

Life of Christ

Jesus Eats and Prays

Matthew 26:17-46

Younger Verse

Keep watch and pray.

Matthew 26:41

Older Verse

Keep watch and pray, so that you will not give in to temptation.

Matthew 26:41

Lesson Goals

Learn that Jesus shared the last meal with His disciples
Understand what He meant by the bread and juice
Recognize that Jesus prayed for God's will to be done

Welcome Time

Can you remember what you ate for lunch yesterday? What about last week? Most of us can't remember! Jesus had a special supper with His friends. We still celebrate that supper as a way to remember what Jesus did for us on the cross. Let's see what they had for supper.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

After spending three years teaching His disciples and performing many miracles, Jesus knew that His time on earth was almost over. He would soon go to the cross. So He made His way toward Jerusalem.

Many other people were also traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover, a special Jewish holiday. Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him. He told them to go to a certain man's house and tell Him the Teacher is coming to eat the Passover meal.

After sunset, Jesus and His friends arrived. They sat on cushions as they ate and talked. Jesus told His friends that one of them would betray Him. That means that instead of being a friend, the person would be mean and hateful. Jesus knew that His friend, Judas, would turn Him in to be killed.

Jesus told them that the bread and juice they were eating would remind them of what He would do for them. The bread would be a picture of His body and the juice would be a reminder of His blood. He prayed and thanked God, and they ate.

After they ate supper, they went to a garden called Gethsemane (It was kind of like a park). Jesus asked His friends to sit down while He went to pray. Jesus took Peter, James, and John along with Him. He began to feel very sad. He told the three disciples to watch and pray with Him.

He went a little farther by Himself and prayed with His face to the ground. He shared with God the emotions He was feeling. He did not want to suffer and die. But then He prayed, "I want your will, not mine." **He obeyed God's will instead of doing what He wanted.**

When he returned to His friends, He found them asleep! He was sad that they could not stay awake and pray. He warned them to stay alert and pray so they would avoid temptation. He then asked them to pray while He went away for a second time.

Again, He prayed for God's will to be done. He returned to His disciples, and, you guessed it, they were asleep! He left them and went to pray for the third time. Again, He came back to find them sleeping.

This time, Jesus woke up His disciples and explained that people were coming to accuse and arrest Him. This is what He had been trying to tell them about, but they did not understand.

It would not be until much later, after Jesus had died and risen again, that His disciples would really understand all He had tried to teach them.

Today, we can understand why Jesus died on the cross. He did it for us. He wanted us to be forgiven of our sins. When we believe in Him, we can be friends of God. Then we can learn how to pray and talk to God, like Jesus did. He is our example.

Review Questions

1. **What holiday were the Jewish people celebrating? (Passover)**
2. **What city did Jesus and His disciples go to? (Jerusalem)**
3. **During the Passover meal, what did Jesus use to represent His body and blood? (Bread and juice)**
4. **What three disciples did Jesus take with Him to pray in the garden? (Peter, James and John)**
5. **Why was Jesus sad when He prayed? (He knew He was about to die on the cross.)**

Prayer Time

Thank God that Jesus was willing to go through the pain and suffering on the cross. Ask Him to give us strength to do His will and follow Him.

Life Application

Ask: What do you think Jesus meant by, "Watch and pray, so that you do not give in to temptation?"

Jesus knows how hard it is when we are tempted. We REALLY want something, even though we know it is wrong or bad for us. The only way we can resist temptation is by praying to God for help. We can also say Bible verses. Jesus did this when He was tempted by Satan.

Jesus knew that Peter would lie three times and say that he didn't know Jesus. If Peter had stayed awake and prayed, maybe he wouldn't have done this.

Ask: What are some things in our lives that we need to pray about? (Examples: school, friends, strength to do the right thing, more faith)

Planning for Next Lesson
The Cross
Matthew 26:47-67; 27:11-56

Preschool Lesson for Jesus Eats and Prays

All day Jesus and His friends traveled along dusty, sandy streets to get to the town of Jerusalem. Many people were traveling there to celebrate a special holiday called Passover.

After sunset, Jesus and His friends sat on cushions and ate supper. The meal they ate was different from anything we would eat for a holiday. They made special flat bread, bitter herbs, applesauce, and lamb meat.

Jesus told His friends that He loved them very much. He gave them bread to eat and thanked God for it. He told them that when they ate it, they would remember how much Jesus loved them. Then He gave them juice to drink. He thanked God and again told them that when they ate it, they would remember how much Jesus loved them.

After they ate supper, they went to a garden called Gethsemane (Geth-sem-a-nee). It was kind of like a park. Jesus asked His friends to sit down while He went to pray. Jesus took Peter, James, and John along with Him. He became very sad and asked Peter, James, and John to pray with Him.

He went a little farther and prayed with His face to the ground. He shared His feelings with God. He knew that it was almost time for people to hurt Him and arrest Him. Jesus told God that He would do whatever God wanted.

When he went back to His friends, they were asleep (You may want to make snoring sounds)! He asked them why they couldn't pray with Him. He then asked them to pray while He went away for a second time.

Again when He came back, His friends were asleep (Make snoring noises). He left them and went away to pray a third time.

Sure enough, when He came back, they were still asleep (Make snoring sounds)! Jesus-woke them up. He told them it was almost time for people to come and take Him away.

Soon, Jesus would die on the cross. It was sad, but He did it because He loves us! He wants us to be His friends. And the best part is, Jesus did not stay dead! He rose again three days later! Praise the Lord.

Preschoolers can sing this little song to the tune of "Mary had a little lamb."

Jesus is God's special Son,
Special Son, special Son.
Jesus is God's special Son.
He ate a special meal.
He served His friends bread and juice
bread and juice, bread and juice
He served His friends bread and juice
And shared some special news.

Hands-on Activities for Jesus Eats and Prays

Bring Resurrection Eggs. This is a good time to start emphasizing the Easter story. The first few eggs go over scenes from today's lesson: the donkey when Jesus rode into Jerusalem, the cup from the Last Supper, and the praying hands when Jesus prayed in the garden.

Act out the story. Choose 3 people to be Peter, James and John. Be sure that they snore loudly to show that they are asleep. You may have Jesus come back and say, "Wake Up!!" The kids will love acting it out.

Emphasize the importance of prayer. Make up a Scavenger Hunt. Give children clues like "Go to the place where we sing songs to God." When they get there, they will hunt for a note, maybe inside a plastic egg. Inside the egg is a prayer request. Stop and pray for that request and then lead them to another place in the church to find another clue.

Cut out garden/park pictures from magazines. Let children glue these pictures onto a piece of construction paper. Write or glue the Bible verse onto the paper. Take time to show them how to pray and pray with them.

Bring a bag and fill it with objects from the lesson: towel, grapes (possibly imitation ones), crackers or matzo, little cup of applesauce, etc. Let each child take one item out of the bag. Let them share what it has to do with the lesson today.

Bring pita bread and grape juice to share. Explain why this meal is so important for us to remember how much Jesus loved us. (Several years ago, one teacher even cooked lamb so that the kids could try it!!)