



FUNDAMENTAL #7

Why did Jesus die?

MEMORY SCRIPTURES

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. —John 3:16

SUMMARY STATEMENT

God loves us *so much*! He loves everyone who has ever lived, everyone now living, and everyone who has yet to be born. He doesn't always love what we're *doing*—in fact He hates sin, and when we disobey His rules for living a good and beautiful life, it makes Him very sad.

Sinners create negative consequences, so when we do something wrong against God or others, there's a necessary penalty. In the old covenant (mostly the time in history described in the Old Testament), God instructed priests to offer animal sacrifices as a way to remind the people that there was a penalty to be paid. This took place until the time when the one and only sacrifice of Jesus Christ would be made. (Though animal sacrifices didn't actually take away sins, they pictured the ultimate sacrifice that eventually would.)

That may be hard for us to understand today, but sinning against our Creator is serious, and it requires a death penalty. Today our ministers don't offer animal sacrifices when someone sins because our very Creator, Jesus Christ, offered His own life for all of us. With His death, He paid for all the sins of humanity: past, present and future. None of us could have done this because we're flawed humans, but He was and is the Son of God and lived a life as a man without sin, so He is worthy to pay that death penalty. As a result of His sacrifice, it is possible for us to talk directly with God the Father in prayer and ask for forgiveness when we disobey His good rules for living.

BEGIN YOUR STUDY

Read the memory scriptures together with your children, then read through the summary statement (remember to simplify the statement, if necessary). Have your children cut and paste the summary statement from this page in their **"Fundamentals Bible Study Journal"** (as suggested in the **Memorizing Scripture** resource **"The Fundamentals"**).

Have your child read and write the memory scripture, **John 3:16**, in his or her journal. Discuss with your child how God gave His only Son, Jesus Christ, by having Him come to earth as God in the





flesh (in human form). Christ, who never did anything wrong and never made any bad choices, died so that we—humans who make lots of mistakes—can have our sins forgiven and can be a part of God’s family.

Have your child bring you his or her “most precious treasure”—a favorite toy, blanket, stuffed animal, or book, for example. Then have your child tell you why this item is so loved and important. Ask, What if you had to give this special treasure away? How would you feel if you had to give it up? It is hard to give up the things that are important to us.

Now imagine when God the Father gave His Son. How do you think He felt? We are so important to God the Father and Jesus Christ, that God gave His Son to die for us, and Jesus Christ willingly died for us, so that we can have the opportunity to be a part of God’s family. God loves us so much!



DIGGING DEEPER INTERACTION #1

We know that God the Father gave His Son for us and Jesus Christ gave His life for us. They sacrificed to show Their love for us. Discuss what it means *to sacrifice* on a level your child will understand: giving up, doing without, sharing. We know that we are trying to be like God and therefore we, too, need to make sacrifices to show our love for God and others. That means doing things for others instead of always doing things for ourselves. God wants us to live a life where we are **GIVING**, not always trying to **GET** for ourselves. Brainstorm with your child ways that you can show others you care about them by giving.

Some of these ways may include:

Baking cookies to **give to a friend** (even though you may want to eat them all yourself!).

Buying a gift for someone who may not be able to afford a new toy rather than buying a new toy you wanted for yourself. (Or buy one for anyone just because you want to show them how much you care about them!)

Giving up a Sunday afternoon playing video games or watching a movie and instead **going to a senior citizen’s house** to rake leaves, do some gardening, or shovel snow.



DIGGING DEEPER INTERACTION #2

Have your child say the memory scripture. Tell him or her that today you are going to focus on the part where it says that “God so loved the world.” God loves everyone in the whole world (though as we learned in the summary statement, He does not love it when people sin). We spend time with and have friends in our church congregations, but probably most of our children spend time with friends “in the world”—friends who do not attend our fellowship. We can follow God’s example by showing love to people in the world.



Create a list of ways to show love to others everywhere, not just at church services. Some examples may include:

Always saying kind words (never calling anyone names or saying something mean about anyone).

Letting others go first in line.

Celebrating with someone when something good happens to them, like winning a race in gym class or receiving the Best Story Award in Language Arts, and so on.

Doing a service project, like making blankets for those in the hospital or filling a school backpack with supplies for children in need. (Look online for organizations in your community.)

BIBLE STORY: JESUS CHRIST, THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Have your child recite the memory scripture. God the Father and Jesus Christ continue to show Their love for us by guiding us like a gentle shepherd guides his sheep. Read through [John 10:11-18](#) with your child and discuss how Christ is the Good Shepherd who will never leave us and always looks out for what is best for us.

For a continuing study on Christ, choose a favorite story from the Gospels about the life of Christ. While reading the story, ask your child what we can learn from Christ's example, what character traits He shows in the particular story, and how we can apply the lessons and develop those character traits in our own lives.

BONUS IDEAS

There are several examples throughout Scripture of God's loving care of His people. Challenge your children (and yourself!) to find additional scriptures to add to their **"Fundamentals Bible Study Journal."**

For a more in-depth study on the topic of Jesus Christ, the Good Shepherd, find the EEI lesson **"Moral Precepts for a Teachable Heart"** in the **Shepherding the Heart** section.

WRAP-UP ACTIVITY

Have your child create a poster with the [John 3:16](#) memory verse and display it with the other Fundamentals posters.

To end your study, have your child recite the memory scripture for a small audience, perhaps at a small church social or potluck gathering.

