

A Less Than Friendly Greeting



Find

- The character Mark who is helping to tell the Easter story
- A bag of 30 coins to place behind Mark.
- A number of greetings in different languages written on separate pieces of card

Introduce

- Introduce Mark, a boy who has been on an Easter adventure - he will help us to explore our Easter story today. Invite a child to come and look what Mark has hidden
- Ask a volunteer to come and look at what Mark has hidden (this will be the bag of money). Show the rest of the school the bag of money and explain that the coins are a clue to today's story. Ask the school if anyone can guess exactly which part of the Easter the coins may point to. *(If anyone does know you could ask them how many silver coins should be in your bag).*
- Today's story is about one of Jesus' friends betraying him for just 30 pieces of silver. We will never fully know why Judas turned traitor but many believe that Judas felt let down by Jesus. It is thought Judas had hoped that Jesus was going to rise up an army against the Romans who had invaded the country. As we know Jesus didn't do that, instead he had taught that we should love our enemies and that peace was the only way. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss – a common greeting in those days. Something that was meant to be a sign of friendship became a sign of betrayal.

Play

- Before we look at today's story in more detail we are going to think about greetings a little more and there is a game that we will play. *(You could do this as a whole school quiz or create two teams to compete).*
- Have a set of greetings in various languages and see who can guess which language they come from.
- E.g. Bonjour (French), Halo (Spanish), Jambo (Swahili), Ni Hao (Chinese)



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Talk

During the last week of Jesus' life he and his disciples ate a meal together. Whilst they were eating the meal Jesus said that one of the people there was going to double-cross him. Jesus knew that the Jewish authorities wanted to arrest him but he also knew that one of his closest friends was going to help them do that.

Once the meal was over Jesus needed a quiet place to pray to help get ready for the hard times that lay ahead. So Jesus and his closest friends went to the garden of Gethsemane to pray.

When Jesus had finished praying, a large crowd came towards him. The crowd was led by one of Jesus' disciples, Judas. But this was not a friendly meeting – some religious leaders helped by Judas, had brought soldiers with swords and clubs to arrest Jesus.

As we have said, Judas had decided that he was going to swap his friendship with Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. So he had hatched a plan with the authorities to lead them to Jesus – you have to remember that in those days there was no TV or magazines and so some people wouldn't know what Jesus looked like.

As the crowd came closer Judas stepped forward and said, 'Teacher!' Then he kissed Jesus – that was the soldiers cue; they grabbed Jesus and arrested him.

How do you think that kiss felt? It should have been a warm greeting from a friend.

Once Jesus' friends realised what was happening chaos broke out but there was nothing that they could do and the soldiers took Jesus away. A young boy had been watching this from a distance and when he had seen everything he ran home to tell others about Jesus' arrest. Who do you think that boy was? *(Let the children have time to think then explain it was Mark).*

The soldiers took Jesus to a court where the religious leaders were waiting to judge him. They wanted to get rid of him forever and so they paid people to tell lies about Jesus, to say that he had done bad things. It appeared that the leaders were jealous of Jesus and angry because people were beginning to listen to him more than to them. In the end the leaders decided that Jesus had to die and that is exactly what happened.

Does this sound fair? Jesus had only ever done good things but he was being treated so badly. Even though this was not a happy time for Jesus he knew that it was all part of God's plan. He trusted that things would work out right in the end.

Pray

Today we remember Jesus and how one of his best friends let him down. Please help us to be the best friends we can be – always faithful and trustworthy. Amen

Classroom follow up:

The objective would be to base the activities around friendship in order to help the children focus on what makes a good friend.

- Discuss what makes a good friend
- Make a friendship bracelet to give to a friend
- Write a card to a friend who is going through a tough time

