

I Can Believe Jesus Christ

An Easter Bible Study for Kids by

Every Generation
MINISTRIES



Every Generation Ministries helps churches in 15 countries minister to children. This lesson is an example of the life-changing resources our national ministries offer in Argentina, Belarus, Chile, DR Congo, Egypt, Hungary, India, Jordan, Lebanon, Mexico, Peru, Poland, Romania, Uganda and Ukraine.

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Lesson Aim

I can believe that Jesus willingly gave His life to save me.

Basic Idea

Jesus told Peter to put his sword away. He also told him that if He wanted, He could stop the arrest and the future crucifixion but that was not the plan. Jesus knew what He was about to do and was a willing participant.

Scripture

Matthew 26:47-56

Devotional

Every Generation Ministries believes that transformation in the life of your child begins with transformation in your life. Before you teach this lesson to your children, take a moment to reflect on this lesson aim in your own life. Read this devotional and ask yourself if you really believe that, "I can believe that Jesus willingly gave His life to save me."

"Stay here and watch with Me." (Matthew 26:38)

"Watch with Me." Jesus was saying, in effect, "Watch with no private point of view at all, but watch solely and entirely with Me." In the early stages of our Christian life, we do not watch with Jesus, we watch for Him. We do not watch with Him through the revealed truth of the Bible even in the circumstances of our own lives. Our Lord is trying to introduce us to identification with Himself through a particular "Gethsemane" experience of our own. But we refuse to go, saying, "No, Lord, I can't see the meaning of this, and besides, it's very painful."

And how can we possibly watch with Someone who is so incomprehensible? How are we going to understand Jesus sufficiently to watch with Him in His Gethsemane, when we don't even know why He is suffering? We don't know how to watch with Him— we are only used to the idea of Jesus watching with us.

The disciples loved Jesus Christ to the limit of their natural capacity, but they did not fully understand His purpose. In the Garden of Gethsemane they slept as a result of their own sorrow, and at the end of three years of the closest and most intimate relationship of their lives they "all...forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56).

"They were all filled with the Holy Spirit..." (Acts 2:4). "They" refers to the same people, but something wonderful has happened between these two events— our Lord's death, resurrection, and ascension— and the disciples have now been invaded and "filled with the Holy Spirit." Our Lord had said, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you..." (Acts 1:8). This meant that they learned to watch with Him the rest of their lives.

"Watching with Jesus" from *My Utmost for His Highest*, Oswald Chambers

Bible Background

In Jesus' arrest (Matthew 26:47-56), "The large crowd Judas brought to Gethsemane were a detachment of the 'police' deployed by the Sanhedrin. The unprepared disciples were outnumbered and offered little more than token resistance. But in any case, Jesus would allow no resistance; again He let events take their predicted course. It was not that He was powerless to prevent them, but that He chose not to do so, so that Scripture might be fulfilled. Hence His non-violent style, in contrast with Zealot leaders.

Thus, while the initiative appeared to be with Judas and his armed men, it was in fact Jesus who was in charge of the situation and the purpose of God which was being worked out.”

New Bible Commentary: 21st century edition/consulting editors, D.A. Carson... [et al.]—4th ed. p. cm.

Lesson Aim Note

The Lesson Aim is mentioned many times throughout the course of this lesson. To make it noticeable, it is underlined. It is critical to repeat and explain it numerous times. The goal is for the children to not only learn the Lesson Aim but to understand it well enough to be able to apply it to their daily lives.

Supplies Needed

This is a comprehensive list of all supplies you will need to complete this lesson.

- Surprise treats (candy, a game or fun craft)
- A pretend sword
- A soldier's armor (can be made out of paper)
- Paper
- Pencils, markers or colored pencils for writing and drawing

Relationship

Every Generation Ministries believes that a relationship that reflects the love of God is a crucial element of transformational ministry. The life of Christ, particularly His love, flows through our relationship with our children (Deuteronomy 6:5-6). Relational activities can be fun, sincere, humorous... The purpose is to learn something about each other and to grow in relationship.

Supplies Needed:

- Paper and pen or pencil for each person

Sit around the table with your family. Pass out the paper and pen and ask each person to write their name at the top of the paper (assign a helper to kids who don't write). Everyone passes the paper to the person on their left. Instruct them to write something they like/value about the person who's name is at the top. Keep passing the papers to the person on their left and continue until each person has written something. Go around twice or more if you have a smaller family. Once the paper gets back to the original owner have them read the list out loud.

Ask them to share how they felt when they read their list.

Experience

Every Generation Ministries believes that experience is a key element of learning. Transformation is not just a cognitive exercise. We learn by integrating God's Word into the everyday "experiences" of life (Deuteronomy 6:7). The purpose is to connect the *feelings* associated with the experiential activity to the *feeling* associated with the Bible story (see the connecting statement for clarity before you start.)

Supplies Needed:

- Surprise treats (candy, a game or fun craft)

Assign some difficult tasks for children to do. The work should be appropriate to their age, but hard enough that they need perseverance to complete the task. For example, push ups, burpees, planks or something that is a challenge for your particular child.

Do not tell them that there is a treat at the end for hard work. If they ask to stop working, let them. Congratulate them on the job they did. Stop everyone from working after a few minutes. Give them the treat as you discuss the connecting questions.

Connecting Questions:

1. How did you *feel* when you had to work hard?
2. Did you want to keep working? Why or why not?
3. Can you think of another time when you decided to do something that was very hard, something you really didn't want to do?
4. How did you feel when you found out there was a surprise reward at the end?

Connecting Statement:

Some things in life are hard to do. Sometimes we must choose to do the hard things. Let's look into the Bible to find out about someone who freely chose to do the hardest thing anyone has ever done.

Truth

Every Generation Ministries believes that the Word of God needs to be "impressed" on our children. It is the Bible Truth that we are teaching and is the core of the lesson (Deuteronomy 6:6-7).

Parent Note: It is important that children understand that the story you are about to teach is from God's Word, the Bible. We want them to understand that the stories are all true and they help us to understand who God is and how He wants us to live. We recommend having a Bible in hand.

Supplies Needed:

- Pretend sword
- Soldier's armor (can be made out of paper)

Parent Says:

Use your imagination with me. Pretend that we are in a garden (not a vegetable garden, but more like a park). It is very late at night.

What do you see? What do you hear?

(Wait for children to respond.)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26:47-56. In today's story, Jesus and His close followers, the disciples, were in a garden. It was late at night. Jesus, God the Son, had been praying, talking to God the Father. Jesus knew that something very important was about to happen and He was praying about it in the garden. Jesus had been telling the people that He was God's Son, but some of the religious leaders did not want to believe it was true. They did not want to believe God's plan that Jesus was going to die and rise again. They didn't like that people were following Jesus.

The religious leaders decided that they needed to figure out a plan to get rid of Jesus or make Him be quiet. They could see that people were starting to believe in Jesus and were following Jesus instead of them. So, they decided to arrest Jesus. One of Jesus' followers, Judas, went to them and offered to help them find and arrest Jesus. Jesus knew that Judas was going to betray him. Late that night, Judas led the angry people to the garden where Jesus was. The Bible says that there were soldiers and other men there to take Jesus away by force.

(Put on the armor.)

All these men came to arrest Jesus. They had swords and clubs.

(Show the children the sword.)

One of Jesus' followers, Peter (John 18:10) also had a sword with him. He took it out and swung it at the men. He thought he could protect Jesus. That didn't make sense because Jesus is God! He is all-powerful and could have stopped the whole thing if He had wanted to do so. Peter didn't understand that **Jesus was WILLING to go with the men. Jesus knew what was going to happen to Him and He was still willing to go.** The swinging sword didn't do any good. All that happened was that the ear of one of the servants was cut off in the confusion!

Immediately, Jesus reached out and healed the man's ear (Luke 22:51). It was a miracle! Jesus then told Peter, "Put your sword away." He reminded His followers that if He wanted to, He could call thousands of angels to fight the men. But Jesus knew that this arrest was all part of God's plan.

Then, Jesus turned to the crowd who had come to arrest Him. He asked them why they had come with the swords, when they could have come to find Him at any time when He had been teaching in the temple courts. Instead they had come at night with soldiers!

When Jesus was taken away, the Bible records a very sad event: "Then all the disciples deserted Jesus and fled." How sad that they ran away and left Jesus alone with the angry men. **Jesus was willing to die on the cross for them.** He loved them and wanted to follow God's plan, no matter how hard it would be.

Jesus went with the religious leaders and soldiers knowing that He was going to die on a cross for our sins. Jesus understood God's plan for Him to pay for our sins and change the world. He also knew that He would rise from the dead three days later. **Jesus chose to go through the horrible experience of dying on the cross and rising again because He loves us!** Surely, there is no harder choice to make and yet, Jesus did so. Today, it is important for EVERYONE to know **Jesus willingly died on the cross and rose again!**

Discussion

Every Generation Ministries makes a big deal out of "talk about them," believing that it is crucial to talk about the Bible Truth above and connect it to the real lives of children. Talk about how to connect God's Word to your child's real life (Deuteronomy 6:7).

1. Where was Jesus spending time with His disciples?
 2. What happened to Jesus and His followers in the garden?
 3. How do you think you would have reacted if you had been with Jesus that day when they arrested Him?
 4. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus was WILLING to die for you and for everyone in the world who believes in Him?
 5. How does this change your actions or beliefs?
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Response

Every Generation Ministries believes that responding to God from a transformed heart is the ultimate goal of our time here on earth. Children are encouraged to respond to God's Word in thought and action, immediately and on into the future. (Deuteronomy 6:8-9)

Supplies Needed:

- Paper
- Pencils, markers or colored pencils for writing and drawing

Respond Now:

Parent Says: In our discussion today, we talked about how it makes us feel to know that Jesus willingly died for our sins. (Note: Use your real examples) For some of us, it made us feel thankful. For others, it made us want to serve Him more. Maybe some of you have believed today for the first time that Jesus did this wonderful thing for you. Let's take a moment right now to pray in our hearts to tell God how we want to be different this week because we know how much He loves us.

Allow time for silent prayer and then close the time by praying aloud. Invite your children if they want to talk more about **believing Jesus willingly gave His life to save them.**

Keep Responding:

Parent Says: When we believe that Jesus willingly gave up His life for us and then rose again, it changes everything. As believers, we become new creations. We can live differently. We can trust in God's plans instead of ours. How do you want to live and what do you want to do this week as you think about Jesus dying for you?

Give your children a piece of paper and have them draw lines to divide it into four boxes. Ask them to label each one with: Home, School, Church, Community. Give them time to write or draw some of the things they want to do in each area this week in response to **Jesus willingly giving His life to save them.**
