

In the Garden

Bible Verse: The LORD will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming. (Psalm 121:8)

Bible Story: Matthew 26:31-56

Bible Background

The story of Jesus' visit to the garden of Gethsemane to pray before his arrest and death is one that appears in all four Gospels. As is often the case, the story differs slightly in each account. Matthew and Mark say Jesus went to Gethsemane, and John says he went to a garden. Luke doesn't mention a garden or Gethsemane, but rather says that Jesus made his way to the Mount of Olives.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus displays his humanness. We're told that Jesus knows his time of death is drawing near. When Jesus goes to the garden to pray, we see him sad and anxious as he contemplates the events to come. Jesus also wants human companionship. He takes Peter, James, and John with him as he goes farther into the garden. Jesus begs his closest friends to stay awake with him. The disciples failed in the task that Jesus gave them and instead of praying, they fell asleep. In Matthew and Mark, this scene repeats three times, with Jesus admonishing the disciples for falling asleep each time. Luke's account has the disciples only falling asleep once, and Luke appears to try to give the disciples an out by saying that they fell asleep because they were overcome with grief.

Devotion

There is something comforting in knowing the Son of God has experienced human emotions such as sadness and anxiety. Jesus knows how it feels. He gets it! Just as we can be comforted by these thoughts, we can also learn from Jesus' example in the way he responded to these emotions. Jesus prayed. We also can pray and receive comfort when we are sad and anxious.

You may want to add a prayer journal to your daily routine. This can be as simple as a spiral notebook or a book purchased specifically as a journal. Use the journal to write how you are feeling as you pray. Write down what you are praying for and note any answers that become apparent. End your daily journaling with gratitude. Make a list of at least three things you are grateful for each day.

BASIC

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Bible Beginnings

Welcome

Supplies: Class Pack—Attendance Chart, p. 7; CD-ROM; CD player; tape; offering basket

- Display the Attendance Chart (Class Pack) and “Unit 1 Bible Verse Picture” (Class Pack—p. 7) at the children’s eye level.
- Play, “The B-I-B-L-E” (CD-ROM), as you welcome each child.
- Show the children where to place their offerings on the worship table.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus was feeling sad, so he went to a garden to pray.

- Point out the Bible Verse Picture, and say the Bible verse for the child.

Picture the Bible Story

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 30, crayons or markers

- Photocopy “Jesus Prays” for each child. Give each child a copy of the picture.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus was feeling sad, so he went to a garden to pray and talk to God.

- Encourage each child to decorate the picture with crayons or markers.

Bible Puzzle

Supplies: Bible Story Leaflet—Session 4, p. 4; crayons or markers

- Give each child a copy of “Find the Hidden Pictures” and encourage the children to find the hidden pictures.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus was feeling sad, so he went to a garden to pray.

Bible Play

Supplies: green olives and black olives, olive oil, pictures of olive branches, stones, real or artificial wildflowers

- Provide items that will illustrate the things Jesus would have seen or touched in the garden of Gethsemane.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus went to a garden to pray. The garden was an olive grove. That means there were trees that grew olives.

- Encourage the children to taste the olives. Pour a small amount of olive oil on each child’s finger.
- Let the children examine the wildflowers.

Into the Bible

Time for the Bible Story

SAY: Let's pretend we are Jesus' friends going to see Jesus.

- Have the children line up behind you. Say the following action rhyme as you march around the room. End the poem in your story area.

SING: Let's go marching, marching, marching, all around the town.
Let's go marching, marching, marching, up the hills and down.
Let's go marching, marching, marching, 'cause marching is such fun.
Let's go marching, marching, marching to Jesus, God's own Son.

- Have the children sit down.

Open the Bible

Supplies: Bible Basics Storybook—pp. 162-163

- Tell the children the story, "In the Garden."

Experience the Bible Story

Supplies: CEB Bible; Bible Story Leaflet—Session 4, pp. 2-3

TODAY'S BIBLE TOOL: Stories about Jesus are in the New Testament.

SAY: Our Bible is divided into two parts, the Old Testament and the New Testament. Stories about Jesus are in the New Testament.

- Show the children the beginning of the New Testament. Then show the children the Book of Matthew. Turn to the twenty-sixth chapter.

SAY: Our Bible story is about when Jesus went to a garden to pray. It's chapter twenty-six in the Book of Matthew. Listen and watch as I tell the story.

- Place the Leaflet in your Bible. Tell the children the story, "In the Garden" from the Bible Story Leaflet, and encourage them to do the motions as suggested.

ASK: How do you think Jesus felt when he went to the garden to pray? How do you think Jesus felt when he finished praying?

Say the Bible Verse

Supplies: Class Pack—p. 7, Leader Guide—p. 93

- Show the children the Bible Verse Picture. Repeat the verse for the children.
- Teach the children signs from American Sign Language (Leader Guide) to go along with the verse.
- Encourage the children to make the signs as they say the verse again.

Bible Connections

Make a Garden

Supplies: mural paper, white coffee filters, crayons or markers, glue, tape

- Place a long piece of mural paper on the table or on the floor.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus went to a garden to pray. He probably thought the garden was a peaceful place to be with God. Let's make a pretend garden. First, we will make flowers.

- Give each child a coffee filter to make a flower. Show the children how to flatten the filters out.
- Encourage each child to color the center of the coffee filter to be the center of the flower. Let each child make several flowers. Then have the children glue the flowers onto the mural paper.
- Let the children use crayons or markers to add grass, flower stems, and trees. Tape the mural on the floor or a wall in your story area. Have them sit around the mural.

SAY: Let's pretend we are in a beautiful garden. Everyone, sit quietly. Take a deep breath; now let it out slowly. Close your eyes and take another breath. Let's pray.

PRAY: Dear God, thank you for Jesus. Thank you for listening to us as we pray. Amen.

Sleep, Sleep, Wake

Supplies: none

- Have the children sit in a circle in an open area of the room for a game similar to "Duck, Duck, Goose."

SAY: Our Bible story is about what happened when Jesus went to a garden to pray. Jesus asked his friends to stay awake, but they went to sleep. Let's pretend we are friends of Jesus. We just can't stay awake. We are so sleepy. Let's go to sleep.

- Have the children pretend to sleep. Go around the circle, tapping each child's shoulder, saying, "Sleep." Then tap someone gently and say, "Wake up!" That child must jump up and walk quickly around the circle after you. Try to sit down in the empty space before the one who was awakened catches you.
- Play the game several times, changing who is the tapper.

Live the Bible

Play Dough Feelings

Supplies: play dough, paper, marker

- Draw a large happy-face circle on a paper for each child. Add the eyes, but do not draw a mouth. Give each child a copy of the face.

SAY: In our Bible story today, Jesus was feeling sad, so he went to a garden to pray. Let's make sad faces.

- Give each child a ball of play dough. Show the children how to pinch off a portion of the play dough and roll it into a “snake.” Encourage the children to use the “snakes” to make frowns on their faces.

ASK: What do you do when you feel sad? One thing you can do when you feel sad is talk to God.

- Encourage the children to use the “snakes” to make smiles on their faces.

ASK: What do you do when you feel happy? One thing you can do when you feel happy is talk to God.

- Continue talking about feelings (mad, surprised, worried) and making the matching mouths out of play dough as the children show interest.

Pot a Prayer

Supplies: plastic or paper table covering, small paper cups or small terra cotta pots, stickers, plastic spoons, potting soil, grass seeds or marigold seeds, pitcher of water, craft sticks, markers

- Cover the work area with paper or plastic. Give each child a cup. Let the children decorate the cups with stickers. Help the children spoon potting soil into the cups.
- Sprinkle grass seeds or marigold seeds on top of the soil. Help the children cover the seeds lightly with more soil. Let the children sprinkle water over the seeds.
- Give each child a craft stick. Help them write something they would like to pray for on the craft sticks. Encourage the children to place their craft sticks inside their pots.

SAY: Our flowers can remind us of our Bible story today. Jesus went to a garden to pray. He probably thought the garden was a peaceful place to be with God.

Express Praise

Praise and Pray

Supplies: CD-ROM, CD player

- Sing with the children the song, “Hear Us As We Pray,” from the CD-ROM.
- Encourage the children to name any prayer requests.

PRAY: Thank you, God, for all the wonderful things you have created. Amen.

Blessing

Supplies: none

- Have all the children face one side of the room.

SAY: If you journey this way, God is with you. *(Have the children turn to face the opposite side of the room.)* If you journey this way, God is with you.

- Call each child by name.

SAY: *(Child’s name)*, God is always with you.

- Continue until you have blessed each child.

Jesus Prays



**The LORD will protect you on your journeys—whether going or coming.
Psalm 121:8**

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Find the Hidden Pictures

Look at this picture of Jesus praying in the garden. Find these things hidden in the picture.



Talk About It

Use these questions to talk about today's Bible story with your child.

- How do you think Jesus felt when he prayed to God in the garden?
- Jesus went to a garden to pray. Where can you go to pray?

PRAY: Thank you, God, for Jesus. Thank you for listening to us when we pray. Amen.

In the Garden

Matthew
26:31-56

The LORD will protect you on your journeys—
whether going or coming.

Psalms 121:8

Bible
STORY
BASICS

biblestorybasics.com

In the Garden

Walk, walk, walk. (Walk in place.) After Jesus and his friends ate the Passover meal together, they walked to a place filled with olive trees.

Stop, stop, stop. (Stop walking.) Jesus and his friends stopped. "Tonight, all of you will run away from me," said Jesus. "You will pretend you don't know me."

No, no, no. (Shake your head no.) "No!" said Peter. "I will never run away from you!"

Crow, crow, crow. (Crow like a rooster.) "You will run away!" Jesus said to Peter. "You will say you do not know me three times—all before the rooster crows tonight!"

No, no, no. (Shake your head no.) "I won't," said Peter. "I will stay by your side!"

Walk, walk, walk. (Walk in place.) Jesus walked into a garden with his friends.

Sit, sit, sit. (Sit down.) "Stay here," said Jesus. "I'm going deeper into the garden to pray." Jesus' friends sat down to wait.

Come, come, come. (Motion to come here.) "Peter, James, and John," called Jesus, "come into the garden with me."

Watch, watch, watch. (Put your hands over your eyes.) "I'm feeling very sad," said Jesus. "Please stay awake and watch while I pray!"

Pray, pray, pray. (Fold your hands in prayer.) Jesus went even deeper into the garden. He fell to the ground and prayed, "God, I feel so sad. Please help me do what you want me to do."

Sleep, sleep, sleep. (Pretend to your rub eyes.) Jesus went back to Peter, James, and John. They were sleeping. "Wake up!" said Jesus. "Please keep watch as I pray!"

Pray, pray, pray. (Fold your hands in prayer.) Jesus left his friends and went to pray again. Again, Jesus asked God to help him do what God wanted him to do.

Sleep, sleep, sleep. (Pretend to rub your eyes.) Peter, James, and John fell asleep again. Jesus saw his friends were sleeping. He went back to pray again.

Sleep, sleep, sleep. (Pretend to rub your eyes.) Jesus went to his friends a third time. They were still sleeping!

Wake, wake, wake. (Yawn and stretch.) "Wake up!" said Jesus. "It's time to leave the garden. It's time to do what God wants me to do."

March, march, march. (March in place.) Suddenly, a crowd of people marched into the garden. Judas was leading the crowd. "Arrest the man I kiss," said Judas. Then Judas kissed Jesus on the cheek. The soldiers arrested Jesus and took him away.

