

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** ..... **10 MIN**

**The Curtain Torn in Two**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large paper drop cloth to act as the temple curtain
- ✓ a Bible

**4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION**

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

**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**

**Torn Curtain**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

**8. CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

**9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **15 MIN**

**Compare**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ Bibles for the class

**TOTAL 75 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).

## A LITTLE BIT MORE

### *The Temple Curtain*

At the moment of Jesus' death, the curtain dividing the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place in the temple was torn in two. A barrier between man and God was no longer needed. Colossians 2:14 tells us that Jesus fulfilled the law and cancelled its claim against us. Only once a year could the high priest enter the Most Holy Place and never without taking blood that he offered for himself and the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:7).

Hebrews 9:12 explains that Jesus entered the Most Holy Place by his own blood and obtained eternal redemption. God tore the curtain in two, signifying no more sacrifices would ever again be needed. And because Jesus' sacrifice was sufficient for eternal redemption, there was no longer any barrier between God and man.

## 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 ..... 10 MIN

**The Curtain Torn in Two****SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large paper drop cloth to act as the temple curtain
- ✓ a Bible

This exercise is designed to teach the children why the temple curtain was torn and what that provides for us.

Set up the curtain in the front corner of your classroom. Place a stool behind the curtain with a Bible open to Hebrews 10.

Make a big deal about how the curtain prevented people from being in the presence of God and how it protected them from the judgment of God. Remember, God is holy and people are sinful.

Ask the class if they can see through the curtain. Of course they will say no. Then read the account of the crucifixion and the death of Jesus from Matthew 27:27–54. Explain that when Jesus died, the curtain was torn down the middle. At the same time, rip the curtain right down the middle, opening the way to the other side.

Pick up the Bible and read Hebrews 10:19–22. Explain the verse, noting that once we are forgiven, we can enter the presence of God with confidence.

The new temple, where the Spirit of God lives, is the heart of every believer. Not only is there no curtain, but also our hearts have become the Most Holy Place. That is why Paul tells us we should not defile the temple of the Holy Spirit by sinning (1 Corinthians 6:19).

## TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

## 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 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.

**WORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5 MIN**

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

**ACTIVITY TIME** ..... **10 MIN**

**Torn Curtain**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils

Draw a picture of the curtain of the temple torn in two. Write the words, “Enter into his presence with confidence!”

**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

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

**BONUS OBJECT LESSON** ..... **15 MIN**

**Compare**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase markers
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Compare the death of Christ in each of the Gospels—Matthew 27:33–66; Mark 15:22–47; Luke 23:33–56; and John 19:23–42—to form one harmonized picture. Use Matthew’s Gospel as a baseline and add additional details from the other three. Divide the class into four groups. Each group should look up a different Gospel account. Have the group alert you to differences and list them on the whiteboard.

What is the significance of John’s addition, “It is finished?” (The wrath of God being poured out for sin was satisfied and Jesus knew his mission was finished.)

What is the significance of Luke’s addition, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.” (With these words Jesus demonstrated his faithfulness to the Father to the very end. There is no bitterness, only trust. Jesus, having completed the mission, entrusted himself to the Father.)