Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA
This lesson was written by Carol Hulbert for First United Methodist Church, Ann Arbor, MI, and writers from the “St. Elmo’s choir rotation writing group. Adapted for Gloria Dei Lutheran Church in 2013 by Beth Tobin. Permission granted to freely distribute and use, provided the copyright message and credits at the end are included.

The Garden of Gethsemane

Creation Station:  Art Workshop


Key Verse:  Mark 14:36 -- “Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet, not what I want, but what you want.”

Memory Verse: Matthew 26:41 NIV -- "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak."

Purpose: This lesson is designed to assist the participants in visualizing the events on the night Jesus was betrayed in the garden of Gethsemane. In this session the students will construct a diorama display that shows one part of the drama, which occurs, in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Objectives for the Rotation:
After completing this rotation, the participants will be able to:
1) Name that the story is found in the New Testament Gospel of Luke.
2) Retell the story of Jesus and his disciples’ experience in the Garden of Gethsemane.
3) Recognize that Jesus struggled with knowing the events that would come next, including his death.
4) Discover that Jesus used prayer to strengthen himself to accept and follow God’s plan and explore how we can use prayer to follow God’s plan for our lives.
5) Learn that the disciples intended to remain faithful, but were unable to do so and that we also fail in this way.
The Garden of Gethsemane Rotation

Materials:

- Bibles
- Pencils
- Shoe Boxes 1/child
- Large Print out of Key Verse and Memory Verse
- Faith Journal Sheets
- Art Supplies: Paint, paint brushes, construction paper, glue, scissors, markers, clothes pins (old fashioned wooden ones), fabric scraps, pipe cleaners, yarn or fake fur, clay, and anything else you can think of that could be used in constructing the diorama.

Teacher Preparation in Advance:

- Read through the Bible Background information for this Rotation
- Watch the Bible Study Video found on our website at www.gloriadeikids.org
- Learn the memory verses.

Lesson:

Greet your students warmly, welcoming them to the Art Workshop. Introduce yourself and any other new students and adults. Remind the children that today we are talking about Jesus when He was praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Begin with Prayer:

“Dear God, Thank you for our time together during this season of Lent in preparation for Easter. Please open our hearts today, so that we may more fully understand why you sent your only son to die for us. Help us understand how Jesus was able to do your will God, even when it meant he would suffer and die. Amen”

Invite the children to talk about their experiences in a garden. Ask questions like: Have you ever been in a garden? Where? Have you helped plant or grow a garden? What kind of garden? How did you feel while you were visiting or working in the garden? Allow time for volunteers to share their experiences.

For 1st and 2nd graders:

Ask: If we want to read a story in the Bible about Jesus’ life, where would we find it – in the Old Testament or the New Testament of the Bible? Say: We find this story about Jesus in the New Testament.

For 3rd grade and up:

Ask: Where in the Bible would we read about Jesus and his disciples? What are the first four books of the New Testament? What do we call those first four books? Say: The word Gospel means “good news”. These first four books of the New Testament tell the story of the good news about Jesus.
Distribute Bibles if needed. (Encourage everyone to bring his/her Bible every week.)


Ask the students to read the heading (before verse 39) in their Bible. [Will vary depending on which Bible they are looking at. It will probably say, “Jesus Prays on the Mount of Olives.” Gethsemane was at the foot of the “Mount of Olives.” Mention that Jesus was going there to pray.]

Have the students find the Mount of Olives on the map of Jerusalem. [Some of them may find maps in their Bibles. It’s shown on two maps in the Adventure Bible: the very last map, just to the right outside the walls of Jerusalem, and on the second map, “Holy Land and Sinai” just outside of Jerusalem.]

Say: We are going to read about Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The Garden of Gethsemane was located on lower slopes of the Mount of Olives, which overlooked the city of Jerusalem.

Make sure everyone knows how to pronounce “Gethsemane”.

Say: I am going to read this story. While I read, create in your mind a picture of the scenes taking place. Think about how people were feeling – what was the mood.


Tell the children that Jesus needed time and a place to reach out to his Father because he was frightened and feeling weak. He needed to find the strength that we all can find through prayer and obedience to God’s will. Ask the students if they have ever been frightened in the night - perhaps from a nightmare or a bad storm - and gone to find their parents for comfort. Explain that Jesus was doing just that; Jesus was reaching out to his Father through prayer and we can do the same thing.

**Activity:**

Explain that today each person will make a diorama display that shows one part of the story of Jesus in Gethsemane. The “diorama” will be something that can remind you to pray - especially at times when you need God’s extra strength and comfort.

The Garden scene must have been extremely overwhelming, powerful, and scary. Recreate one or many parts of the events that occurred by constructing individual or group dioramas.

Have the students choose a scene in the story and construct their diorama with as much detail as possible. Invite each child to select a box to use. Tell the group to set it on its side, so that the bottom of the box becomes the back of the scene.
Point out the supplies: paint, paintbrush, construction paper, glue, scissors and markers. Show the children how to cover the outside of the box with paint or paper. Also demonstrate how to create the background of the scene on the inside of the box. Assist the young people as they complete this part of the project.

Refocus the group’s attention and illustrate how to make figures of the people and objects in the garden by using chenille stems, clay and/or clothespins. Add fabric scrapes for clothes. Trees, bushes, and animals may be made from this technique as well. Have the children set the completed pieces inside their boxes.

If they need help getting started:
Some ideas for scenes: the place where Jesus was praying, or where the disciples were sleeping, the scene with Judas kissing Jesus, when the disciples ran away, or when Jesus is being taken away by the guards.

What was the mood in that scene: peaceful or tense, scary or calm?

Discussion While Working: (Choose according to age group)
• Gethsemane means oil press. Jesus is going to a place called Gethsemane. Sometimes people call it the Garden of Gethsemane. It wasn’t a garden like you might think of – with pretty flowers. It was more like an orchard. This was a place where olive trees grew. Olives were grown so they could be eaten, or pressed into olive oil.
• Why did Jesus go to the garden? (to pray, to talk to God)
• What did Jesus ask God to do? (take this cup from me) What did Jesus mean?
• How do you suppose Jesus was feeling while praying in the garden. (anguish about what was coming; prayed so hard, sweat was like drops of blood)
• How did Jesus finish his prayer to God? (not what I want but what you want)
• What happened when Jesus decided to obey God? (angel came to strengthen him)
• It can be hard to accept God’s plan for our lives because often we don’t know what that plan is. Why do you think even Jesus had to do hard things? (trials help us grow, make us strong; the story also shows us Jesus was just like us)
• What are some hard things you have faced?
How can prayer strengthen and help you during those times?

Closing:
Allow students to share their dioramas, explaining why they chose the scene they did. Be sure names are clearly marked on the bottom of each diorama. Display dioramas at church to be sent home later or send them home with students today.

Say: Just as Jesus prayed to God in the Garden of Gethsemane, we can talk to God whenever we are afraid or alone or are struggling. Prayer is not just talking to God but includes listening. In our listening we remember that God loves us. God was willing to let his own son die, so that our sins would be forgiven. God loves us that much! Jesus died so we could be welcomed as a part of God’s family forever.
The Garden of Gethsemane Rotation

Closing Prayer:
Take a few minutes to just have a silent prayer time. Listening to God. Then close with the Lord’s Prayer.

Resources:
Lesson plan from a group of educators and Presbyterian pastors known as “St. Elmo’s Choir”. “Art Workshop:Lent/Easter (focus on Gethsemane/Judas & Peter).”
http://rotation.infopop.cc/eve/forums? a=tpc&s=120606712...1109891&m=5036088121


If you use this material, even in a modified form, please include the following reference:

If you have found this workshop useful it would make my day if you let me know about it. Thanks!