

**Scripture ~ Matthew 26:69-75**

*69 Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." 70 But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." 71 When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth." 72 Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." 73 After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.*

**Reflection for Adults**

In the autumn of 1934, the Detroit Tigers were in the middle of their first pennant race in 25 years. Hank Greenberg was one of the team's first baseman, and one of the greatest sluggers of all time. The Tigers needed him in their game against the NY Yankees. But Greenberg, a Jewish-American, was torn about whether he should play the game that day. It was September 1...Yom Kippur. After consulting with his rabbi and family, Greenberg made the decision to not play. With American anti-Semitism on the rise, Greenberg's decision was not popular. Fans shouted, "Rosh Hashanah comes every year but the Tigers haven't won the pennant since 1909!" But Greenberg remained true to his convictions, attending synagogue services that day.

It is not always easy to be true to our religious convictions when forces from all sides are asking us to deny the very things that give us life. Peter found this out in the courtyard as he watched Jesus being led away to trial. Just weeks before, Peter had mustered up the courage to profess that Jesus was "the Messiah". But now, he denied he even knew him.

The Tigers lost to the Yankees that day. Who knows whether or not Hank Greenberg's decision to not play had anything to do with the results of the game? But what we do know is, in a small way, his decision to not deny his faith helped pave the way for a more tolerant baseball league and society.

Take a look at the picture. Is the person with folded arms a defiant Peter? Or could it be a defiant Jesus, saying to us, "no matter how many times you deny me, I will always love you!"

**Going Deeper**

- Has there ever been a time that you have denied your faith, or your belief in Jesus, in order to fit in? Was it worth it?

**Reflection for Children**

Peter was Jesus' closest friend, and the leader of the disciples. The night Jesus was arrested however, Peter was afraid for his own life and ran away from Jesus. Some people in the courtyard recognized him, and began to ask him if he was a disciple of Jesus. Peter got angry, and said that he had never even seen Jesus. He denied Jesus. Even though Peter denied Jesus three times that night, Jesus loved Peter very much. After Jesus rose from the dead, he forgave Peter for denying him.

### **Discussion with Children**

- Have you ever told someone you weren't a Christian because you were embarrassed?
- Do you think there is anything you could do that would make Jesus stop loving you?