**Artrageous**

**Garden of Gethsemane**

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**BIG IDEA: God cares about us, so we can turn our worries over to Him through prayer.**

**BIBLE BASIS: Matt. 26:36-56; Mark 14:32-52; Luke 22:40-53; Jn. 18:1-11**

**KEY VERSE: “Turn all of your worries over to him. He cares about you.” 1 Peter 5:7 (NIrV)**

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**LEADER DEVOTIONAL**

Think for a moment about the times when you have felt under the most amount of stress. Maybe it was an end of the year presentation at work, final exams, or being in between jobs. During these times, we feel as if the weight of the world were pushing down on us. It’s a feeling that Jesus is familiar with. But on the night that He was betrayed, it wasn’t just the weight of the world that was pushing down on Him, it was the weight of the world’s sin.

The betrayal took place in the appropriately named Garden of Gethsemane. Simply put a “gethsemane” is a large stone used for pressing and crushing olives. When you read the words that Jesus spoke to His disciples, you can hear the weight of the task pressing on and crushing His soul. In Matthew 26:38, Jesus said, “My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death” (NIV). It was here in this garden of olives that Jesus wrestled with the pressure of the task before him. So much so, that he sweat blood and that an angel attended to him (Luke 22:43). It is clear from his prayers that Jesus desired to avoid the pain and the suffering of the cross. Three times He prayed for this “cup” to be taken away from Him, but following each request for deliverance, Jesus says, “Not my will, God, but yours be done.”

As usual, Jesus provides the ultimate example of how we should respond when in the middle of turmoil. His immediate response was to find a quiet place, fall to His knees, and pray out to God. His prayer was raw, honest, heartfelt, and specific. But at the end, He trusted his fate to the will of God, knowing that God’s will was for the ultimate good.

Chances are that the pressures you’re feeling don’t compare to the weight of the cross. Nevertheless, you would benefit greatly by following Jesus’ example. Regardless of the type or severity of your troubles, fall to your knees and pray out to God a raw, honest, heartfelt, and specific prayer. But in the end, regardless of His answer, trust that God’s will for you is good.

*John Garrison*

GO! Contributor

**LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING**

***How to Create a “Moment” that Draws Your Audience In***

Wouldn’t it be great if you could keep kids laser focused on every word you said during a lesson? *(Answer: Yes! That would be a super power greater than both invisibility and flight!)* Unfortunately, that’s often times not the case. No matter how dynamic a lesson is, most kids can only stay laser focused for so long. Part of being an effective communicator is choosing the most important “moment(s)” within a lesson and using your voice and body to package it in a way that draws in your audience. Here are a few tips on creating a “moment” so you can be certain your audience hears what matters most:

**Choose your “moment” wisely:** Any given lesson probably has one or two moments where you really want to draw their attention. Often times, the best place to look for that moment is at or near the end of the lesson when the “Big Idea” is being hammered home. The “Big Idea” is usually the moment the whole lesson has been leading to.

**Don’t make the “moment” too long.** For a kid, you might want to keep your moment to 2 or 3 high impact sentences.

**Pause before the “moment.”** A well placed pause can be very powerful. That short moment of silence can communicate to a kid that something different and interesting is about to be said or done.

**Use your voice.** One way to create a moment is to slow your pace down—give each word just a little extra emphasis. In addition, lower the volume of your voice to just above a whisper. A whisper can grab attention even more than shouting.

**Use your body.**  Using movement and levels can also help to create a powerful moment. As your voice begins to slow down and become quiet, move close to the kids. You may even choose to place yourself in the middle of your audience. Sit down or kneel so that you put yourself almost eye to eye with the kids. Slow down your body movement and hand gestures to match the pace and volume of your voice.

**SET UP INSTRUCTIONS**

Shhh…listen carefully. Do you hear that voice coming from inside of you? Does it have a slightly French accent? If so, it’s probably your inner artist. God has put one in all of us (maybe without the accent) and it’s screaming to get out! That is—until now! During “Artrageous,” kids will have a chance to unleash the artist inside of them by using all kinds of super fun art to tell the Easter story and to picture the outrageous love that Jesus has for us.

**Special “Artrageous” directions:**

* During the “Artrageous” storytelling, kids will be encouraged to use their artistic talents to create whatever comes to mind while listening to the Bible story. They’re free to create the people, the environment, or some special words.
* Below are suggestions for different artistic media to use during the “Artrageous” series. Choose one for each week. You can have the kids use the same medium every week or provide a different medium from week to week. Do not feel limited by the list. Feel free to choose any artistic medium that you would like.

**Suggested artistic media:**

* Markers on paper
* Crayons on paper
* Colored pencils on paper
* Water color on paper
* Chalk on black construction paper
* Rainbow color scratch paper
* Playdough. (See Resource Folder for a DIY playdough recipe.)
* Pipe cleaners
* Wax Craft sticks
* Temper paint on canvas
* Add ons: stickers, stamps, craft sticks

**Do the following ahead of time:**

* Determine which artistic medium you’ll be using ahead of time and gather the materials.
* If you’re artistic medium uses paper as a “canvas,” consider what kind of paper you would like to use. Here are a few options:
	+ Give each kid their own piece of blank 8½ x 11 paper.
	+ Give each small group one or two pieces of poster board for all of the group to draw on.
	+ Have all of the kids in the room gather around one or two large pieces of butcher block paper to create one giant piece of story art.
	+ Other options include paper plates, brown bags, or construction paper
* Determine how you will display the art made during the lesson. Will they take home their art or do you want to display them for the duration of the unit?
* Place a large paper pad or marker board in the teaching area along with a marker.
* Create an “Artrageous Mystery Box” by cutting the flaps off of a cardboard box. Print out the “Artrageous Mystery Box” sign and tape it to the box. Decorate the box in any other artistic way that you would like. When finished, hide the day’s art supplies underneath until the big reveal.
* Place the “Weight of Worry” props in the teaching area. The props include: a basketball, a soccer ball, a backpack, 5-7 large school books, and a picture frame with a picture of a family.
* Place a large cross somewhere in or near the teaching area.
* Choose which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.

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**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**Sound: PLAY upbeat music as kids move to large group area**

**ARTRAGEOUS INTRO**

**Large Group Leader:** Hello everybody and welcome to the very first week of “Artrageous!” Did you know that we all have an artist inside of us? No—you didn’t eat him for breakfast. He doesn’t actually live inside of you with a paintbrush or box of markers. That’s just a fancy way of saying that God has put creative abilities inside all of us. During “Artrageous,” we’re going to have a chance to unleash that artist inside of us. We’re going to be using all kinds of super fun art to tell the Easter story and picture the outrageous love that Jesus has for us.

In just a little bit, I’m going to tell you the first part of the Easter story. As you listen to the story, you can draw whatever pops into your head. Draw the people. Draw the background. Draw some special words that come to mind. Let your imagination go wild! And if there’s something you don’t know how to draw, that’s okay—just do your best! You might be surprised how artrageously awesome it turns out.

**BIG BIBLE STORY REVIEW**

Before we get started, though, I’m going to unleash my own inner artist. I’m going to draw some pictures from the Bible. See if you can guess what they are. The pictures will help us remember all of the things that have happened in the Big Bible Story so far.

Ahead of time, place a paper pad or marker board in the teaching area. Quickly draw each of the pictures indicated below. (Optional: choose some kids to draw the pictures instead.) Allow the kids to shout out what they think is being drawing. Once the kids have guessed correctly, recount that part of the Big Bible Story.

* *Draw the earth.* In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
* *Draw a tree with fruit.* Everything was perfect until Adam and Eve sinned by eating fruit from the tree that God had told them not to touch.
* *Draw a family.* God came up with a plan to defeat sin. He chose a special family called the Israelites. Many years later, Jesus would be born through the Israelite family and die for our sins.
* *Draw waves.* While in Egypt, the Israelites were made slaves by Pharaoh, but God sent Moses to lead them out of slavery. With God’s help, they crossed on dry land through the Red Sea and into a new home called the Promised Land.
* *Draw a stop sign.* While in the Promised Land, the Israelites turned away from God, so God sent prophets to tell the people to STOP sinning and turn back to Him. The prophets also told people about the coming Savior.
* *Draw a manger.* On the first Christmas morning, the prophecies came true. Jesus was born and placed in a manger. God sent Him to take the punishment for our sins so that we would no longer be separated from Him.
* *Draw a speech bubble.* When Jesus grew up, He spent 3 years performing miracles and telling people about the Kingdom of God.

**CG: “Big Bible Story” graphic**

**THE BIG BIBLE STORY— GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE**

Nice work! I think it’s time for us to get a little bit “artrageous!” *(Walk to the “Artrageous” mystery box.)* Let’s count down from 5 and then I’ll reveal what today’s artrageous art supply will be. *(Countdown from 5 then lift the box to reveal the day’s artistic medium.)*

Distribute the art materials to the kids. Before reading the story, remind the kids that they can create anything that comes to mind while they listen. In addition to creating art during the telling of the story, there will be three 60-second “Art Breaks” where the story will pause, but the kids can continue creating.

After 3 years of performing miracles and teaching people about the Kingdom of God, Jesus knew that His time on Earth was coming to an end. So late one night, Jesus took his disciples to a place called the Garden of Gethsemane to prepare for the long, hard days ahead of them.

When they got to the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus invited 3 of His disciples—Peter, James and John—to walk with Him to a different part of the garden. Jesus was starting to feel sad and troubled, so He wanted His 3 closest friends to sit and pray with Him. When Jesus got to where He was going, He dropped to His knees in the darkness and prayed out to God. Jesus said, “My Father, if it is possible, take this cup of suffering away from me. But let what you want be done, not what I want.” That was Jesus’ way of saying that He didn’t want to have to die on the cross, but He would do it if that’s what God wanted. It’s time for an “Artrageous Art Break!” You have 60 seconds to keep on creating before we jump back into the story. *(Pause from story while kids continue creating.)*

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

When Jesus had finished His prayer, He looked up and found that Peter, James and John had all fallen asleep. So He woke them up and said, “Can’t you stay awake for even one hour? Keep watching and praying with me.” So they did, but not for long! For a second time, Jesus prayed that God would spare Him from the pain and suffering, and for a second time the 3 disciples fell fast asleep. They were so tired that they couldn’t keep their eyes open. After praying a third time, Jesus woke the disciples up again and said, “Look! The time has come for me to be arrested. Get up! Let’s go!”

Just then, a man named Judas showed up with a big crowd of people. The people were carrying swords and clubs and they didn’t look too friendly. They had been sent to arrest Jesus for saying that He was the Son of God, even though it was true. And to make things worse, it was Judas, Jesus’ own disciple, who had told the crowd of people where to find Him. Judas had betrayed Jesus for just 30 pieces of silver. Ahead of time, Judas had arranged a signal with the crowd of people. He said, “The one I kiss is the man you’re looking for. Arrest Him.” As soon as he saw Jesus, Judas went up to Him and kissed Him on the cheek. That was it—the signal! The crowd of people immediately rushed forward to arrest Jesus.

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

Most of the disciples jumped back in fear, but not Peter! He wasn’t going to let the crowd arrest Jesus without a fight. With one swift motion he drew his sword and swung it at one of the people who had grabbed Jesus. The sword struck the man’s ear and cut it off. “Stop!” Jesus said. “Put your sword away. If I wanted to escape, I would ask my Father for help and He would send an army of 70,000 angels. But this is all part of God’s plan for me.” Then Jesus reached out, touched the man’s ear and healed it. It was a miracle. It proved that He really was the Son of God. But that didn’t matter to the crowd of people—they still arrested Jesus and the disciples ran away in fear.

**VDO: PLAY “Art Break 60-second Countdown” video**

At the end of the story, if time permits, choose some kids to show what they created and have them recount what was happening during that part of the story.

**CG: “Big Bible Story Questions” graphic**

**BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS**

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids: What was your favorite part of this story? Even though dying on the cross was going to be really hard, Jesus was willing to do it anyway. Why do you think Jesus did it? For Older Kids: What does this story teach you about Jesus? Are you surprised that Jesus was praying for God to take the cross away? Why or why not?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area.

**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**THE WEIGHT OF WORRY**

Can you imagine what it must have been like for Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane? He knew that He was about to die on the cross for our sins. It was going to be the hardest and most painful thing anyone could ever go through. How do you think Jesus felt right at that moment? *(Take answers.)* Great answers! The Bible says that Jesus began to feel sad and troubled. Have you ever felt that way before? *(Kids respond.)* Of course you have! We’ve ALL felt sad and troubled—and it’s no fun at all! It feels like something *really* heavy is weighing you down. Let me show you what I’m talking about. *(Invite a kid to join you in the teaching area.)*

You’ve probably never had to worry about dying on a cross like Jesus, but there are all kinds of other things a kid can get worried about. Maybe you get worried about sports. You get worried that you won’t make the basketball team. *(Hand kid a basketball.)* Or you get worried that you won’t score any goals during your soccer game. *(Hand kid a soccer ball.)* Maybe you get worried about school. *(Hand kid a backpack full of stuff.)* You get worried about the big math test coming up. *(Hand kid a large book.)* You get worried that there’s too much reading homework. *(Hand kid another large book.)* You get worried that you’re going to get a bad grade in science *(hand kid another book,)* or in social studies *(hand kid another book,)* or in spelling *(keep naming subjects and handing the kid more books.)* Maybe you get worried about your family because it seems like everyone is always fighting. *(Hand kid a picture frame with a family picture.)*

*(Address kid with objects in hand.)* Wow—it looks like you’ve got your hands full of worry! How do you think you would feel if you had to carry these things around with you ALL DAY LONG!? *(Kid responds.)* Yeah—it would get *really* heavy, *really* fast. In fact, I’ll bet it’s getting heavy right now! That’s what it feels like to carry all of that worry around with you. It’s no fun! It’s heavy! It feels like it’s weighing you down! So what do you do about it? Take a look at what the Bible says. *(Encourage the kid to continue holding the objects for a little bit longer. Have the other kids open their Bibles to 1 Peter 5:7. When ready, choose a kid to read the verse aloud or read it aloud yourself as the kids follow along.)*

**CG: “Turn all of your worries over to God. He cares about you.” 1 Peter 5:7**

**TURN YOUR WORRIES OVER TO GOD**

The Bible says that God cares for you and wants you to give your worries over to Him. *(Address kid with objects.)* Are you ready to do that? *(Kids responds in the affirmative.)* I’ll bet you are! The best way to do that is through prayer. It might go something like this. *(Kneel on one knee next to kid and begin praying.)* “Dear God, I want to give my worries over to you. Please help my family not to fight so much. *(Remove picture frame and set it at the foot of the cross.)* Please help me at school with spelling *(remove a book and set down,)* and with social studies *(continue praying for each worry and removing objects one at a time until they are all gone.)* Amen!” I’ll bet that feels SO much better, doesn’t it? *(Kid responds. Thank volunteer and dismiss back to audience. Kneel near the cross.)*

That’s what Jesus did in the Garden of Gethsemane. As soon as he began to feel sad and troubled, He fell down to his knees. He didn’t waste any time. He put His face to the ground and began praying right away. He knew He was going to suffer and die on the cross and it was too much for Him to carry alone, so He turned it over to His Father, God. At first He asked God to take the suffering away, but then He said, “If it’s what you want, God, then I’ll do it!” That’s how much Jesus loves you. Even though He didn’t want to suffer and die on the cross, He was willing to do it so that your sins could be forgiven. Now, thanks to Jesus, not only can we turn our worries over to God, we can turn our sins over to Him as well! In fact, let’s do that right now!

Close the GO! TELL IT Large group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you. Following the prayer, explain to the kids which of the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations will be available. Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today’s lesson. For more instructions on how the GO! DEEP Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide.”

**CG: “Artrageous” title graphic**

**Music: (Optional) Play quiet reflective music**



**Prayer Station prompt:** Do you feel troubled or worried about something. Write a prayer to God and tell Him about it. Ask Him to take it from you.

**Journal Station prompt:** Write a letter to Jesus and tell Him how amazing He is for dying on the cross for you.

**Bible Station prompt:** Read it for yourself: Matthew 26:36-56. Draw a picture of the story or write to God about your favorite part of the story. Tell Him why you liked it.

**Art Station prompt:**  What is something that you feel troubled or worried about? Draw a picture of it. While you’re drawing, ask God to help you not feel worried about it anymore.