

Community Group Curriculum  
for the week of May 5, 2013  
"The Hour of Darkness"

**BIG PICTURE**

We now encounter Jesus as He is preparing for what He knows will be his last week of this earthly life. As with everything that Jesus does He approaches it with quiet strength, grace and dignity. Even until the end, Jesus is teaching His disciples and showing love for others. He is a perfect role model in how to deal with adversity. The four gospels each share a slightly different, although complimentary, account of this last week. Let's dig in and see what they have to tell us about the most interesting man in the world!

**LET'S DIG IN!**

1. Read John 13:1-17. With His crucifixion imminent, Jesus washes His disciples' feet as a final proof of His love for them, as well as revealing several lessons for the disciples. What lessons or meanings does Jesus' action reveal in the following verses?
  - a) John 13:8-10
  - b) John 13:12-17
  - c) Think of as many ways as possible in which present-day Christians can wash each other's feet.
  
2. Read Mark 14:32-42. Right before his arrest, Jesus took three of His disciples and went to a garden to pray. In verse 36 Jesus asks that "this cup be removed from me." What does the cup signify (Isaiah 51:17-23)? What do you learn about the love and power of God, contrasted with the weakness and need of people as you read this account?
  
3. Read Matthew 26:57-68; John 18:28-19:16. Describe how the religious and political leaders treated Jesus and His response to them. Jesus offered no defense in any of His trials. Why not?
  
4. Read Luke 22:54-62. Peter, one of Jesus' closest friends vigorously denied three times that he even knew the Lord – even as Jesus watched. How must this have felt to Jesus? What are ways we deny Jesus and act like we don't know Him?

5. Read Luke 23:32-43 and John 19:25-27. What do you learn about Jesus' heart as He hung on the cross interacting with those who crucified Him, the thief who reached out to Him and His own mother?
  
6. When Jesus said, "It is finished," it is one of the briefest and most powerful statements in the entire Bible. From a Lower Story perspective, what must people have thought when Jesus spoke these words? From an Upper Story spiritual reality, what was Jesus declaring and what does this mean for us?

OPTIONAL: Read Hebrews 10:19-22. This passage points out three things when we enter into a relationship with Jesus. How have you experienced one or more of these listed below in your life?

- We can draw near to God with absolute confidence
- We no longer have a guilty conscience
- We live with a sense of being cleansed and pure

What can we do on a daily basis to walk in an intimate and living friendship with God?

### **PRAY! PRAY! PRAY!**

- Pray for strength to affirm your faith in Christ in situations where others may be indifferent or hostile to our Lord.
- Pray for strength to stand by a friend no matter the cost.
- Pray for the desire to witness and help bring others to Christ; whether by words or through example.

### **AND NOW FOR SOME FINAL THOUGHTS**

This is a story of love, sacrifice and redemption. Jesus loves us so much He was willing to take on human form, live among us and ultimately give His life in order to redeem ours. God accepted Jesus' death on the cross as payment for our sins. We have to accept that gift and try to live in a manner that glorifies Him, although we know our sin nature will cause us to stumble. Yet, like Peter who was impetuous and denied Christ, we can still be used by God. Step out of the way and allow Him to use you. You will be amazed at the results!