-16 (whip or rope)

Pilate has Jesus flogged to keep the people happy, but they want him dead. Pilate starts to get frightened by the crowd and disturbed by his conversation with Jesus. Eventually, he hands Jesus over to the Jews to be crucified.

Station 6: John 19:17-37 (cross)

Jesus is crucified and the soldiers gamble for his clothes. Jesus tells John to look after his mum and then he dies. The soldiers come to make sure he's dead because they want to take the body down from the cross before the Sabbath.

Station 7: John 19:38-42 (scented ointment and bandages)

Two of the disciples come and take Jesus' body to a tomb and lay him in it.

When you have finished, give out some Bibles and let the children go back to any of the stations, look at the objects and read that part of the story again.

+ CHATTING TOGETHER



Ask the children these questions, encouraging everyone to take turns to contribute:

- How does this story make you feel?
- What's unfair about it?
- How would you have felt if you were Peter after you had denied knowing Jesus?
- Did Pilate act in the right way? How could he have acted differently?
- How do you think Jesus' disciples felt at the end of this story?
- Why is Jesus dying on the cross important for us today?

+ CREATIVE RESPONSE



You will need: air-drying clay; cover-up and clean-up equipment

Ask the group to reflect on the different bits of the story they've just walked through, and the props you showed them at each point. Ask them to make one of the props out of clay. As you work, encourage them to talk about why they have chosen that object to model.

+ PRAYER



You will need: paper; pens or pencils; sticky tape, Blu-Tack or hammer and nails; cross

Ask the children to write a note to Jesus saying how they feel about him dying on the cross. You'll need some kind of cross to stick the notes to (a wooden one would be best).

If you can, it's very powerful to have someone actually nail each note to the cross. Obviously, you'll want a leader to do (or very closely supervise) the hammering. Otherwise, stick them to the cross with tape or tack.

As you do so, ask the children to talk to God about what they've heard and how they feel.

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