

A Good Shepherd Story of Jesus

Peter Denies Jesus

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2nd Edition
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INTRODUCTION TO LENT

The season of Lent is another "waiting time". The Good Shepherd program makes it easy for children to see the time pass as they prepare to experience Easter.

The stage is set for Lent by using a series of seven cards. The first six cards are purple with one side showing a blackened silhouette and the seventh card is white with one side showing a blackened silhouette. Each week the cards are removed from the Lent basket and laid out in a straight line to your left with the solid side facing upward. As each week's story is shared, the card is turned over. The first week the purple card with the silhouette symbolizing the story of "Waving Palms" is revealed. The second week that card and the one with the silhouette symbolizing the story of "Zacchaeus" are revealed. And so on. Each week we begin with card one, asking the children to mentally recall each part of the Lent story, before telling the current week's story.

During the story response time, the children are encouraged to take the Lent basket and the story basket from the shelf and see if they can tell the story each week. By using the Lent cards and the story figures the children look ahead with great anticipation to the joy and wonder of Easter.

Each lesson in the Lent series tells you what story, story figures and Lent cards are to be used. During the "circle of light" be sure to place the appropriate bookmark representing each week's story in the Good Shepherd classroom Bible. This allows the children, non-readers as well as readers, to become familiar with where the Lent stories are found in the Bible.

During this time called Lent we learn a lot about Jesus, the stories he told and the things he did. We learn about his relationships with his friends and the people who followed him. The message of Lent is heard as we gradually begin to understand that Jesus showed himself to be the Messiah.

MATERIALS USED DURING LENT--YEAR I

The medium Lent basket on the shelf contains:

- a set of 7 cards are used each week in the following order:
 - a purple card with palm branch silhouette
 - a purple card with Jesus and Zacchaeus silhouette
 - a purple card with basket silhouette
 - a purple card with chalice and paten silhouette
 - a purple card with cock (rooster) silhouette
 - a purple card with a bunch of grapes and vine silhouette
 - a white card with an empty tomb and cross silhouette

The story sets are used in the following order:

- Waving Palms basket
- Zacchaeus basket
- Feeding the 5000 basket
- The Last Supper basket
- Peter Denies Jesus basket
- Unfaithful Tenants parable box
- Crucifixion and Resurrection basket

Items needed from the worship shelf for Lent:

- chalice (for use with the Last Supper basket)*
- paten (for use with the Last Supper basket)*

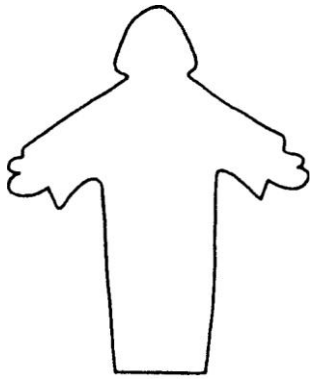
If communion is served during the "circle of light" the week The Last Supper story is presented you will need to purchase bread and grape juice.

* These items are not furnished for you. We recommend their use and hope you can acquire them locally.

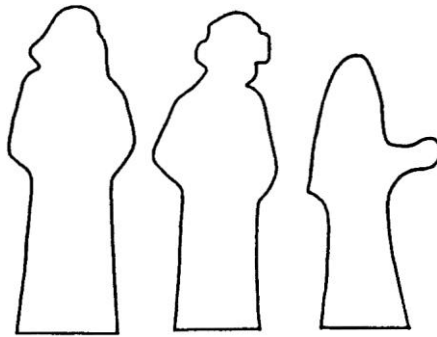
PETER DENIES JESUS MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - wooden Jesus figure
 - wooden Peter figure
 - wooden Judas figure
 - 10 wooden disciple figures
 - 3 wooden servant figures
 - 2 wooden Roman soldier figures

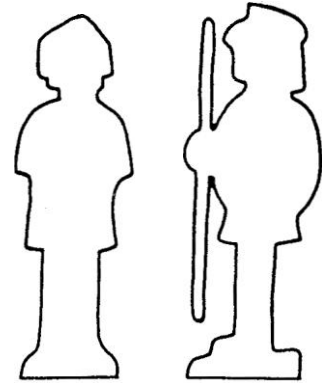
- from the worship shelf
 - Lent basket containing 7 cards



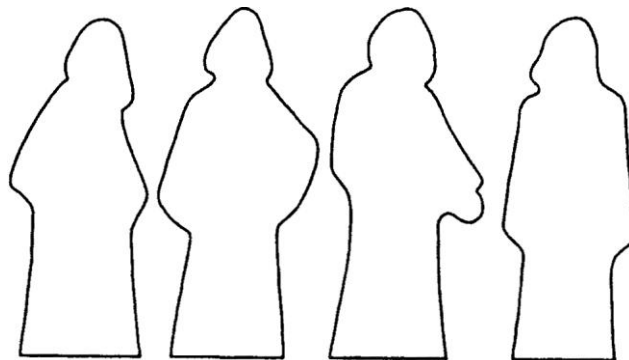
Jesus



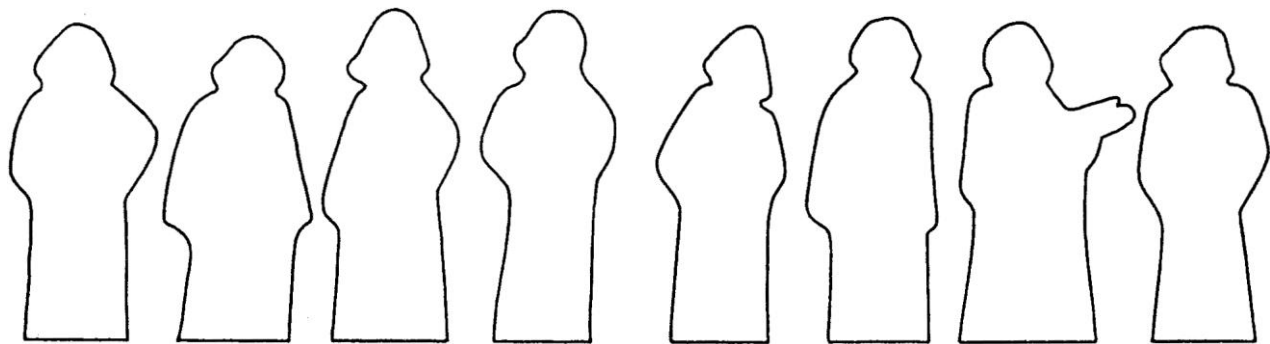
Servants



Roman Soldiers



(Peter)



Disciples

(Judas)

PETER DENIES JESUS MATTHEW 26:30-75

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the Lent basket from the worship shelf. Get the Peter Denies Jesus basket from its shelf. Bring them to the circle and sit down.

Allow 10-15 seconds of silence as you reverently touch the Lent cards or wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Point to the worship shelf.

Remove the six purple cards from the Lent basket and lay them out with the plain purple side showing in a straight line starting to your outer left.

Remove the white card from the Lent basket and lay it next to the purple card closest to you with the plain white side showing.

Turn the first purple card over so the silhouette of the palm branch shows. Touch it reverently.

Turn the second purple card over so the silhouette of Jesus and Zacchaeus shows. Touch it reverently.

Turn the third purple card over so the silhouette of the basket shows. Touch it reverently.

Turn the fourth purple card over so the silhouette of the chalice and paten shows. Touch it reverently.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get these materials so you will know where to find them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. Will you make silence with me so I can find all the words to this story?

The worship cloth is purple and we know we are waiting. This is the fifth week of Lent.

These are Lent cards.

They will help us understand the stories we hear during Lent and make us ready for the time we are waiting for. .. Easter.

The first week of Lent we learned about Jesus coming into the city of Jerusalem while the people waved palms.

The second week of Lent we learned how Jesus came for everyone--even Zacchaeus who had done bad things.

The third week of Lent we learned about Jesus teaching and feeding 5000 people.

The fourth week of Lent (last week) we shared the Last Supper with Jesus and his disciples.

Turn the fifth purple card over so the silhouette of the cock (rooster) shows. Touch it reverently.

Place Jesus and the disciples to the right of the storytelling area.

Move Peter and Jesus left to the center.

Hold up three fingers.

Shake your head firmly and move Peter back to the right with the rest of the disciples.

Fold your hands in prayer.

Place Judas and both soldiers near Jesus.

Move Judas and the rest of the disciples in different directions away from Jesus,

Move the Peter figure back to center.

Move Jesus and the two soldiers to the left with Peter following.

Place the three servants to the right of Jesus, as though in the courtyard.

Look sad as you speak these words.

Move one servant near Peter.

Move Peter just slightly away and shake your head nervously.

This fifth week of Lent we will hear how Jesus' special friend, Peter, said he didn't even know Jesus.

After Jesus and his disciples ate the passover together they went into the garden.

There Peter said to Jesus, "Even if everyone else leaves you, I will never leave you."

Jesus looked at Peter and said, "Peter, before the rooster crows in the morning, you will deny me three times."

Peter said, "Even if I must die with you, I will not betray you."

Jesus prayed in the garden and the disciples slept nearby.

Then Judas came to the garden and told the soldiers to take Jesus.

The disciples were so afraid they ran away.

But Peter came back.

He followed behind as the soldiers took Jesus to the high priest, Caiaphas.

Peter waited out in the courtyard to see what would happen.

The guards hurt Jesus. They hit him and slapped him.

Outside a servant came up to Peter and said, "You were also with Jesus."

But Peter said, "I don't know what you mean."

Bring the second servant near Peter.

Raise your voice and shake your head.

Place the third servant next to Peter.

Shake your head angrily and hit one palm with the fist of another. Speak very loudly. (Pause for 5 seconds.) Speak very softly and slowly as you tell the end of the story.

Touch the Peter figure and move him slowly away from the others. (Bring him inward toward you and then put him in the story basket).

Place the wooden figures into the story basket.

Pick up the first five Lent cards and place them in the Lent basket.

A little later another servant came by. She said to the others standing around, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."

But Peter said, "I do not know the man!"

Just a little later a third person came up to Peter and said, "I can tell by the way you talk that you are one of those who followed Jesus. "

Then Peter began to curse and swear and said, "I do not know the man!"

Then the rooster crowed.

And Peter remembered the words of Jesus and began to cry very sad l y .

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder why Judas told the soldiers where they could find Jesus?

I wonder what the disciples who ran away were thinking?

I wonder if Jesus heard the rooster crow, too?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away so you will know how to use them if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

This is the fifth week of Lent.

Pick up the remaining purple card and then pick up the white card and place them in the Lent basket.

After speaking, carry the story basket back to its shelf and the Lent basket back to the worship shelf. Return to the circle.

Be certain ALL children have had a chance to choose their work before dismissing the children.

We will wait and make ourselves ready for two more weeks, then it will be Easter.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

I wonder what will you make your work today? Let's go around the circle and choose what each of us will do.

PETER DENIES JESUS TEACHER HELPS

We all feel the pain of Peter when he realizes how he's let his Lord down. This was Peter who jumped out of the boat to walk across the water to meet Jesus (Matthew 14:28-35). This man was the same Peter who just hours earlier had cut off the ear of one of the slaves of the high priest who had come along during the arrest of Jesus (John 18: 10-11). In our story today we hear the words of Peter promising to follow Jesus, even to death if necessary, rather than deny him.

And so we cringe with Peter at the horrible thing he has done. Where is his courage, his determination, his faith? I really believe we suffer with Peter because we see so much of ourselves in him. We all want desperately to be true and faithful in all areas of our lives. And yet we often find that when an opportunity like this is presented, we do just what Peter did, back off or out!

While this is a painful story it was an important lesson for both Peter and Jesus at the time. Peter needed to learn that he had to be very careful about the promises he made. We can't always be what we want or do what we think we can. Peter needed to learn that he had to measure his words and be ready to follow through with the promises he made. Peter didn't do what he said he would. But he did learn that he was human and he had fears and doubts just like everyone else.

This was also a final break for Jesus with his disciples. There could not be two or three or twelve men who went to the cross. The plan of salvation depended on one man and even his most vocal supporter could not go with Jesus that final distance to the cross. And so Peter, the only one brave enough to come back, to tag along, breaks the bonds with Jesus by denying him to the servants and hangers-on in the courtyard.

The first wondering question is one that even adults ask. We will never know why Judas betrayed Jesus. There are many theories ranging from the fact that he was upset with Jesus

allowing the expensive oil to be poured on his feet instead of being sold for money for the poor, to Judas wanting to force Jesus' hand to take over the Roman government by putting Jesus in a spot where he had to reveal himself as the new king or die. We don't know the answer to this question, but it's okay to wonder about it and discuss possibilities of what may have been in Judas' mind. This will be a particularly important question for the older children.

As we wonder about what the disciples were thinking, we will come up with doubt, fear, and many questions. The disciples may have been afraid that they would be next to be arrested and therefore ran for their lives. They may have been disillusioned and confused about this man who said he was the Son of God who allowed simple soldiers to take him away like a common criminal. They probably felt guilty because they, too, had promised to stay with Jesus to the end (Matthew 26:35).

The final question is answered in Luke 22:60-61. In Luke's account Jesus turned and looked at Peter as he, too, heard the cock crow. How painful that look must have been to both of them! The children have not been told this version of the story. If you like, you may tell them about the account Luke left us. It's probably best to do that with only the older children since the younger ones will be more likely to have trouble reconciling different "versions" of truth.

This story happens before the crucifixion account and serves to set the stage of leaving Jesus alone to face his captors and eventually death. Allow the sadness of the story to be felt. This story should not be told with bright smiles. Children feel pain as deeply as do adults. To take away the pain of this story is to diminish the joy of the resurrection later. At no place does this story say that Jesus stopped loving his disciples ... even when there is sadness at what we've done .. we are still loved.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Try to remember a time when a friend left you alone to deal with a tough situation you'd both been part of. How did you feel? Then, think about a time when you let someone take the blame for something both of you did. How did you feel?

Who do you think felt worse about Peter's denial of Jesus, Peter or Jesus?

Sometimes it's very hard to stand up for what we believe. What are the reasons you go along with the crowd? What would make it easier to stand on what you really believe?