

WEEK 1

LESSON GUIDE

RISE & SHINE

BIG IDEA

I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.

BIBLE

Peter Denies Jesus:
Matthew 26:31-35, 57-75; Philippians 2:5-11

LARGE GROUP TIME

Rise and shine! It's a glorious day here on the farm!

As we bask in the warm sunrise and enjoy all of the beauty and fun that life on the farm provides, we are going to be celebrating new life and freedom thanks to Jesus and what he did on the cross.

Let's strap on our boots and get to work!

[Start getting ready for farm work by changing into farm clothes. For example, take off your street shoes and put on some plastic boots or gardening shoes, or bring a flannel to put on over your clothes, or hat with a large brim.]

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Decorate the Farm

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Hang large pieces of butcher paper across several walls. Encourage children to use art supplies to create scenes from the farm on butcher paper. You can either assign a different scene to a group of kids, or you can have kids roam around freely like a gallery walk and have them add a little to every scene. Some farm scenes to consider: animal fields and stables, fruit and vegetable gardens, trees and flowers, and farm tools and vehicles. You can leave the completed scenes up for the entire month of Rise & Shine.
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Split into preteens groups and have each group come up with a unique farm idea for "Farm Tank". Groups will have 10 minutes to create their idea and pitch and 3-5 minutes to present to the investors (leaders). Check out [this Pizza Farm video](#) and [this Shark Tank pitch](#) to give kids an idea of how to put their presentations together.
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Provide ready-made stickers or cut out images from magazines or online that kids can adhere to the scenes of their choice.
- Let's close our eyes and picture our special farm:
 - The grass is soft and the sky is blue.
 - The corn is growing tall and there are blueberries on every bush just waiting to be picked.
 - The chickens are squawking as they lay their eggs.

- The carrots are growing so deep in the ground that all you can see are their leafy green tops.
- There are wildflowers all along the fence in the prettiest of colors.
- You can open your eyes now.
- Now, instead of imagining this great farm, we're going to make it!

ACTIVITY | Evening Watering

- Imagine all of the hard work that you would do living on a farm. Each day you use your hands and energy to tend to animals and crops. Every night you go to bed content, knowing you got so much important work done and cared for your farm well.
- But before you can call it a night, another important evening chore on the farm is to water the garden. Let's have some fun with this chore!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Kids will play a relay race to fill up a planter. Teams will fill up their watering cans from a communal water source then run across to the opposite side of the room to add the water to their team's planter, and then race back to pass the empty watering can to their teammates. This game is best played outdoors but can be played indoors using a tarp. If you would rather not use water, you could use dry beans and [scoops](#) and pretend they need to fill up the pot with "dirt" (beans).
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Set up a row of pots filled with dirt and have kids take turns giving each pot a little bit of water. You can stick in some artificial plants or leaves in the dirt if you'd like.
- Even when the sun is setting and darkness blankets the earth, good things are growing. In today's Bible story, we'll learn about a dark time in the Easter story and what we can learn from it.

QUESTION | Are you afraid of the dark?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Turn out the lights in the room and place a lantern in one corner of the room. Ask the children if they are afraid of the dark or not. If they are, they can get up and gather around the lantern. If they are not, they can find another corner of the room that is still dark.
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Some preteens might still be afraid of the dark for various reasons and might be reluctant to admit it. So instead, give a poll that asks kids to choose between dark and light, with questions such as: Which is easier to play tag? Which makes campfires more enjoyable? Which is better for stargazing? Which is better to share a meal with family or friends?
- We have talked a lot about what happens on the farm in the evening when night begins to fall. Sometimes at night when it's dark, it can feel pretty scary.
- **How many of you are afraid of the dark?** It's okay to admit it — Lots of grown-ups are uncomfortable in the dark, too.
- **What are some things you do to help you feel less afraid in the dark?** I pray, or talk to my friends and family, and am reminded that God is always with me taking great care of me.
- Let's read the Bible and talk about a time when the day was very dark for Jesus and his friends.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

LESSON | Matthew 26:31-35; 57-75 (Peter Denies Jesus)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Matthew 26:31-35; 57-75 then invite volunteers to help you tell the story by rehearsing and acting out this Bible story using props and costumes. For the rooster crow, the narrator can make the noise or [play audio](#) of a rooster crowing. Consider purchasing or making a [sunrise backdrop](#) to use with the Bible story every week. Characters needed: Narrator, Peter, Person 1, Person 2 (feel free to combine parts for small groups).
- When I think of sunrise on a farm, the first image that comes to mind is a rooster crowing, signaling the start of the day.
- We'll find that a rooster crows in today's Bible story, too, but it meant something completely different.
- Let's see what happens.
 - **Narrator:** Jesus sat with the disciples and said, "We've been traveling for a few years together and we are like brothers now. We have served God together, watched miracles happen together, and found our way through difficult things . . . it's been really incredible. But tonight we are going to face

another challenge. Before the sun goes down, Peter, you are going to say you don't know me three different times."

- **Peter:** I was so shocked to hear him say this. I was so sure that I would never betray Jesus like this. I love him with all my heart! I would give my own life for him!
- **Narrator:** Even though Peter was confident that this would never happen, Jesus told him that before the rooster crows, Peter will have said that he didn't know Jesus three times.
- **Peter:** I said that there's no way I'd let it happen, and all the other disciples agreed. But then, that very night, Jesus was arrested. He was taken to Caiaphas, who was in charge of all the religious leaders. I followed closely to see what was going to happen, making sure not to get noticed.
- **Narrator:** Even though the people had arrested Jesus, they couldn't pin a crime on him . . . because he had done nothing wrong. Some people came forward and made up some stuff, but even then, Jesus said nothing.
- **Peter:** So the high priest asked Jesus a direct question — he asked him if Jesus really is the Messiah, the Son of God. I was so nervous about what Jesus would say. If he said no, they'd probably let him go, but that wasn't the truth. If he said yes, for sure all the religious leaders would be outraged. But Jesus basically said, "You said it." And he told them that everyone will see the truth soon enough.
- **Narrator:** At this, the high priest and all the religious leaders were very angry. They declared that Jesus was a liar and was disrespecting the name of God. They spit at him, ridiculed him, and hurt him. Throughout all of this, Peter sat nearby silently. Suddenly, someone came up to Peter.
- **Person 1:** Hey! Aren't you friends with Jesus?
- **Peter:** No way. I don't know what you're talking about!"
- **Narrator:** Peter rushed away from where he was, and soon was met by someone else. They pointed at him to others nearby.
- **Person 2:** This guy was with Jesus of Nazareth! He knows him well!
- **Peter:** No, I really don't know what you are talking about!
- **Narrator:** Several other people came over to where Peter was and began questioning him about Jesus. *[You can have all the characters and the audience point at Peter accusingly.]*
- **Peter:** I promise! I absolutely do not know that man!
- **Narrator:** *(rooster crows)* And at that very moment, when the rooster crowed Peter remembered what Jesus said to him. Ashamed, Peter went to be alone and cried sorrowfully about what he had done.
- Just like Jesus said, Peter pretended he did not know him and lied about his relationship with Jesus. Peter's day had just become very dark . . . although it was nothing compared to what would happen to Jesus.
- Would Peter have suffered the same fate as Jesus if he had told the truth? Maybe. All we know is that Peter was filled with regret that he didn't stick by or stick up for Jesus when his friend and Savior was going through the darkest day of all.

BIG IDEA | I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using a garden bed or an inflatable pool filled with dirt, have kids dig and find the words from the Big Idea. Let kids know there are ten separate words they are searching for. Bring towels and wipes for kids to wash their hands afterwards.*
- On the farm, you know what we always have plenty of . . . dirt! The soil on our farm is important in so many ways, but today digging in the dirt is going to reveal something extra special . . . our BIG IDEA!
- **I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.**
- Even when our day may look scary and dark, like it did for Peter, we can trust that the best thing to do is stick with Jesus.

RESPONSE | Farmer's Almanac

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Kids will reflect by journaling this Easter season using the Farmer's Almanac printable.*
- A Farmer's Almanac is a helpful guide for farmers. It predicts what the weather might be like for that year, when the moon will be full, tips for gardening and fishing along with some fun facts and jokes. An almanac is like a journal where you can keep track of important information about one topic.

- During *Rise & Shine*, we are going to make our own farmer's almanacs except that instead of containing information about farming, we are going to jot down reminders about what we learned today!
- Draw or write to respond to the questions in your journal and fill it up with any other thoughts you might want to remember.
- When it comes to the dark or night time . . .
 - What are some things you really like about it?
 - What are some things you don't like so much?
 - When are some times during your week that you need to remember to stick with Jesus?

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 24:6a (NIV)

- "He is not here; he has risen!"
- Right now we're going to practice our memory verse! With Easter coming up, let's practice hunting for Easter eggs. Inside each egg, you will find a word. See if you can find all the words to the memory verse I'm saying out loud.
- If you have more words than you need, help out a friend who is still trying to complete their memory verse, or join forces and complete the verse together by combining the words you have.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using glow-in-the-dark plastic Easter eggs, set up a hunt where the kids can search for the eggs in the dark. Inside each Easter egg, place one word of the memory verse per egg. Say the verse aloud a few times as kids search so they are reminded of what words they need.*
- *(Don't forget to also check out the memory verse signs — a combination of SEE and ASL — available in your Programming folder or at growcurriculum.org/Luke24-6a.)*

PRAYER

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Invite each small group leader to lay out a picnic blanket for a picnic prayer time. As they gather in small groups on picnic blankets, have the group repeat the following prayer after you, then have leaders spend a few minutes praying with their small groups.*
- Jesus, thank you for always being with me. Even when things are dark, remind me that I can stick with you because you know what to do and you know everything about me. Amen.

DISCUSSION

- What did Jesus predict Peter would do?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus' prediction?
- Once Jesus' words came true, how did Peter feel? How do you know?
- Think of a time when you had a dark day and things did not look like they would turn out well. How do you know Jesus stuck by you during that time?
- What are real ways you can stick with Jesus?
- How do you know sticking with Jesus is a good choice?

NOTEBOOKS – Use notebooks in box on cart for kids to write the weekly Big Idea and Memory Verse. Can use notebooks to glue the Farmers Almanac activity in if used.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MATERIAL

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VIDEO | Rise & Shine, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

STORY | "Good Night Farm"

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read the story "Good Night Farm" by Patricia Hegarty aloud to the kids. After reading this story, ask the kids the questions below.
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Show preteens a video about animals with great night vision ([like this](#)). Ask questions such as: Have you ever seen any of these night animals in real life before? If you could be an animal with night vision, which one would you be? Why?
 - **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Turn this into a game. Say, "What is the first thing you do to get ready for bed?" and have kids show you by acting it out. Have kids look around and see what everyone else does. Proceed with, "What do you do next?" and continue playing a few more rounds.
- What did you notice when reading this story?
- What different things did we say "good night" to on the farm?
- Were there any things that did not sleep while the rest of the farm slept?
- Even if you've had a bad day, sometimes the right nighttime rituals can calm us down and make us feel better.
- What is your "good night" routine at home?
- Let's not forget to add "talking to God" to our list of things to do before falling asleep. Tell God about your day, especially if it was a rough one, and remind yourself that **I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.**

OBJECT LESSON | Flashlight STEM

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Kids will work together to build working flashlights using a few household items. See your Shop & Prep List for more detailed instructions. Practice [building these](#) with your volunteer team so they can help groups of kids build theirs.
- Sometimes in the dark things can look scary or altogether different than the way they are in the daylight.
- With just a little light from Jesus, we are reminded that he is with us and that we can look to Jesus when things look dark.
- Let's make a flashlight of our very own to help us remember that we are not alone when things appear hopeless. Jesus is always there and that's why **I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.**

SCRIPTURE | Philippians 2:5-11

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Read Philippians 2:5-11.
- This passage tells us everything that Jesus went through when he came to earth. Even though he was God, he became an ordinary human. He chose to be made low, the lowest anyone can go, because he knew that he would have to die on the cross.
- We learned today that **I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark.** I can do what I learned from Jesus because he stuck with God when *his* day was dark! He continued to obey God all the way to the cross. That is some really sticky loyalty!

- But as we'll talk about next week, Jesus' story doesn't end with death. Jesus came back to life and took the highest place, the place of all honor. And when we believe that Jesus truly did all these things for us (which he did), we can't help but worship and thank God for giving Jesus to us.
- **What are some ways that we can stick with Jesus even though we might become distracted or get pressured into doing the opposite?**

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

ACTIVITY | Growing Trust

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid one small clay pot, several markers, a baggie filled with dirt, and one flower seed. Spend time decorating their flower pots. They can plant their seed at home if you're short on time.
- Sticking with Jesus means to trust him even when you don't see any immediate results. But if you keep at it, you will find that Jesus will come through for you.
- **What are some things that comfort you when your day is dark . . . like when you feel scared or sad?** Maybe it's a favorite toy or blanket, a trusted friend or family member, praying to God, a nightlight, and other things.
- **Let's draw that on your pot.**
- When you get home, place your flower pot in a special place where you can watch it grow. Every time you feel a bit scared you will be reminded of the things that help you, but above all, that Jesus is right there with you even though you can't see him.
- Watch your faith grow into the most beautiful flower so that it helps you remember: **I can stick with Jesus when my day is dark!**

MEMORY VERSE | Luke 24:6a (NIV)

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SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- What did Jesus predict Peter would do?
- How did Peter respond to Jesus' prediction?
- Once Jesus' words came true, how did Peter feel? How do you know?

- Read Philippians 2:9-11. What happened because Jesus stuck with God's plan even though it was very hard?
- Think of a time when you had a dark day and things did not look like they would turn out well. How do you know Jesus stuck by you during that time?
- What are real ways you can stick with Jesus?
- How do you know sticking with Jesus is a good choice?

ACTIVITY | Paper Farmhouse

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Using red construction paper, teach kids how to fold a [paper farmhouse](#). Then, invite the kids to write or draw some things or people who they have always been able to count on.*
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** *You can have preteens make a 3-D origami house with a detachable roof ([like this](#)) and have them write their responses on small pieces of paper to store inside.*
- The farmhouse is the place where people live on the farm. It's where we eat meals, it's where we spend time together, it's our shelter when it gets dark! The house also keeps us safe from bad weather and cold nights.
- Just like the people in a farmhouse have to stick together, we have to stick with Jesus through both the bright and dark days. Jesus sticks with us through them all, and even gives us people and things we can count on. **Can you think of a few?**