



EASTER BONUS SESSIONS

KIDS MIDWEEK GUIDE



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

EASTER BONUS SESSION 1

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

MATTHEW 21; MARK 11; LUKE 19; JOHN 12



CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus cried because He wanted the people in Jerusalem to know that He is the Messiah so that they would be saved. God wants all people to turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and accept the free gift of salvation and eternal life.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: Celebration



FOR THE SESSION

PLAN the Session

- Pray, asking God to prepare your heart to teach and the hearts of kids to receive His Word.
- Read the *Leader Bible Study* and review the session plan.
- Decide which *Welcome* activities to prepare for the session.
- Familiarize yourself with the *Learn* section enough to teach naturally.
- Organize discipleship groups, including a plan for new kids.
- Print a copy of the *Live* section for each discipleship group leader.

LEADER Bible Study

Celebration: the act of praising God, enjoying His presence, and acknowledging His good works

Today we will be talking about Jesus entering Jerusalem to celebrate Passover. As Jesus rides into Jerusalem, the crowd waves palm branches and lays down their clothing for His donkey to walk over. The crowd recognizes Jesus as their Messiah! To help prepare you for today's lesson, consider the first time you heard about the good news of Jesus and how that changed your life. When we understand what it meant for Jesus to come down to earth, we truly can't help but celebrate Him. This lesson would be a good time to share with the kids when you first trusted Jesus and put your faith in His death and resurrection.

There are three main points to focus on for the lesson. The first main point will be the spiritual discipline of celebrating. The Bible shows us that celebrating means acknowledging Jesus and praising Him for what He has done. Emphasize that the crowd was unashamed when celebrating Jesus for being their Savior! Our opening game of "Biggest Fan" will bring the kids into a celebratory mindset.

In Luke 19:38-40, we will point out that when the Pharisees were upset about the celebration being too much, Jesus said that even the rocks will cry out for who Jesus is! Some people in our lives will not truly realize why we are celebrating Easter! It is easy to get caught up in the excitement of the holiday and lose the true meaning of what we are celebrating. Again, we learn that we can celebrate Jesus simply for existing—Jesus cannot be hidden! And lastly we want to point out that this story ultimately leads us into Good Friday. Jesus went from being the most celebrated man in Jerusalem to being killed on a cross less than a week later. Though this time of celebration can be filled with mixed emotions, we get to celebrate that Jesus will rise from his grave as the Savior to all people! We can celebrate Jesus for who He is, the example He provides to us, and the path that He leads us through to salvation and a life with Him.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach



WELCOME

5–10 MINUTES

Welcome kids to the session



LEARN

15–20 MINUTES

Learn how to practice spiritual disciplines



LOVE

10–15 MINUTES

Love God by practicing a spiritual discipline



LIVE

20–30 MINUTES

Live for God through discipleship



PREPARE

FOR THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Allergy Alert, Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.

WELCOME

Option 3: Praise and worship freeze dance

- ☐ worship music

LEARN

Group Activity: Zig-zag

- ☐ painter's tape

Introduce the discipline of celebration

- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ inflated balloons
- ☐ streamers
- ☐ plastic eggs

LOVE

Option 1: Rocks cry out

- ☐ paint
- ☐ paint brushes
- ☐ smooth rocks

Option 2: Palm branch craft

- ☐ green construction paper, 1 per child
- ☐ craft sticks, 2 per child
- ☐ jewel stickers
- ☐ assorted stickers

LIVE

Option 1: Pick a card

- ☐ index cards

Option 2: Draw a question

- ☐ small basket or bin

Option 3: Pin the finger on the question

- ☐ poster board



WELCOME Kids

Choose one or all of these activities to engage kids as they arrive.

☐ **OPTION 1: SHARE GOOD NEWS**

This game is similar to playing “telephone.” Instruct kids to sit in a circle and prepare to whisper a “good news” message from one to another. Choose one kid to begin the message. They should say something good that happened in their life recently, something they love about coming to church, or something they are looking forward to in the future. They will whisper their sentences to the person sitting next to them. That person will whisper the message to the next person and so on. Continue around the circle until it comes back to the person that shared their “good news.” Continue play as time allows.

☐ **OPTION 2: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES CHARADES**

Choose one volunteer to act out a spiritual discipline they have learned while others gather to watch and make guesses. Continue play as time allows. Encourage kids to add in acting out the Bible stories covered. Examples for the game include: Bible study, celebration, worship, confession, fasting, stewardship, meditation, evangelism, service, prayer, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, the last supper, Jesus riding on a donkey, Jesus rising from the dead, empty tomb, Jesus praying in the garden, and so forth.

☐ **OPTION 3: PRAISE AND WORSHIP FREEZE DANCE**

Remind kids that when we practice the spiritual discipline of celebration, it can sometimes look like us praising and worshiping God with music. Play worship music and let everyone sing and dance for several seconds. Pause the music and everyone must immediately freeze. If anyone falls, moves, and so forth, they must sit down. Start the music back up and freeze again after a few seconds. Continue play as time allows.



LEARN

LEARN about celebration (15–20 minutes)

1 REVIEW SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

SAY “ During this time each week we come together to learn about and practice spiritual disciplines. ”

What is a spiritual discipline? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ A spiritual discipline is a practice, or a repeated action, we do to help us grow in love for God and godliness. Some examples of spiritual disciplines are worship, prayer, celebration, fasting, Bible study, service, rest, and generosity. ”

3 INTRODUCE THE DISCIPLINE OF CELEBRATION

As your time begins, kids will find you in the middle of decorating the room for a party. Display a few balloons, drape streamers on the furniture and walls, and place Easter eggs around the room. As you begin explaining the spiritual discipline, direct the kids to help you decorate the classroom as well with streamers and eggs. Use painter's tape to adhere decorations.

SAY “ Can anyone guess which spiritual discipline we might be learning about today based on what you are helping me do right now? [Allow responses.] Yes, today we are going to learn about the spiritual discipline of celebration! ”

Can someone please share a special tradition your family has when you are celebrating a birthday or holiday? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ Today we will be learning about the spiritual discipline of celebration. Celebration can be described as praising, enjoying, and acknowledging all that God has done!

Around this time of the year, we usually celebrate Palm Sunday—the day Jesus entered Jerusalem for Passover. Before we talk more about Palm Sunday and what it means for us, let's play a game to help us get in the mood for celebrating! ”

2 GROUP GAME: BIGGEST FAN

Place kids in random pairs prior to explaining the activity.

SAY “ We are going to play a game of ‘Rock, Paper, Scissors!’ For this game though, you don't just stop at one win. Once you play against a partner, the winner will continue on to find a new opponent and the loser will follow their partner around cheering them on as they battle their next opponent. Whoever wins from that group will continue on to a new person to battle while everyone else becomes the cheer squad. As you continue to win you will gain more followers to cheer you on. Continue on until there is one winner and everyone else are the cheerleaders! Depending on how many kids you have in class you can play a few rounds. Celebrating God means that we are paying attention to and recognizing the good things that God has done and because of what He has done we get to outwardly express it through praise, singing, cheering, and worshipping! ”



LEARN

4 READ THE BIBLE

Read Luke 19:28-40.

SAY “ This passage of Scripture is typically titled something similar to ‘The Triumphal Entry.’ Can someone tell me why it’s called that? Triumphal means celebrating a victory! Lets rewind a little to help give some background to this story. First, this moment was prophesied years ago in the book of Zechariah, meaning this very moment was written about and the Jewish people had read and known of this text. When they recognized this moment was happening, they began celebrating! So why did Jesus, later in the text, cry about the unbelief of the Jews? Some of the people who were celebrating thought that Jesus was coming to save them from the Romans, not coming to save them from their sins! People were shouting and saying ‘Hosanna’ but some only believed they were there to fix their current troubles instead of showing them eternal life. Though the Triumphal Entry was certainly a joyful time for Christians, knowing what we know now, this was a time of mixed belief among the very people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem. They knew who Jesus was, but they didn’t believe He was the Savior of their souls.

As we watch Jesus enter into the city, He comes humbly on a donkey. You would think a king would make a more grand entrance! But what we can look at and celebrate is our humble Lord, riding on a young donkey, sitting on disciples’ clothing, and being welcomed with palm leaves. We can celebrate the character of Jesus every day! ”

5 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The people in the crowd were celebrating Jesus by shouting ‘Hosanna!’ They heard that Jesus had come to Jerusalem as their Messiah or Savior. We learn to celebrate Jesus because He came to earth to save us! Some of the people in the crowd did not know that Jesus would be the living sacrifice, and one week later ultimately sacrifice Himself on the cross to save us from our sins. And the coolest part is—when the Pharisees get mad about all of the celebrating, Jesus reminds them that the whole world, nature and humans, can’t help but to be an out loud celebration of who He is! Jesus’ light cannot be hidden from anyone. ”

6 GROUP ACTIVITY: ZIG-ZAG

Before the game begins, use painter’s tape to create two zig-zag race courses on the ground. Form two teams and give each kid a disposable straw. Dive the two teams by placing half of each team at opposite ends of the course. Choose two volunteers to go first and provide them with a plastic egg. Encourage kids to use the straws to gently blow the plastic egg as it follows the course. If the egg falls off course, instruct kids to pick it up and put it back on the tape. Once the egg gets to the end of the path, the next teammate will repeat the process in the opposite direction.

SAY “ How did you know which path to follow to guide your egg to the finish line? [Allow responses.] The path was laid out before you! Everyone was cheering you on as you followed the path. Jesus came to earth to guide us! In His life, Jesus showed us our need for Him, His power to save us from sin, and how to live in a way that honors Him. We celebrate Jesus because He has shown us the way! When we celebrate Jesus during this Easter season, we get to show other people who may not know who Jesus is and what He has done for us by offering a relationship with Him. ”



7 FOLLOW UP ON LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

Last week, we had a challenge. How did it go? [Allow responses.]

8 INTRODUCE THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

SAY “ Make a handmade invitation to Easter Sunday service and give it to a friend. Explain that Easter is about celebrating Jesus’ resurrection! ”

9 CLOSE IN PRAYER

Use the scripted prayer below or pray in your own words.

SAY “ God, thank You for sending Jesus to this earth as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Help us celebrate this week, thinking about the example that Jesus set for us. Please teach us how to always celebrate Jesus like those who celebrated Him on Palm Sunday. Please help us spread Your gospel to those who haven’t heard it yet so they may also receive the gift of salvation. God, You deserve all of our honor and celebration! Amen. ”



LOVE God by practicing celebration (10–15 minutes)

Choose one these two options as a way to lead children to practice the spiritual discipline of celebration.

☐ **OPTION 1: ROCKS CRY OUT**

Place paint, paint brushes, and smooth rocks in the middle of tables. Remind kids of Jesus' words that "even the rocks would cry out in celebration for Him!" Explain that in today's activity, we will be painting rocks to decorate and leave around our neighborhood for others to find. These rocks will remind our neighbors of reasons we celebrate God during the Easter season. Guide the children to paint phrases such as: "God is good"; "He has risen"; "Jesus loves you"; along with Easter imagery, such as a cross, an empty grave, palm branches, and so forth.

☐ **OPTION 2: PALM BRANCH CRAFT**

Pass out green construction paper. Instruct kids to use a pencil to trace both hands (fingers spread out, not together) and cut out each hand print. Decorate each hand print with phrases such as "Hosanna", "Jesus is King", "King of Israel," or other phrases they think the people of Israel may have been shouting. They can also decorate each print with jewels, stickers, or markers. Once the hand prints are decorated, glue or tape each hand print to a craft stick to resemble a palm branch. After everyone has made their palm branch, play worship music and ask kids to show you what they think it looked like when everyone was celebrating Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Have them sing, dance, and wave their palm branches around.



LIVE for God through discipleship (20–30 minutes)

Form discipleship groups to provide a safe environment for kids to share with one another. Limit groups to ideally no more than five children and one adult leader. Prioritize forming groups according to gender first, then age. Adult leaders should never be alone with children.

1 EMPHASIZE HEALTHY DISCUSSION

Explain that discipleship time is a special time because we share our deep thoughts and feelings with one another. All must work together to create a safe place for sharing. Consider these three guidelines:

1. Listen when someone is talking.
2. Only comment when the person sharing invites you to do so.
3. In general, what is shared in the group should stay in the group. The only exception is talking with a trusted adult if it would help either you or the person who shared.

Note: Be sure to follow local laws and ministry policies concerning any report or suspicion of abuse or neglect.

2 GET EVERYONE TALKING

Choose one of the options below to encourage children to engage with one another.

☐ **OPTION 1: FIND YOUR PEOPLE**

Call out different categories such as number of siblings, favorite soda, age, or favorite board game. When a category is called, kids will work to find the other people whose answers match their own. For example, if you called out number of siblings, kids would group together based on whether they had no siblings, one sibling, two siblings, etc.

☐ **OPTION 2: TELL A STORY**

Lead the kids to sit in a circle. Explain that you will create a story together, one word at a time. Start the story with one word, then the kid next to you will add a word. Continue until everyone has had several turns to add to the story.

☐ **OPTION 3: THAT'S MY FAVORITE**

Lead the group to sit in a circle. Call out a category such as ice cream flavor, pizza topping, animal, or recess game. Invite the kids to go around the circle and take turns sharing their favorite choice in the given category.



3 DISCUSS LEARN TIME

Choose an option below to engage kids with the following questions.

1. What is something you learned today?
2. In what ways was Jesus triumphal entry a celebration?
3. Based on what you learned today, what do you think God is asking you to do?

☐ OPTION 1: PICK A CARD

Write each question on an index card. Fan the cards in your hand where kids cannot see the questions. Invite a kid to pick a card and answer the question.

☐ OPTION 2: DRAW A QUESTION

Write each question on a slip of paper. Fold the papers and place them in a basket or bin. Invite children to take turns drawing a question and answering it.

☐ OPTION 3: PIN THE FINGER ON THE QUESTION

Write the questions on poster board and display them on a wall. Invite a child to wear a blindfold or close his eyes. Spin him around three times and guide him to touch the poster board. Remove the blindfold. Lead him to answer the question closest to his finger.

4 WALK IN THE LIGHT

Read 1 John 1:7. Explain that this is a time for openness with one another as we answer the following questions: “How has it been hard for you to obey God this week? Where are you struggling?”

Model answering the question or confessing sin in an age-appropriate way. Ask a volunteer to pray for you. Do not force a child to share or pray. As children share their responses, guide others to not offer advice or try to fix the problem, but simply to pray for one another. Use one of the strategies below to encourage discussion.

- Form a circle. Go around the circle, giving each child an opportunity to share her struggles. Ask a volunteer to pray for her.
- Form pairs. Take turns sharing and praying for each other.
- Give each child a sheet of paper. Allow children to write or draw their answer to the question. Mix up the papers and distribute one to each child to pray for silently.

EASTER BONUS SESSION 2

JESUS SAVES US TO FOLLOW HIM

MATTHEW 27-28; MARK 15-16; LUKE 23-24; JOHN 19-20



CHRIST CONNECTION: While the people were crucifying Jesus, He asked His Father to forgive them. Even though Jesus never sinned, He went to the cross for our sin. Jesus forgives everyone who repents and believes He died and rose again.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE: Celebration



PLAN the Session

- Pray, asking God to prepare your heart to teach and the hearts of kids to receive His Word.
- Read the *Leader Bible Study* and review the session plan.
- Decide which *Welcome* activities to prepare for the session.
- Familiarize yourself with the *Learn* section enough to teach naturally.
- Organize discipleship groups, including a plan for new kids.
- Print a copy of the *Live* section for each discipleship group leader.

LEADER Bible Study

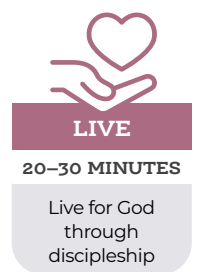
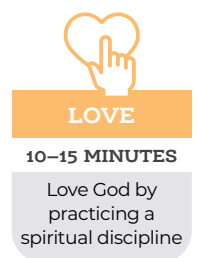
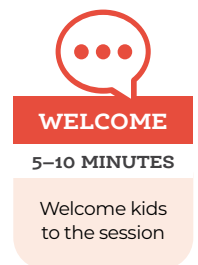
Celebration: the act of praising God, enjoying His presence, and acknowledging His good works

In today's lesson, we will be talking about the crucifixion and also the joy that it has brought us as believers. And while this is still a somber series of events, we will connect it back to celebrating what Jesus did for us when He died on the cross and rose again.

The first main point you will talk about is during our Follow the Leader game. This game will emphasize following a leader during the game, and while it may be silly, it shows us that there is a path and a leader for us to follow when we accept it. Without God showing us this path to salvation it would be a lot harder to follow. Our text highlights the time period where Jesus' disciples were not sure if He was going to come back to life. This would be a good time to mention a time in your life when you had to work on the spiritual discipline of celebrating in a season of trusting and waiting on God, just as the disciples had to do.

Lastly, the group demonstration has the kids thinking about what the resurrection means for our sinful nature. It is important to emphasize that when we follow Jesus and repent from our sins, we are forgiven. We celebrate the life, obedience, and faithfulness of Jesus in offering us a gift we could never earn or deserve. It might also be good to remind everyone again that celebrating Easter and following a theme can be fun, but we always want to focus on the reason for the holidays we celebrate.

At the end, be prepared to share how you participated in the challenge from last week by creating an invite for a friend to come celebrate Easter with you at church this season.





PREPARE

FOR THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Allergy Alert, Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.

WELCOME

Option 3: Praise and worship freeze dance

- ☐ worship music

LEARN

Group Activity: Follow the leader

- ☐ jelly beans
- ☐ disposable spoons, 1 per child
- ☐ plastic eggs, 1 per child

Group Demonstration: Sins on the cross

- ☐ colored construction paper, ½ sheet per child
- ☐ poster board

LOVE

Option 1: Joy jars

- ☐ colored construction paper, cut into squares
- ☐ jars or small containers with lids

Option 2: He is risen/we can be forgiven

- ☐ paper plates, 2 per child
- ☐ brass fastener, 1 per child

LIVE

Option 1: Pick a card

- ☐ index cards

Option 2: Draw a question

- ☐ small basket or bin

Option 3: Pin the finger on the question

- ☐ poster board



WELCOME Kids

Choose one or all of these activities to engage kids as they arrive.

☐ **OPTION 1: SHARE GOOD NEWS**

This game is similar to playing “telephone.” Instruct kids to sit in a circle and prepare to whisper a “good news” message from one to another. Choose one kid to begin the message. They should say something good that happened in their life recently, something they love about coming to church, or something they are looking forward to in the future. They will whisper their sentences to the person sitting next to them. That person will whisper the message to the next person and so on. Continue around the circle until it comes back to the person that shared their “good news.” Continue play as time allows.

☐ **OPTION 2: SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES CHARADES**

Choose one volunteer to act out a spiritual discipline they have learned while others gather to watch and make guesses. Continue play as time allows. Encourage kids to add in acting out the Bible stories covered. Examples for the game include: Bible study, celebration, worship, confession, fasting, stewardship, meditation, evangelism, service, prayer, Palm Sunday, Good Friday, the last supper, Jesus riding on a donkey, Jesus rising from the dead, empty tomb, Jesus praying in the garden, and so forth.

☐ **OPTION 3: PRAISE AND WORSHIP FREEZE DANCE**

Remind kids that when we practice the spiritual discipline of celebration, it can sometimes look like us praising and worshiping God with music. Play worship music and let everyone sing and dance for several seconds. Pause the music and everyone must immediately freeze. If anyone falls, moves, and so forth, they must sit down. Start the music back up and freeze again after a few seconds. Continue play as time allows.



LEARN

LEARN about celebration (15–20 minutes)

1 REVIEW SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Who can remind us what a spiritual discipline is? [Allow responses.]

SAY “ A spiritual discipline is an action you practice to grow in love for God and godliness. You might discipline yourself to get better at all sorts of things, like sports or music. It always takes hard work to grow, but practicing spiritual disciplines is worth the effort because it draws us closer to God and grows His kingdom. We will learn more about this today. ”

3 REVIEW THE DISCIPLINE OF CELEBRATION

SAY “ Last week we learned how Jesus was celebrated as He entered into Jerusalem. The crowd waved palm branches and laid their clothes at His feet as He came into the city! The crowd was celebrating because He knew that Jesus was their Savior and He was long awaited. It’s so easy for us to practice the spiritual discipline of celebrating Jesus when we see Him, trust Him, and remember what He has done for us! Sometimes we can’t help but sing, dance, and wave to show everyone the goodness of God.

Today we will be looking at this same city a few days later. The mood is going to shift a little bit and we will look at what it looks like to celebrate even in the hard times because of what Jesus came to earth to do. First, we are going to play a game to see how good you are at following directions and following a leader. ”

2 GROUP GAME: FOLLOW THE LEADER



Before the game begins, post an Allergy Alert and pass out a plastic spoon and an Easter egg. Fill each egg with a few jelly beans (to add some weight to the egg). Explain that today’s activity will require them to play a “Follow the Leader” game while holding the spoon and balancing the Easter egg without dropping it. Have children follow behind you in a line as you do different movements such as hopping like a rabbit, moving up and down, zig-zagging, spinning in a circle, marching with high knees, running, slow motion walking, and so forth. Take turns allowing kids to lead, if time permits.

SAY “ Today we are learning that Jesus saves us to follow Him! We can celebrate that Jesus came down to take our place as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. When we practice the discipline of celebrating Jesus, we are showing that He is the most important thing in our life! We can have fun when we celebrate by laughing, singing, playing, and dancing. We can also celebrate by recalling what makes Jesus great, by praying to Jesus, and by gathering to remember Him. ”



LEARN

4 READ THE BIBLE

Read John 20:1-31.

SAY “ We can call this passage The Resurrection of Jesus. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate Jesus rising from the dead after three days and defeating death. But what happened after that? We sometimes forget to look at the rest of the story after getting lost in all of the celebration. After Jesus rose from the dead He appeared before the disciples. They were spending time together, certainly grieving and doubting their faith, when all of a sudden Jesus appeared before them! They were shocked and happy to see Him. In that moment Jesus gave them the Holy Spirit, who we know as the Spirit of Jesus that lives in everyone who chooses to follow Him. Thomas, one of the twelve disciples, had only heard of Jesus rising from the grave but had not seen him. Thomas questioned if Jesus’ resurrection was real until He saw Jesus face to face. What can we learn from this passage?

There will be times when we have doubt or stumble in our faith. We know that Jesus is who He says He is and He will always show Himself when we seek Him. Jesus showed Himself to His believers and spoke if the provision of the Holy Spirit to guide them, and other believers, in His absence.

Jesus saved us so that we could follow Him. Because Jesus died on the cross, we get the chance to repent from our sins and follow Jesus. In this passage, Jesus guides the disciples with the Holy Spirit. Those disciples went out and told everyone about Jesus. Now we are learning about Jesus and getting the chance to tell everyone that He has saved us from our sins! ”

5 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ The three days after Jesus died were not full of celebration for His followers. Jesus’ followers were mourning, or feeling sad about His death. On the third day, Jesus appeared before the disciples and showed that He had conquered death. Jesus fulfilled the prophecies by dying on the cross and taking away our sin. ”

6 GROUP DEMONSTRATION: SINS ON THE CROSS

Create a large cross out of poster board. Pass out a half sheet of colored construction paper to each kid. Take time to reflect on ways we disobey God. Allow 1–2 minutes for everyone to write down their thoughts, then say: “When Jesus died on the cross, He took our place and made a way for our sins to be forgiven.” Have everyone rip this construction paper into 4–5 pieces and call a few kids up at a time to take a glue stick and glue the paper pieces onto the cross.

SAY “ Today we can celebrate knowing that even though we sin, Jesus’ death and resurrection made a way for us to be with God forever. He made a path for us to follow and now we can follow His teachings and live a life with Him. It’s not always easy to remember, and it doesn’t feel good when we sin, but because Jesus has risen from the grave, we can choose to repent from our sins and they are forgiven! ”



7 FOLLOW UP ON LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE

SAY “ Last week we challenged you to create an invite to share with a friend as a way to encourage them to come celebrate Easter. (Now would be a good time to show an invite you yourself made or share the names of a few people you invited to celebrate Easter with you.) We can practice the spiritual discipline of celebration by inviting others to celebrate with us! Having a community to celebrate with can help remind you to practice celebration when life feels hard or when you get distracted from the reasons we celebrate Jesus. ”

8 INTRODUCE THIS WEEK'S CHALLENGE

SAY “ Each day next week, write down one thing that gave you a reason to celebrate Jesus and His goodness. At the end of the week, reflect on the reasons we have to celebrate Jesus. ”

9 CLOSE IN PRAYER

Use the scripted prayer below or pray in your own words.

SAY “ Jesus, thank you for Easter. Thank you for being the ultimate sacrifice on the cross for our sins. Thank you for showing us that even in the darkest days, when we don't think there is anything to celebrate, you are faithful. Help us to truly understand what the crucifixion means for our life. Please help us be a good example to others through the discipline of celebration. ”



LOVE God by practicing celebration (10–15 minutes)

Choose one of these options as a way to lead children to practice the spiritual discipline of celebration.

☐ **OPTION 1: JOY JARS**

Place pencils, markers, crayons, and colored construction paper (cut into small squares) on tables. Encourage kids to take several squares of paper and write things that bring them joy. They may decorate the papers as well. Once they have completed their squares, give each a jar. Instruct children to place their “joy squares” inside the jar and close. Encourage children to retrieve a “joy square” from their jar each week to remind them of God’s good gifts.

☐ **OPTION 2: HE IS RISEN/WE CAN BE FORGIVEN**

Pass out two paper plates per child. On one plate, instruct kids to write out “He has risen!” and color in neutral colors to represent the stone blocking the way to Jesus’ grave. On the other plate guide them to write “____(their name) is forgiven” and color as desired. Place the two plates on top of one another and attach a brass fastener through the edge of the plates. Fasten it so that you can “open up” the tombstone to reveal the inside of the tomb.



LIVE for God through discipleship (20–30 minutes)

Form discipleship groups to provide a safe environment for kids to share with one another. Limit groups to ideally no more than five children and one adult leader. Prioritize forming groups according to gender first, then age. Adult leaders should never be alone with children.

1 EMPHASIZE HEALTHY DISCUSSION

Explain that discipleship time is a special time because we share our deep thoughts and feelings with one another. All must work together to create a safe place for sharing. Consider these three guidelines:

1. Listen when someone is talking.
2. Only comment when the person sharing invites you to do so.
3. In general, what is shared in the group should stay in the group. The only exception is talking with a trusted adult if it would help either you or the person who shared.

Note: Be sure to follow local laws and ministry policies concerning any report or suspicion of abuse or neglect.

2 GET EVERYONE TALKING

Choose one of the options below to encourage children to engage with one another.

☐ **OPTION 1: FIND YOUR PEOPLE**

Call out different categories such as number of siblings, favorite soda, age, or favorite board game. When a category is called, kids will work to find the other people whose answers match their own. For example, if you called out number of siblings, kids would group together based on whether they had no siblings, one sibling, two siblings, etc.

☐ **OPTION 2: TELL A STORY**

Lead the kids to sit in a circle. Explain that you will create a story together, one word at a time. Start the story with one word, then the kid next to you will add a word. Continue until everyone has had several turns to add to the story.

☐ **OPTION 3: THAT'S MY FAVORITE**

Lead the group to sit in a circle. Call out a category such as ice cream flavor, pizza topping, animal, or recess game. Invite the kids to go around the circle and take turns sharing their favorite choice in the given category.

3 DISCUSS LEARN TIME

Choose an option below to engage kids with the following questions.

1. What is something you learned today?
2. Why do we celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection?
3. Based on what you learned today, what do you think God is asking you to do?

|



☐ **OPTION 1: PICK A CARD**

Write each question on an index card. Fan the cards in your hand where kids cannot see the questions. Invite a kid to pick a card and answer the question.

☐ **OPTION 2: DRAW A QUESTION**

Write each question on a slip of paper. Fold the papers and place them in a basket or bin. Invite children to take turns drawing a question and answering it.

☐ **OPTION 3: PIN THE FINGER ON THE QUESTION**

Write the questions on poster board and display them on a wall. Invite a child to wear a blindfold or close his eyes. Spin him around three times and guide him to touch the poster board. Remove the blindfold. Lead him to answer the question closest to his finger.

4 COMPETE TO SHOW HONOR

Read Romans 12:10. Invite children to “outdo” one another in showing each other honor. Begin by telling a child you want to honor him. Say a specific way you see God at work in his life. Be prepared to help kids share meaningful encouragement to one another. Choose one of the following ways to lead children in competing to show honor.

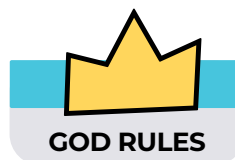
- Allow children to take turns honoring one another as they choose.
- Choose one child to honor for the day. Allow the rest of the group to take turns honoring each child.
- Guide each child to write her name at the top of a sheet of paper. Lead children to pass their papers to the child next to them. That child must write or draw a way to honor the child whose name is on the paper. Continue passing the papers after a given amount of time until each child’s paper is returned to them.



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR US

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use these prompts to share the gospel with your kids.



Ask: "Who is in charge at home?" Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



Ask: "What is the best gift you've ever received?" Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: "Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus." Read Romans 10:9-10.