



Themes:

- Jesus understands the hearts of all people
- Jesus knows that sinners are weak and afraid
- Sinners are unworthy of God's love
- Jesus loves sinners and is patient with them because He is a loving and faithful God

Scripture:

John 15:13-14a; Mark 14:27-72

Memory verse:

This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 1 John 4:10

Materials and Visuals:

Lesson:

White board or large piece of paper with the following portion of John 15:13 written on it: Jesus said, Greater _____ has no one than this, that he give up his life for his friends.

Props or pictures for telling the story

Background Information for the Teacher:

After the recorded conversation that Jesus had with His disciples during their last Passover meal together, one would think that the disciples would have been overwhelmed at the words of love and assurance that Jesus had expressed in this intimate setting. The words of Jesus, **Greater love has no one than this, that he give up his life for his friends** (John 15:13), revealed the extent of His love for them. The announcement by Jesus that He would be betrayed by Judas was indeed shocking to these friends, but more than that was Jesus' statement to the remaining disciples, **You will all fall away...**(Mark 14:27). Peter was emphatic that this would never happen-- not Peter! But Jesus knows the human heart is sinful, weak, and afraid, a heart prone to wander in its affections. Unlike us however, Jesus never wanders in His affections. Jesus will always display the greatness and worth of the Father. Jesus is faithful and patient. Jesus did not abandon His mission because of His friends' unfaithfulness.

Planning Ahead:

Before class, make arrangements with one of the children (one who is not too sensitive) to come up in the beginning and help you demonstrate the concept of impatience. Explain to them exactly what you will be saying to them and what their response should be. You will be pretending to be angry with them.

Lesson Presentation:

Call the child (or adult) up front with whom you have made the above mentioned arrangements. Display the white-board and explain to the children that before class today, you gave (child's name) some brand new, colorful markers and asked him/her to come up and fill in the missing word from last week's memory verse. Make the following types of comments in an impatient manner:

Well, (child's name) you can use the new markers I gave you and fill in the missing word now. Where are the markers? (Child responds that he/she doesn't know) Did you lose them? How could you have lost them already? I just gave them to you! They were brand new. They were a special gift for you. No

one had even used them yet and you lost them! You can't be trusted. I will not be your teacher or friend anymore.

Quickly assure the children that you and (child's name) were pretending the above scene. Ask the children how they would judge your actions. Were your actions kind and loving? Do people sometimes lose things? Were you quick to get angry? Would a teacher or parent or good friend really treat him/her in that manner? Yes, sometimes even our friends and parents are not patient with us.

Emphasize that because we are all weak sinners we sometimes make mistakes. Also, because we are weak sinners we are not always patient with others who make mistakes. However, if someone really loves you, they wouldn't say the following when you make a mistake: "*Because you made a mistake, I'm not going to be your parent (friend) anymore*". If someone really loves you they will want to be patient with you.

Remind the children that in last week's Bible story Jesus had something very important to tell His disciples. Display the white board or paper, give the child a marker and let them write in the missing word, *love*. Read John 15:13.

Jesus said, ***Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.***

Jesus wanted His disciples to know that they were His friends and that He loved them so much that He was going to die for them. But even after Jesus told them how much He loved them, His friends made some big mistakes and they said and did some very wrong things. Ask the children if they think that Jesus would respond how the teacher did in the beginning example when the child made a mistake. Where will we find the answer? Yes, in the Bible.

STORY: JESUS' ARREST AND BETRAYAL Mark 14: 27-72

Since the text is very long, it will be necessary to focus only on those points that bring out the stated themes, especially those associated with Jesus and His relationship with His disciples, even after they desert and deny Him. The goal is to have the children see that Jesus is not a "fair weather" Savior and Friend, but is a patient and faithful God, who even in our weakness, displays His greatness. Points to emphasize:

-Jesus is God. He knows how weak and afraid sinners are: even His friends that He loves and is going to die for.

-Peter made a promise to never leave Jesus or deny Him. He promised that he would even die for Jesus. Peter wanted to be a good friend to Jesus.

-Jesus and the disciples went to a garden at night so that Jesus could pray. Jesus was filled with much sadness (Luke 22:44). Jesus knew that what He

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was going to do for His friends would cause Him a lot of pain. Even though it would be hard, Jesus obeyed God.

-Jesus asked His friends to keep watch but, they got tired and fell asleep, not once, but twice! Were they being good friends? Do you think that Jesus got mad at them and said something like: *I'm not going to be friends with you anymore if you can't stay awake with me! You can't be trusted!* ? No, Jesus is patient with His friends.

-A large group of men came and arrested Jesus.

-As the men took Jesus away; what do you think His friends did? Did they follow and see what happened to Jesus? Did they try to help? Should they? Read verse 50 to tell what Jesus friends did:

Then everyone deserted Him and fled.

-Peter, who had been one of Jesus closest friends was recognized by someone as a friend Jesus. What would a close friend do? Would you stick up for your friend? Would you ask questions to find out what has happened to Jesus? Read verse 71:

Peter, ***"... swore to them, "I don't know this man that you're talking about."***

Emphasize that Jesus, friends all abandoned Him when things got hard. Jesus' closest friend even denied knowing Him, not once but three times. Was that right to do? Were they being a good friend to Jesus? No. They failed to be good friends to Jesus.

Ask: *How would Jesus respond? Would He still want to die for these weak and scared friends? Could Jesus have said- "Forget them. Why should I die to save them? Look how they treat Me! They're not My friends anymore! They don't deserve My love.?" Did Jesus go to the cross and die anyway? Yes, He did. Jesus is the most special person of all. He never gives up on His friends.*

Additional Activities:

-Act Out the Bible Story: Act out the story of Jesus and the disciples in the garden. For example, lead the children on a walk as if they were going to the garden. Next have them all close their eyes and assume a posture of praying and then falling asleep. Have the children open their eyes and get up. The teacher may now play the role of the soldier and choose a child to play the role of Jesus by "arresting" him/her. Say the following to the other children: *Then everyone deserted Jesus and fled.* The children should then run and hide somewhere in the room. To end the

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story, have the child playing Jesus go around the room and find his/her "faithless" friends. Review the main points of the story emphasizing that Jesus is a patient and faithful Savior.