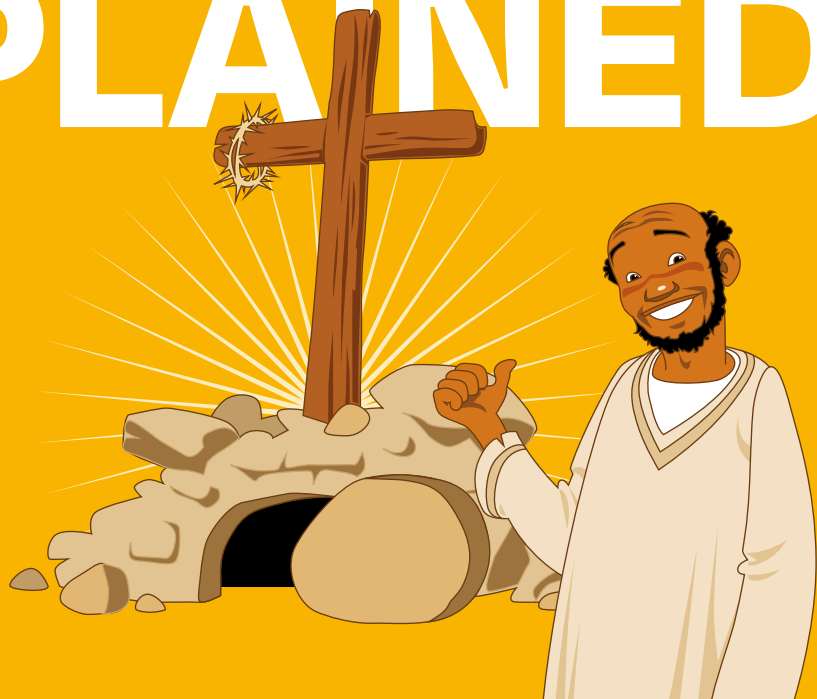


ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

EASTER EXPLAINED





LESSON 1

THE GARDEN: "I AM HE!"

JOHN 18:1-12a

faithin**kids**

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Easter Explained

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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Cover design and illustrations by Alex Webb-Peploe | Lesson illustrations by Magriet Brink | Writing Team: Amy Smith, Ed Drew, Cathy Dalton, Jo Chamberlin, Lizzie Clarke

'All for the glory of God alone' (1 Corinthians 10:31)

"I AM HE"

JOHN 18:1-12a



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Big Idea:

Jesus is the son of God with all power. He was willing to give his life so his friends might go free.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are amazed by Jesus' brave decision to save them.

Preparation



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

In John's gospel we have a close encounter with Jesus. John takes us to the garden, we see the action, we hear the words Jesus speaks as he explains what he is doing. Jesus is the "I AM", God the son is a man on a mission to give his life to save his friends. Our children can have a bigger view of who Jesus is and feel safe in his care.



LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

Surrounded (v1-3)

Jesus took his disciples to a garden he had visited many times before, a place Judas knew. These were not the actions of a man on the run, but a man on a mission. Before, Jesus had slipped away from those who planned to kill him (John 8:59), but this time he allowed himself to be surrounded by a detachment of soldiers – probably at least 100 – guided by Judas. As we read more of John's account, we get to work out who we believe Jesus is.

Confronted (v4-6)

A surprising confrontation took place – the soldiers seemed to have the power and authority, but Jesus asked the question; "Who is it you want?" We are faced with the astounding reality of who Jesus claimed to be; "I AM he". Jesus used "I AM", the personal name the eternal God revealed to Moses (Exodus 3:13-15), to show that he is God the son. The one through whom the universe was created was standing in the garden! When Jesus revealed his identity, the soldiers ended up where we all should be – flat on the floor at the feet of the Son of God.



Notes

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read *Where are we going* and *Look at the passage* to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.

Arrested (v7–11)

Simon Peter leapt to Jesus' defence, wielding his sword enthusiastically against the army – and taking out an ear! But Jesus needed no defence and was completely clear; he was determined to drink the cup of God's wrath (Isaiah 51:17-23), the anger God rightly feels at our sin, draining it completely. Jesus willingly took on sin's judgement for us, he is our only defence because he needed none. The Son of God was led away by the soldiers, knowing what was to come. Jesus chose to give his life to save his friends. Thanks be to Jesus for confronting us with the truth of who he is and surrounding us with his love.



This truth is for your heart too.



WIN MY HEART

How would you answer the question, 'Who am I?' Would you list the roles you play? The work you do? The things you've achieved? Perhaps you'd describe your physical appearance, or interests. All of these things are significant about you, but imagine a day when you feel insecure or worthless. Could your possessions offer the comfort you long for? Would your achievements make you feel valued? Could your relationships offer all the security you need... forever?

With God, we have a better answer about our identity. We can point to our creator and say, 'He made me, he loves me, I belong to him!' On my worst day, I have an unquestionable value. On my most successful day, I have a better place to rest my confidence; not in myself, but in the one who made me and loves me.

- Where are you tempted to look to feel a sense of value? Achievements? Possessions? Relationships?
- What would your creator say to you to remind you of your value?

Questions for your heart

- Jesus had all power, and yet chose to obey the father and give his life for others. How is this a challenge to us as his followers?
- What is the scene in your life when it would help you to remember that Jesus stands to defend you?



5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

Who do the children in your group believe Jesus is? How will you help your children understand the picture of a cup, so that they might understand Jesus' brave decision to drink it for us? How can you help them see that Jesus is a loving saviour worth trusting?

What do the children in your group need?

Pray for them:

- to grasp the truth
- to live it out
- to rely on the Spirit



ALL TOGETHER TIME



This has been written as an all age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



Helpers Needed

A volunteer to act as John who can learn the lines.



Props

Costume for John, volunteers to help act out the story, Bible, jug of juice, large cup.



What to Say

Have you ever been surrounded? People all around you? I'm going to give you some examples of being surrounded and I want everyone to do "thumbs up" for good and "thumbs down" for bad.

- Surrounded by family singing "Happy Birthday" as you blow out the candles on your cake.
- Surrounded by children laughing because you got something wrong.
- Surrounded by your football team mates as you huddle together at half time to regroup.
- Surrounded by kids in the playground, but no one to play with.

Today, we see Jesus surrounded - you have to work out if it's good or bad.

John the disciple - Jesus' best friend - tells the story. He was right there, he saw everything.

He'd watched Jesus arrive in Jerusalem, riding a donkey, crowds going crazy, treating him like a king - incredible scenes!

A few days later, Jesus shared a meal with John and the other disciples. Judas went off saying something about a job he had to do. Then Jesus took his disciples to a garden where they often went to pray.

John: "So we were in the garden, no Judas, Jesus praying and then we heard the sound of feet marching."

Ask the congregation to tap their feet to make the sound effects.

"The sound got louder, we saw flickering torches - and then... STOP!

Hoards of soldiers! With armour and swords, led right to us by Judas - we were surrounded!"

Surrounded! What do you think - good surrounded or bad surrounded? Totally terrifyingly bad surrounded - you guys were in big trouble!



What to Do

Ask children to show thumbs up / down

Have an individual prepared to act as John - in a basic costume

John arrives and acts the story
Congregation adds sound effects.

Ask them for thumbs up / thumbs down

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

John: "Surrounded by loads of soldiers with weapons - we were just ordinary people... but then Jesus, he's not ordinary!
So the soldiers were around us like this...
Jesus was in the middle - here, you be Jesus - I wrote down in my gospel what he said."

You could ask some of the congregation to jump up, to be soldiers
John hands story teller the Bible to read

Jesus: "Who is it you want"

Read from the gospel

John: They said - "Jesus of Nazareth" - and then... this bit was amazing!
Jesus said just 3 words...

Jesus: Reading "**I AM He**"

Soldiers fall flat on the floor

Pause for action. Look - the soldiers have fallen flat on the floor! Jesus only spoke! Wow, John, are those magic words?

John: "No, it's not about the words, it's the person saying them.
When Jesus said, "I AM", he was using the name God used to talk about himself, to show that he is God.
God the Son who was there at the beginning of time, making all things with all power, was standing in the garden. He spoke and the men fell flat."

Well what an exciting end to the story - the army was on the floor and everyone walked away free and happy!

Allow the soldiers to sit back down

John: "No, the soldiers got up, Jesus asked again "Who is it you want?" and then said, "I'm the one you want, take me and let these men go."
Peter tried to stop them - but Jesus said he was allowing the soldiers to arrest him because he was determined to protect his people and drink the cup that his Father had given him. Jesus was taken away and we went free.

John leaves scene

Jesus had all power, he could have taken the soldiers prisoner!
But Jesus chose to be arrested because he was determined to drink the cup.

Hold up the cup/glass you are using

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

What is this cup? It is a picture of God's anger at our sin. Every time we ignore God, get angry, lie, are selfish - whenever we think, say or do wrong things - God is angry. Our anger can be out of control and unloving. God's anger is always good. He is angry at sin, which is damaging, foolish and against him. God's anger at our wrongs fills the cup. We have all done our bit to fill up the cup - so we all deserve to drink it. Jesus says, "I have always obeyed God perfectly, nothing went into the cup because of me. I don't deserve to drink it. But because I love my friends I will drink the cup, every last drop, so that they don't have to."

Pour a small amount of juice from a jug into a cup every time you say an example of sin.

Drink the cup.

Jesus had done nothing wrong but he let the soldiers arrest him so that his friends could go free. Jesus went to the cross to drink the cup of God's anger at **our** sin, taking the punishment we deserve.

John saw and wrote down what happened so that we might see Jesus too and believe that he is who he said he was and that he did all he said he would do, giving his followers new life - it's going to be great to learn more from John together.

Pray.

Thank you





7s and under




GET GOING

Powerful words

Tell the children that they are soldiers ready to listen to commands - when they hear you give commands they should listen and do what you have asked.

- "To the left" - go to the left side of the room
- "To the right" - go to the right side of the room
- "Stand to attention" - stop still and salute
- "I am He!" - drop to the floor

 **Link:** Today we saw a group of soldiers surround Jesus. They were used to obeying the instructions of their commander, but when Jesus spoke and said who he was, the soldiers fell flat on the floor - Jesus' words had even more power than their commander's!



TEACHING TIME

Jesus, no ordinary man (v1-6)

Ask the children to stand in a circle - imagine that they are soldiers, strong and scary with weapons! Get them to practise their marching.

In the middle of the circle are Jesus and some of his disciples, including John, who wrote down what happened in the Bible for us to read. *Place the Bible down in the middle of the circle.*

The soldiers had come to arrest Jesus - *do some more marching.*

Jesus asked them - "Who is it you want?" The soldiers said they were looking for Jesus of Nazareth - because Nazareth was the town where Jesus grew up. Jesus said three words - John wrote them down - read them. When Jesus said these words, the soldiers fell down flat - when I read them, can you do that? *Repeat with different people saying the words when you hold up the visual.*

Jesus' words had amazing power because Jesus isn't just an ordinary man. When Jesus says "I AM" he is using the name God calls himself - Jesus is saying that he is God. When he spoke, the strong powerful soldiers were full of fear and fell over.

Ask the children what they would do if they could make something happen just with their words?



Notes

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

You will need: A large speech bubble with the words "I AM" in it, a jug of juice, a cup and a picture of the scene printed out (see pages 16-17) / play figures to recreate it.

Jesus knew he had to drink the cup (v11)



We could all think of amazing things we'd like to do if we had power like Jesus. Jesus could have done anything, but there was something he said he had to do - drink the father's cup.

Hold up the cup. Jesus is using a picture of a cup to help us understand what he is going to do. He is helping us to understand that what we do and say matters to God. This juice is like God's anger at the wrong things we say and do. Every time we ignore God (*add juice to cup*), get angry (*add juice*), lie (*add juice*), are selfish (*add juice*) - some juice goes in the cup. This isn't bad anger, this is good anger because God is perfect and he has to punish wrong things.

Can you think of some wrong things we do that might make God angry? As *children make suggestions, add more juice.*

Now the cup is full of God's right anger at wrong things. If someone drinks it, they will be punished. Everyone deserves to drink the cup, nobody wants to drink it. We can't pour the cup away - that would just make a puddle of anger on the floor - somebody has to drink it to get rid of it properly.

Jesus says, "I have always obeyed God perfectly, I have not done anything wrong and made God angry. And I love my friends. I will drink the cup, every drop, so that my friends don't have to."

Wow! God's anger and the punishment we deserve is taken away by Jesus so we don't have to take it.

Jesus arrested, his friends go free (v12)

Look at the picture / create the scene with play figures - who is being taken away by the soldiers?

Jesus, who could use his words to knock the soldiers down, is arrested and taken away.

What about his friends - are they arrested? NO, they go free.

Jesus gives himself up so that his friends might go free. Jesus drinks the cup so we don't have to.


What could we say to Jesus together this morning?



BRAIN BREAK

Stuck in the mud

Play a game of stuck in the mud. Discuss the rules of how you can free people and assign those who are tagging. When the leader shouts "I am he", those who are stuck need to lie on the floor and they are out of the game. Continue playing until most kids are out, then change the taggers and play again.

 **Link:** In our game, the leader had the power to take you out of the game, but in our story Jesus showed real power because the soldiers fell straight to the ground when Jesus showed who he was. Jesus' words have more power than your leader.

A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.




HEART & HANDS

Craft time - Make your own sword

Prepare in advance: Print and cut out the swords ready for the kids to decorate

Use the foil and glue to cover the blade of the sword.

 **Link:** As the kids decorate their swords with the foil, remind them that Jesus is the one who had real power over the soldiers when he showed them who he was.

Think time

Big question: How was Jesus brave in the story?

A follow up question: What did Jesus do that was surprising in the story?

Pray

Thank you Jesus that you have amazing power and that you chose to use your power to love and save your friends, thank you for giving your life to set us free. Amen.



Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.

You will need: Print out of page 14 onto card (2 swords per sheet), scissors, foil, glue





8s and over



Notes

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

Go! GET GOING

Break free

Ask the group to link hands and form a circle, choose 1 or 2 people to stand in the middle of the circle (surrounded). Give them a time limit to see if they can break free - they can use different methods to break free - perhaps running, dodging, crawling - or they could even try asking / announcing who they are to see if they can break free from being surrounded. *Advise the children that this is a game and not to charge at one another / injure each other.*

Link: This game helped us imagine being surrounded, today we see that Jesus was surrounded by a powerful army and had the power to flatten them with his words and walk free. Jesus chose to go with them, so that his friends might go free.

TEACHING TIME

What John saw and heard (v1-12)

Have the Bible Passage open and work together to read the passage and fill in the table - examples included to help stay on track.

Or let them work in 2's / 3's and feedback after each section depending on reading ability etc.

Verses to read	What does John see?	What does John hear Jesus say?	What does it mean?
v1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Garden • Soldiers • Torches • Weapons • Judas • Soldiers falling to the ground 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Who do you want" • "I am he" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They are in trouble • Jesus is no ordinary man • Jesus has power

continued →



Verses to read	What does John see?	What does John hear Jesus say?	What does it mean?
v7-9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jesus · Soldiers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "Let them go" · "I have not lost one of those you gave me" 	Jesus protects his friends
v10-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jesus · Peter · Sword · Ears · Arrested 	"I will drink the cup the Father has given me"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Jesus knows what will happen and chooses to give his life to save his friends. · He knows he must take sin's penalty for us.

Jesus determined to drink the cup (v11)

The Bible is full of picture language to help us understand something big about what God is doing.

The idea of drinking a cup is a picture of someone taking on themselves God's judgement for sin, Isaiah 51:17. When Jesus says he is determined to drink the cup the father has given him, he's saying he knows the problem and the solution.

Pour and drink from the cup as you explain.

The situation - We all do things wrong and don't treat God and other people the way they should be treated. The Bible calls this sin. Sin makes a holy God rightly angry and needs to be punished. God's anger at sin is like deadly poison in the cup.

Our problem - We have all done wrong - every single one of us - so we all deserve to drink the cup of anger. But drinking the cup would kill us.

Jesus' solution - I have lived delighting and obeying God perfectly. I have not sinned and made God angry. I love my friends. I will drink the cup so that my friends don't have to.

Can you see a different solution to the problem? *If they say it could be poured away, point out that it would still be there, just in a different place.*

What do you think of Jesus' solution?

What is particularly amazing about these events in John's gospel is that all of this happens before Jesus goes to the cross, it was no accident - the man who could flatten soldiers with just his words set out to the cross, determined to drink the cup of judgement for sin that his friends might go free.

You could look at Isaiah 51:17 with your group, and ask 'What do we learn about the cup?'




BRAIN BREAK

“Who am I?”

Ask the children to write on a piece of paper / sticky note a statement about themselves - something they are good at, or a fact, e.g. I am 10 years old, I am good at swimming etc.

Collect the answers, add your own and muddle them up - read a selection and ask them to guess who this is about and how you could know it was true.

 **Link:** You had to work out who you thought had the skills to do what the piece of paper said, you could know for sure they could swim if you saw them do it. Today Jesus claimed to be God who could do *anything* but chose not to do anything when he was arrested.



HEART & HANDS

Did you spot it?

- How can you tell that Jesus is no ordinary man?
- What is Jesus determined to do?

Work it out

- Who is Jesus determined to help?
- Who is Jesus determined to obey?
- What does that tell you about Jesus?

Live it out

- How does it make you feel that Jesus chose to take God's anger that we deserve because of our sin?
- What difference could that make when you are finding it hard to live as a christian?

Extra stretch

- If Jesus had all power - why would he allow himself to be led away and arrested?
- Why did Jesus have to be the one to drink the cup - couldn't someone else have done it?
- Why can't God just ignore sin / forget about it - that's how we tend to deal with people who upset us?

PRAY

Thinking about who Jesus is and what he chose to do to take sins punishment for us his friends - what could we say to him, what could we ask him to help us remember.



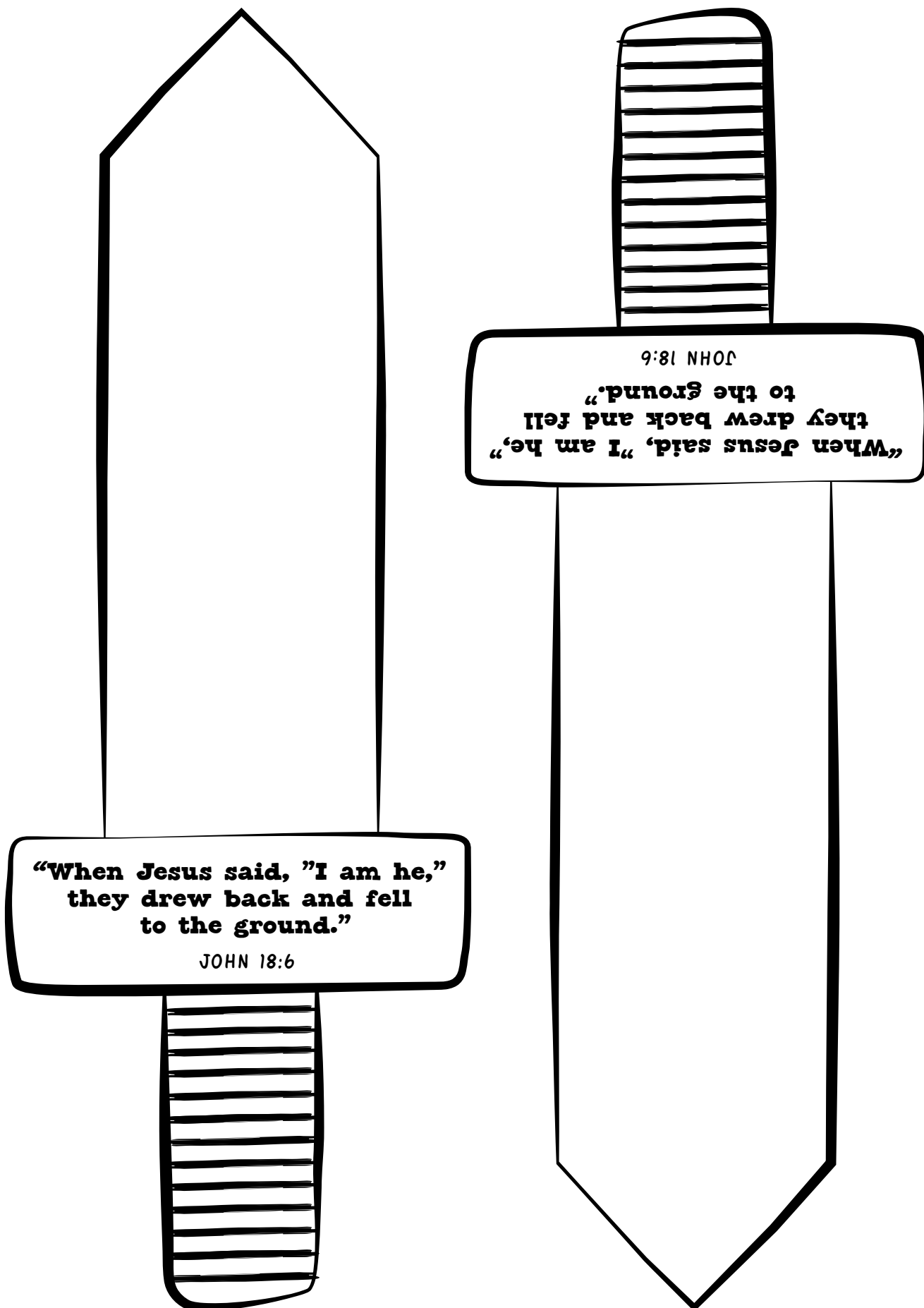
A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.

You will need:

Paper and pens

A chance to reflect and chat about how the truth, through the Spirit's work, changes our thoughts (head), feelings (heart) and actions (hands).

*Use the **Chat Time** sheet (see page 15) - you could enlarge it and work on it together. Hand out sticky notes so children can still respond personally.*

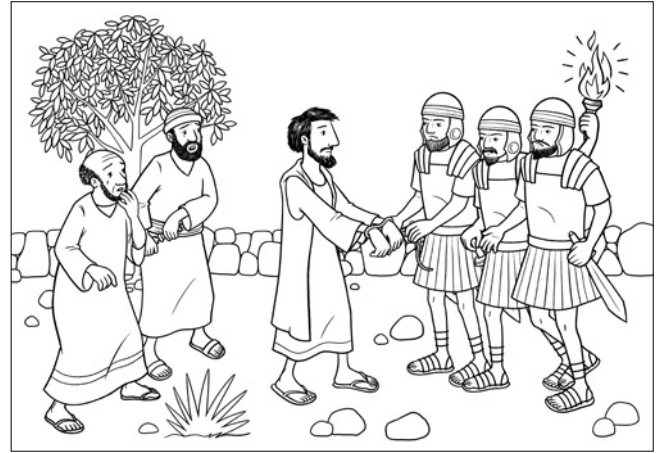




DID YOU SPOT IT?



How can you tell that Jesus is no ordinary man?



What is Jesus determined to do?



WORK IT OUT



Who is Jesus determined to help?



Who is Jesus determined to obey?

What does that tell you about Jesus?

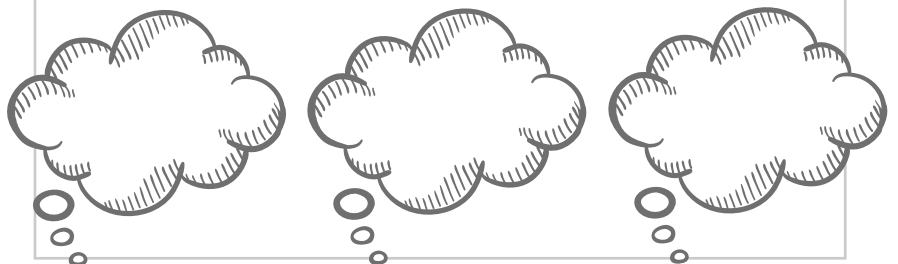


LIVE IT OUT

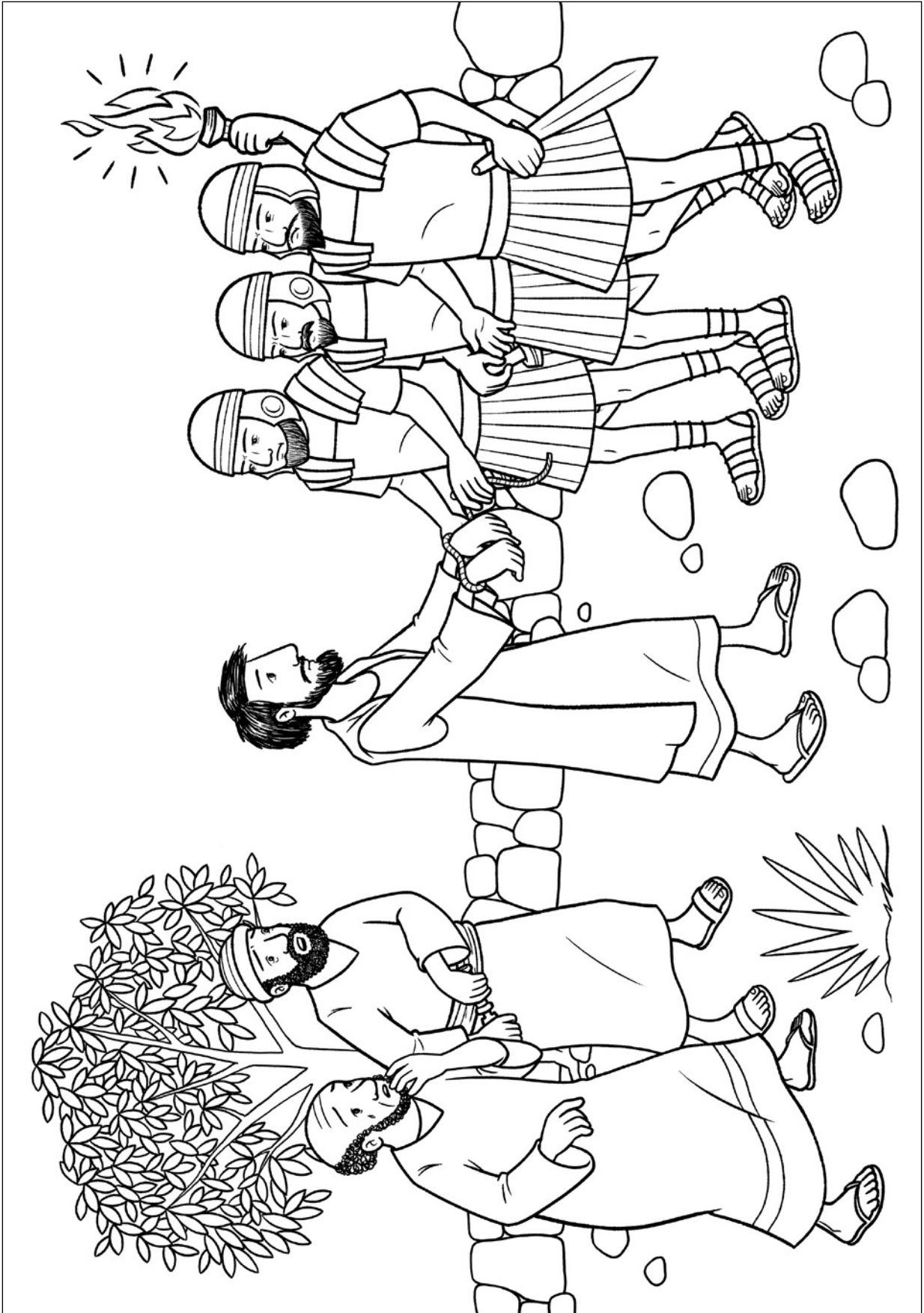
How does it make you feel that Jesus chose to take God's anger that we deserve because of our sin?



What difference could that make when you are finding it hard to live as a christian?









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