

LESSON 38

The Death of Christ

MATTHEW 27:27-61



BIBLE TRUTH

THE DEATH OF JESUS BRINGS US LIFE

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read John 14:1–26 from the Scriptures or read story 112, “Jesus Promises to Send the Holy Spirit,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

A Crown of Thorns

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a crown of thorns (Cut narrow branches from any thorny bush like a rose and weave them into a circle. Use leather gloves to protect fingers from the prickles.)
- ✓ a box to hold the crown
- ✓ stick or length of bamboo or reed
- ✓ four pieces of straw or stick, one shorter than the others
- ✓ piece of scarlet cloth (robe placed on Jesus to mock him)

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

All Our Sins Were Nailed to the Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ brown craft paper to make a large six-foot cross
- ✓ a pad of index-card-size sticky notes—one for each child
- ✓ pencils or pens

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 38—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

LESSON SNAPSHOT

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN
9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 15 MIN

Bring Back the Passover

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ brown construction paper cut crosswise into one-inch strips—three strips for each child
- ✓ red construction paper cut into one-inch circles—one circle for each child
- ✓ print out the following verses on a sheet of paper and cut them apart so kids can read them: Romans 5:9–10; Ephesians 1:7–8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:13–14; 1 Peter 1:18–19; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:4–6

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus was crowned with thorns—Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords, endured the mocking of sinful men and death on the cross so that we might be saved (Hebrews 12:2). The soldiers gave Jesus a crown of thorns, a scarlet robe, and a staff. They struck Jesus again and again on the head. This was no surprise to Jesus; he knew the fate that awaited him. Consider these verses from Isaiah’s prophecy that he would have known from childhood: “He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted” (Isaiah 53:3–4).

Jesus was crucified—Jesus was nailed to the cross and crucified. A sign was placed over his head that announced his title as “King of the Jews” (Matthew 27:37). The soldiers cast lots for his clothing, and a crowd gathered to mock him. Jesus endured crucifixion on our behalf. It was a terrible way to be executed. It was so horrible that it was reserved for slaves and the most degraded criminals. If the legs of a person who was crucified were not broken, it might take days to die an agonizing death. Once the legs of a person were broken, they could no longer support their weight to lift themselves and breathe so they would suffocate.

Jesus died and was buried—While Jesus suffered on the cross, Matthew 27:46 records that he cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” For all eternity past, Jesus enjoyed sweet fellowship with his Father. Now the Father poured out his full wrath upon Christ for our sin, forsaking his Son upon the cross. John 19:30 adds that just before he died, Jesus said, “It is finished,” signifying that the wrath of the Father had been fully poured out. The death of Christ was marked by earthquakes, the tearing of the temple curtain, and the resurrections of many. Those watching were terrified, some now realizing that Jesus was, indeed, the Son of God (Matthew 27:54). John 19:33 records that the soldiers did not break Jesus’ legs, for he was already dead. Instead, they pierced Jesus’ side with a spear. After his death, Joseph of Arimathea requested Jesus’ body and buried him in his own new tomb (Matthew 27:57–60).

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

The death of Christ is the heart of the gospel. "Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins" (Hebrews 9:22). Jesus was the Lamb of God who was slain so that we could be forgiven for our sins. Romans 5:8–9 says, "God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God."

As Jesus was dying, darkness came over the whole land. At the moment of his death, the temple curtain was torn in two. This curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, which blocked men from the presence of God. With Jesus' death, the curtain was torn top to bottom, and the way between man and God was opened. John records that just before Jesus died he said "It is finished" (John 19:30). The wrath of God poured out upon Jesus for all sin was exhausted, and the way to God was opened.

Luke 23:46 records that Jesus cried out, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" These words were not just for himself; they were for all those who are "in Christ" through faith in his sacrifice. Jesus died for all of us.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 27:27–61 from the Scriptures or read story 116, "The Death of Christ," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 **15 MIN**

A Crown of Thorns

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a crown of thorns (Cut narrow branches from any thorny bush like a rose and weave them into a circle. Use leather gloves to protect fingers from the prickles.)
- ✓ a box to hold the crown
- ✓ stick or length of bamboo or reed
- ✓ four pieces of straw or stick, one shorter than the others
- ✓ piece of scarlet cloth (robe placed on Jesus to mock him)

Read through the account of the crucifixion from Matthew’s gospel (Matthew 27:27–50). As you come to each of the objects listed, pass them around the class. As you pass around the crown of thorns in its box, caution the children to look at it closely but not to touch it. Talk about how terrible it would be to have a crown of thorns forced down on your head.

Before you pass the stick, demonstrate how the soldiers hit Jesus with it. Throw the scarlet cloth around a volunteer’s shoulders. Before you pass around the four straws that represent the lots cast for Jesus’ clothing, demonstrate how they would work with four student volunteers.

By passing these items around you will enhance the children’s appreciation and understanding of one of the most important stories in the Bible.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION **10 MIN**

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 **15 MIN**

All Our Sins Were Nailed to the Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ brown craft paper to make a large six-foot cross
- ✓ a pad of index-card-size sticky notes—one for each child
- ✓ pencils or pens

Before class, tape the cross to a wall in the classroom.

This exercise will remind the children that Jesus died for their sins personally.

Ask the children how many of them think they are sinners. Explain that Jesus is their only hope for the forgiveness of sin. Pass out the sticky notes, one to each child. Tell them to write the word SIN on their sticky note while they think of one way that they have sinned. Explain that if they place their hope and trust in Jesus' sacrifice as atonement for their sins, they can be forgiven.

Tell them that Christ's sacrifice on the cross is sufficient to pay the penalty for all of our sins. Have them carry their sin up to the cross and affix it there. Explain to the class that we can ask God to take away our sin if we trust in Jesus.

Do not call for a public response to the gospel; children can be too easily manipulated or eager to please. But, if a child indicates their desire to trust Christ, make sure their parents (if they are Christians) know so they can pray with them.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY **5 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME **10 MIN**

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 38—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Why did Jesus die on the cross?**
(Jesus took the punishment for our sins and died in our place so that we can spend eternity with God in heaven. Note: Use this question to help the children understand the gospel message.)
- **What did the sign over his head say?**
(This is Jesus, King of the Jews.)

■ **What were Jesus' last words?**

(John 19:30 tells us Jesus' last words were "It is finished." This meant that the wrath of God had been completely poured out on Jesus.)

CLOSING PRAYER **5 MIN**

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON **15 MIN**

Bring Back the Passover

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ brown construction paper cut crosswise into one-inch strips—three strips for each child
- ✓ red construction paper cut into one-inch circles—one circle for each child
- ✓ print out the following verses on a sheet of paper and cut them apart so kids can read them: Romans 5:9–10; Ephesians 1:7–8; 2:13; Hebrews 9:13–14; 1 Peter 1:18–19; 1 John 1:7; Revelation 1:4–6

This exercise is designed to connect the Passover with the crucifixion.

Give each child three brown strips and have them place them on the table in front of them in the form of a doorway. Read the account of the first Passover from Exodus 12:23–28. Then ask them what happened at the first Passover. Explain to them that the strips of paper represent the door frame. Pass out the red circles and have the children place them on their paper door frame. Ask the children what the red circle represents. They should say the blood of the lamb.

Then read the account of the crucifixion. Tell the children to take their strips and make a cross. Have them place the red circle on the cross. Now ask them what the red circle represents. They should say the blood of the Lamb, Jesus.

Now ask them to tell you how the Passover points to the cross.

Distribute the cutout verses to volunteers and have them read them to the rest of the class (or just read them yourself) to make the point over and over.

LESSON 38 - THE DEATH OF CHRIST

