

Not Guilty

Big Idea Pilate knew that Jesus had not done anything wrong.
Bible Passage Pilate Judges Jesus—John 18:28–19:16

Lesson Summary

In the days and weeks leading to His crucifixion, Jesus repeatedly warned His disciples about the upcoming trip to Jerusalem. Jesus explained that He would be betrayed into the hands of the Jewish authorities and put to death. But the disciples did not understand. They believed He was the Messiah, destined to lead God's people to freedom. Besides, Jesus had done nothing wrong. How could an innocent man be put to death?

Jesus, however, understood that His innocence would not keep Him from the cross. He had experienced the sinful, selfish world that desperately needed redemption. It was no surprise to Him that people would crucify an innocent man. John 18 and 19 captures the sad story of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor to whom the Jewish authorities brought Jesus. They had determined that Jesus should die, but had no authority to carry out the sentence. They appealed to Pilate to condemn Him.

Pilate questioned Jesus and quickly found that He had done nothing that called for the death penalty. But the Jews insisted that Jesus had violated their law. While Pilate cared nothing for the Jewish law, he did care about keeping his job. The angry crowd of Jews grew louder and more agitated and began to question Pilate's loyalty to Caesar. It soon became clear to Pilate that the easiest way to preserve

peace and to retain credibility was simply to have this innocent man killed. Despite his misgivings, Pilate finally gave in and authorized Jesus' crucifixion.

Preschoolers are very aware of what is fair and what is not. The story of Jesus' death will offend their sense of justice. It simply wasn't fair that God's innocent Son was killed by sinful people. Discuss with your children how they feel about the way Jesus was treated. Challenge them to always treat others fairly.

Pray for Wisdom

Heavenly Father, innocent people suffer every day throughout this world. I pray that You would be near them today, especially those who are suffering in the name of Christ.

No one was more innocent than Your precious Son. I ask that these preschoolers would understand the gravity of Jesus' suffering, but also rejoice that He suffered for each one of them. May they understand the joy of forgiveness and personal salvation. Teach these children to treat each other with grace and fairness. I pray in Jesus' holy name, amen.



DISCIPLE TARGETS

In this lesson, children will...

KNOW (knowledge)

- Governor Pilate found Jesus innocent but ordered his soldiers to crucify Jesus

FEEL (character)

- Sad that Jesus was mistreated when He had done nothing wrong

DO (conduct)

- Treat people fairly

SUPPLIES

General Supplies

- Bibles, Disciple Guide pages
- Pencils, markers, crayons
- Paper, scissors, tape, glue

Welcome & Worship Time

- SHARING PICTURES: box of crayons, paper

Bible Time

- Teaching Image (back cover)—Not Guilty
- SNACK—pretzel sticks, frosting or cream cheese
- BEING FAIR: none

Disciple Time

- Puppets (optional)

Welcome & Worship Time

Teacher—Welcome each child warmly. Encourage children to bring their offerings to the Lord.

Learn By Doing—Sharing Pictures

(For alternate ideas to introduce this lesson, refer to the *Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities* on page 4.)

Supplies: box of crayons, paper

Give each child a piece of paper. Have the children sit around a table. Set the box of crayons in the middle of the children and explain that they must share the crayons with everyone and make sure that everyone is treated fairly as they draw a picture of children playing nicely. As an alternative, you could set out a ball of play dough in the middle of the table and explain that the children must share the play dough and treat each other nicely.

Sing With Joy

Move the children to worship with a favorite song. Select one below or use a preschool songbook or recording.

- *Oh, Be Careful, Little Hands* (traditional)
- *The Old Rugged Cross* (hymn)
- *Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam* (traditional)
- *This Little Light of Mine* (traditional)

Rehearse the Verse

As the children practice saying the words, have them shake their heads.

John 19:6b—“*Pilate said, Jesus has done nothing wrong!*”

Seek God's Blessing

Talk with God about your time together with the children today, about the Bible story, and about any special needs.

Bible Time

Teacher—Bring your preschoolers to the Lord. Encourage them to apply Biblical truths in practical ways.

Tell the Truth

Open your Bible to the passage and place it on your lap. (The Bible story is printed on page 3.)

The story, *Not Guilty*, is based on John 18:28–19:16. It captures the interest and attention of older preschool children. If you are teaching younger preschoolers, you may want to use the shorter *Summary/Review*.

Talk and Snack

Consider serving pretzel sticks. Give each child a dab of frosting on a small plate. Have the children use the frosting to stick the pretzels together in the shape of a cross.

While you eat, talk about the Bible story. These questions will help you get started.

- What was Jesus doing when the soldiers arrested Him?
- What had Jesus done wrong?
- What did the soldiers put on Jesus' head?
- What did the selfish leaders do to Jesus?

Play and Move

Play a version of “Musical Chairs” with your students. Put two rows of chairs back-to-back so there are enough chairs for all of your students. While you play music, have the children march around the chairs. When the music stops, each child should sit in the seat nearest him or her. Remind the children that everyone should play fairly, and everyone should have a seat.

Disciple Guide pages

Talk with your children about how someone in each picture is being treated unfairly. Have your children draw a circle around the children who are being treated unfairly. Also have your children suggest ways that the children in the pictures could have been fair to the others.

Learn By Doing—Being Fair

(For alternate ideas to reinforce the Bible story, refer to the Additional “Learn by Doing” Activities on page 4.)

Sing this song with your children to the tune of *All ‘Round the Mulberry Bush*. Have the children do actions that would match the words they are singing.

*This is the way I share my toys, share my toys, share my toys.
This is the way I share my toys.
I treat others fairly.*

*This is the way I wait in line, wait in line, wait in line.
This is the way I wait in line.
I treat others fairly.*

*This is the way I let others go first, let others go first, let others
go first.
This is the way I let others go first.
I treat others fairly.*

*This is the way I ask for things, ask for things, ask for things.
This is the way I ask for things.
I treat others fairly.*

Pray for People

Ask for prayer requests. Pray for each personal concern. Thank the Father for sending Jesus to pay the price for our sins. Pray that your students would understand Jesus’ sacrifice, and rejoice in His resurrection.

Bible Story—Not Guilty

(based on John 18:28–19:16)

One night, Jesus was praying. Mean, selfish leaders sent soldiers to take Jesus away. They tied His hands. They pushed and shoved Him around. But Jesus had done nothing wrong.

The soldiers brought Jesus to the selfish leaders. They were mean to Him. Then they took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman leader.

Pilate asked, “Why did you bring Jesus to me?”

The leaders hated Jesus. They lied to Pilate and said, “He has broken the law. He deserves to die.”

Pilate took Jesus inside and talked alone with Him. Then they went back outside. Pilate told everyone, “Jesus has not broken any laws. He is not guilty. He has done nothing wrong.”

But the selfish leaders didn’t like what Pilate said. They wanted Pilate to let them kill Jesus.

Pilate told his soldiers to take Jesus away. They beat Jesus up. They were very mean to Him. But Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Then the soldiers decided to make fun of Jesus. They took thorny branches and made a crown. They put the thorny crown on Jesus’ head. Then they put a purple robe on Jesus. They laughed at Him. They spit on Him. They beat Him up again. But Jesus had done nothing wrong.

The soldiers brought Jesus back to Pilate. Jesus was still wearing the thorny crown and the purple robe. Pilate told the crowd, “Jesus has not broken any laws. He is not guilty. He has done nothing wrong.”

“Kill Him! Put Him on a cross,” the selfish leaders shouted.

“Crucify Him! He deserves to die.”

Pilate talked alone with Jesus again. He knew that Jesus was a good man. He had not broken any laws. He had done nothing wrong. Pilate wanted Jesus to go free.

Pilate came out and asked the crowd, “Do you want me to free Jesus, your king?”

“Jesus is not our king,” the people said. “He deserves to die.”

Pilate finally gave up trying to save Jesus. He gave Jesus to the selfish leaders. They made Jesus carry a heavy cross to the top of a hill. They nailed Him to the cross and killed Him. But Jesus had done nothing wrong.

Then three days later, a miracle happened. Jesus became alive again! God raised Jesus back to life! Jesus is God’s Son. He is the greatest King of all!

Not Guilty (Summary/Review)

Soldiers brought Jesus to the Roman leader, Pilate. To please the people, he let the soldiers beat up Jesus. They put a thorny crown on His head and made fun of Him.

Pilate talked with Jesus and decided to free Him. “Jesus hasn’t broken any laws,” Pilate told the crowd. “He’s not guilty.”

“Kill Him!” the evil leaders shouted. “Crucify Him!”

Pilate finally gave up. Soldiers made Jesus carry a heavy cross. While Jesus walked, He remembered the people He loved. He would do what was best for them.

Additional Learn By Doing Activities

Both *Learn by Doing* sections in this lesson include a suggested learning activity. However, you may want to substitute one or more of the activities below to capture the specific interests and needs of your children.

Select activities based on the ages of your children, their learning style preferences, and their developmental needs.

Coloring Page

Provide copies of the reproducible Bible story picture for this lesson on the inside back cover of the packet.

One for You, One for Me

Supplies: candy-coated chocolate candies or raisins, small bowls, napkins

Have the children find partners, and give each pair of children a bowl of candies or raisins, and two napkins. Have them sit with the bowl between them and a napkin in front of each of them. Let each child have a turn dividing up some of the treats from the bowl by placing one on the napkin in front of the other child and then one on his or her own napkin. After children have had a chance to share fairly, they may eat the treats.

Share and Tell

Invite the children to take turns telling about a time when they shared with someone or treated someone fairly when playing.

Bubbles for Two

Supplies: bubble solution and bubble wands

Take your children outside and give a bottle of bubble solution and a bubble wand to every pair. Explain that they must share the bubble solution and treat their partner fairly.

Happy/Sad Puppets

Supplies: paper plates, wide craft sticks, glue, crayons

Give each child two paper plates. Have them draw a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. You may also want to use sequins or gel glue to make tears on the sad face. You may need to draw the faces for younger children and have them color the rest of the plate. Help the children glue the plates on opposite sides of the craft stick so that the faces are facing out. Have the children show the sad face side of the puppet and talk about things that make them sad. Then have them turn the puppet around and talk about what makes them happy. Also ask them why they are sad about what happened to Jesus and then why they can be happy now. (It is sad that Jesus was treated so badly, but it is happy that Jesus is alive now.)

One Too Many

Supplies: carpet squares, music player, children's music

You will need one less carpet square than you have children. Place the carpet squares in a circle. Explain to the children that they must walk around the circle of carpet squares while the music is playing, and stay in line. When the music stops, each child must sit down on a carpet square. Remind them to treat everyone fairly, with no pushing or bumping. Play the music for a short time while the children walk around the circle. Then stop the music and watch for children to be fair. Comment about how well they treated everyone and stayed in line. Play several times.

Roll the Ball

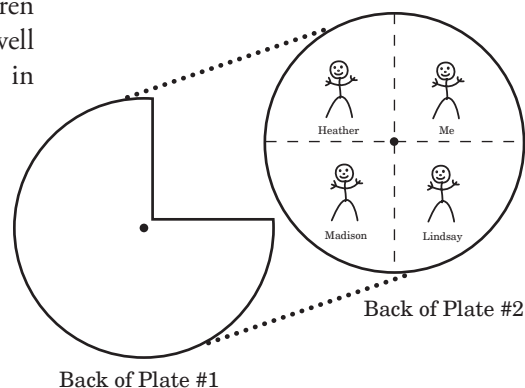
Supplies: large playground ball

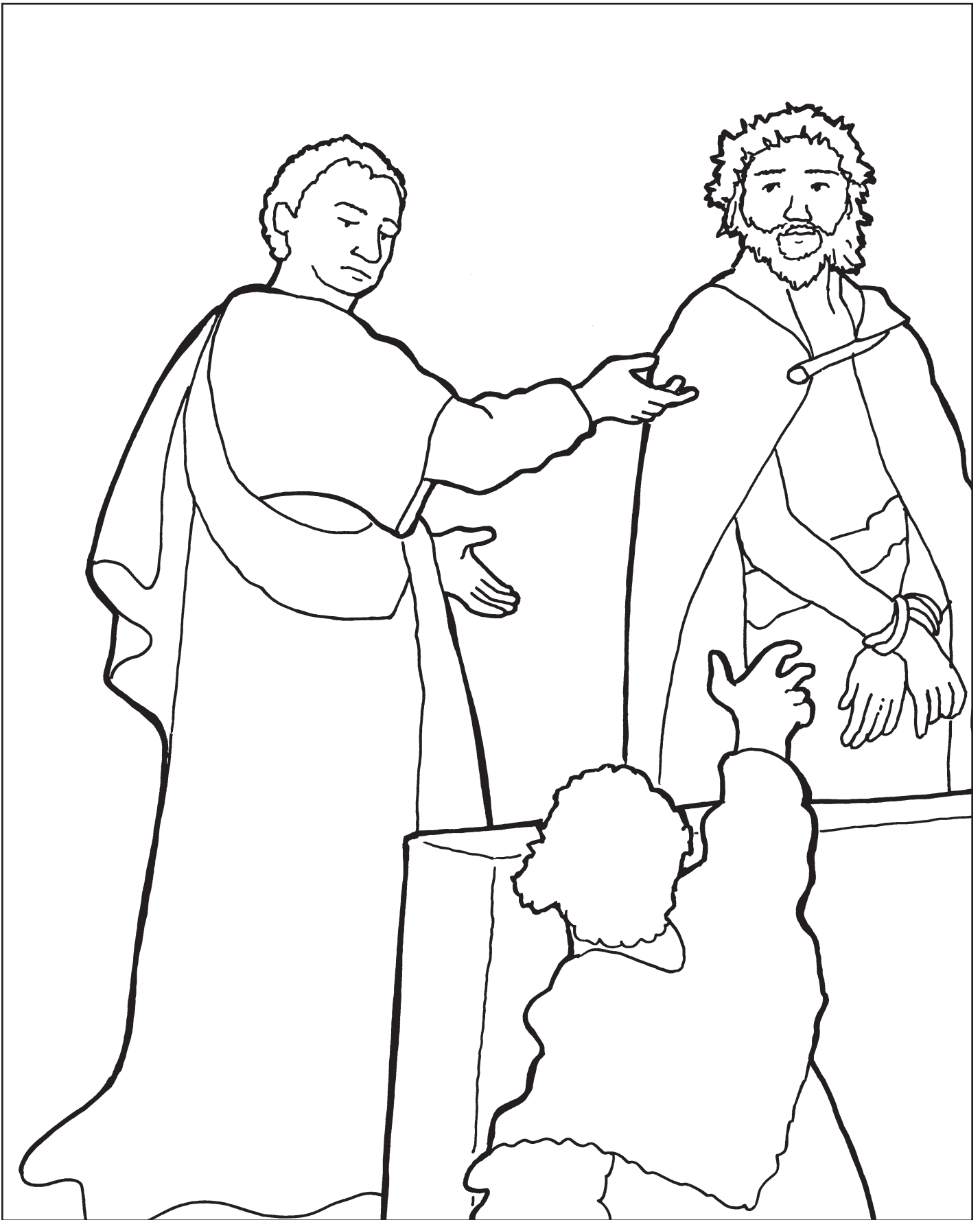
Ask the children to sit in a large circle on the floor. Give one child the ball and have him or her roll it to someone else in the circle. Remind the children that they must not show favorites in who they choose to roll the ball to, but must treat everyone fairly.

Taking Turns

Supplies: paper plates (two per child), scissors, paper fasteners, crayons

Before class, cut out one quarter of one paper plate for each child. Draw lines on the back of the second plate to divide it into four sections. In each section write the child's name alternately with the name of a friend of the child. (See the diagram below.) Have the children decorate the back of the cut plate and draw pictures of themselves and their friends on the other. Using a paper fastener, put the paper plates together so the pictures and names show through the cut-out section. Tell the children to use this as a reminder to treat everyone fairly and to take turns when playing.





Pilate Judges Jesus



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