

## Jesus' Agonizing Prayer in Gethsemane

About 5 minutes, from Matt. 26; Mark 14; Luke 22; John 18

Participants (*No need to memorize lines; the aim is to relive sacred events, not to perform*)

Peter

Voice (*of Jesus*)

Prompter Shout a brief line and Echoes repeat it.

Echoes Children and all adults who want to take part. Echoes need no script.

Peter I am the apostle Peter. For me, this is a night of shame and denial!

Prompter & Echoes Appalling shame!

Peter Jesus is taking us to a secluded spot up on the Mount of Olives. Ages before, King David passed through this same Kidron valley shedding tears when his son Absalom and close friends betrayed him.

Prompter & Echoes Jesus' heart is heavy!

Peter Moonlight caresses Jerusalem's roofs as we enter this Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus sighs heavily.

Voice Peter, James and John, come with me deeper into this garden.

Peter Like the Garden of Eden, it is a place of terrible testing.

Voice My soul grieves to the point of death! Watch while I pray, and pray that you will not fall into temptation.

Prompter & Echoes Watch and pray!

Peter Jesus goes a stone's throw beyond, and falls face down, distressed.

Voice Abba! Father! If it is possible, let this hour pass me by.  
Abba! Father! All things are possible for you; remove this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.

Peter Jesus returns to find us asleep. Sorrow swallows up his tormented soul.

Voice Peter, could you not keep watch for an hour?

Prompter & Echoes The most crucial hour ever!

Peter Had I watched, I'd have seen flaming torches come from the city walls. But I sleep! I sleep while the bravest man who ever lived agonized. He wrestles with a terrible choice.

Prompter & Echoes A soul-wrenching choice!

Peter The atoning blood of every Passover lamb and every bull sacrificed since Adam becomes effective only if Jesus agrees in this moment to bear the cursed sins of all humanity.

Voice Watch, Peter. The hour is near.

Peter Again, Jesus goes and prays the same agonizing words. He comes back and – can you believe it? He again finds us sleeping! Oh what shame! Our eyes are so heavy! But that is no excuse. Jesus prays a third time, and returns. Oh no! Not again! We are snoring!

Voice The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.

Peter Had we been awake, we'd have seen flickering torches snake their way up the mountainside, tracing our steps.

Prompter & Echoes Closer and closer!

Peter I did not yet grasp the terrible gravity of this moment's verdict!  
Every shameful act and thought, yours and mine, is in the venom  
that the serpent's accusing fangs will soon inject into Messiah's veins  
while he hangs, tortured, on the blood-soaked cross.

Voice Calvary's cruel cross!

Peter Sin's filth will penetrate, searing, scalding the soul of the son of God.  
The full, excruciating, lethal dose, the essence of humanity's sins,  
as foretold ages before! Oh, the horror of this night! And I slept!

Prompter & Echoes Such anguish!

Voice Peter, you still rest? Enough! This is the hour of darkness.  
The Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Get up!

Prompter & Echoes The traitor is coming!

Peter We join the other disciples and look down the slope.  
Torches! Many, many torches, coming closer and closer!  
Oh, they have weapons! My stomach knots in fear.  
Hear the angry mob and vengeful priests scream with fury.

Prompter & Echoes Where's that rebel?

Peter Look! Judas is leading the chief priests' officers.  
How can he do this? He's one of Messiah's chosen twelve!  
Judas is walking right up to Jesus! Oh! He is kissing Jesus!  
Is it a signal? Now Jesus is speaking to the soldiers.

Voice Whom do you seek?

Prompter & Echoes Jesus of Nazareth."

Voice I Am.

Peter "I Am!" Moses heard that same Name at the burning bush  
when God revealed His eternal identity! The soldiers fall back!  
I draw my sword and strike off the ear of the High Priest's servant.

Voice Put up your sword, Peter.

Peter Jesus surrenders himself to them!  
We disciples all flee, abandoning the Son of God.  
Jesus has sealed his own fate, to save us from our sins.  
He will suffer the depths of God's wrath and judgment in our place.

Prompter & Echoes For our salvation!