



EASTER BONUS SESSIONS

OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE



the **GOSPEL**PROJECT.

EASTER BONUS SESSION 1

JESUS' TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

MATTHEW 21; MARK 11; LUKE 19; JOHN 12



KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

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

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.

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The triumphal entry presents two contrasting images: the people's celebration as Christ entered Jerusalem and Jesus' heartbroken lamentation as He wept over a city full of people He desired to save. Though God's people seemed overjoyed by the arrival of the Messiah, they did not understand what He would soon endure to pay the price for their sins.

Thousands had gathered in Jerusalem for Passover, one of the largest festivals of the Jewish calendar. Throughout this special week, Israelites came together for special rituals, feasts, and readings of Scripture. But this year was different; the people had received word of a miracle-performing prophet who could perhaps free them from the rule of the Romans. The Israelites expected the long-awaited Messiah to be a conquering king; they were not anticipating a Suffering Servant—the sacrificial Passover Lamb—who would lay down His life for their sins.

Yet, the all-knowing Christ was aware of the torment He would endure at the hands of the Pharisees and Roman authorities, and He received the crowds' praise even though He knew the masses would soon be calling for His execution. He knew the people of Jerusalem would betray Him, yet He wept for their lost state, nonetheless.

Jesus celebrated Scripture's promises of "Hosanna"—the salvation of God's people—and wept for those who would refuse to see God's love and receive His provision. Thankfully, Christ's once-and-for-all sacrifice wasn't just for His followers in the city of Jerusalem at that time; it is for everyone who places true faith in His finished work on the cross.

Lead boys and girls to see that Jesus created all people and cares deeply for them. Pray for their hearts to receive His truth and that they will celebrate the King who has secured eternal salvation for all who repent and believe in Him!



Scan the QR code to listen to The Gospel Project for Kids Weekly Leader Training Podcast.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

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



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Jesus' Triumphal Entry" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ green washable paint or ink pads
- ☐ paint brushes
- ☐ cups of water
- ☐ paper towels
- ☐ wet towelettes

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ palm branches, 2-4



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ "Donkey Head" printable

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ large, white construction paper, 1 per kid
- ☐ roll of string or twine

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Triumphal Word Search" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus' Triumphal Entry" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ Biblical clothes (optional)
- ☐ pictures of modern-day Jerusalem (optional)

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Eternal Life (John 3:16)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ sticky notes



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “How does your family celebrate big events like holidays, birthdays, or big accomplishments? Would you celebrate differently?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry” on the activity page.

SAY “Color the picture of Jesus entering Jerusalem. Explain that today’s story is about how the **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: PALM BRANCHES

Inform the kids that they will be making palm branches from their own handprints. Demonstrate how to apply washable green paint to their hands or to stamp their hands with washable green ink and then place them in the middle of the paper like a butterfly, with the heels of their hands touching. Allow each kid time to create their palm branches and allow these to dry for use at the end of class. Provide ample time for kids to wash their hands after making their branches.

SAY “**PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS INTO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING** with shouts of praise and by laying palm branches on the road.”

☐ OPTION 2: RACE TO PRAISE



Before class move all furniture out of the way to make room for a relay race or do this activity outside. Form two teams of kids. Direct one half of each team to line up on one end of the room and the other half to line up at the other end of the room, all facing each other. Place palm branches at one end of the room in front of the first kid in line on each team. Each kid will race to the other end of the room to pass their team’s palm branch to the next runner on their team, repeating until all kids have run across the room with a palm branch. However, as each kid runs across the room they must wave the branch in the air and shout out HOSANNA all the way across the room until they pass off the branch.

SAY “The people were quick to gather and praise Jesus as He entered Jerusalem. Jesus is the true King who deserves all praise.”





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hey kids, my name is [your name], and I am so excited to be here today. Today we will learn about the first event that happened in the week leading up to Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. If you have your Bibles with you, please take them out. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need them.] Before we begin, let’s pray together. ‘Dear Lord, we are so grateful to be here together studying Your Word. Please help us to focus so that we can hear from You today and what You want to teach us.’”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Who can tell me what our big picture question is? **Who is Jesus?** That’s right! Who can answer? [Allow responses.] **Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.**

Jesus lived a perfect life without sin even though He was tempted. In our lesson today, we will learn about the time when Jesus entered Jerusalem as a king, but not just like any other king. He is a perfect, flawless King, and because of this He is the perfect sacrifice to take our place in the punishment for our sin.”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Today we will be learning about an event in Jesus’ life called the triumphal entry. Prior to this event, Jesus had been healing people and spreading the news that salvation comes through God alone. He had also suffered the loss of his friend Lazarus and then brought Lazarus back to life from death.”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 21. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS’ TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

“Many people had gathered in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was coming to Jerusalem to celebrate too. He sent two of His disciples ahead of Him, saying, “Go into the village near Jerusalem, and you will find a young donkey tied there. Untie it and bring it to me.”

The disciples found the donkey, just as Jesus had said. They laid some of their clothes on the donkey, and Jesus sat down on them. Then He rode into Jerusalem. This fulfilled what was written by the prophet Zechariah many years ago:

“Tell the people of God,
See, your King is coming to you,
gentle, and mounted on a colt,
the foal of a donkey.”

When the crowd heard that Jesus was coming, they took palm branches and went out to meet Him. They spread the branches and some of their clothes on the ground ahead of Jesus. They kept praising God joyfully and shouting, over and over:

“Hosanna!

Blessed is he who comes
in the name of the Lord—the King of Israel!
Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Some of the Pharisees from the crowd called out to Jesus: “Teacher, tell your disciples to be quiet!” They thought the people shouldn’t be calling Jesus the King of Israel.

Jesus replied, “I tell you, if they were to keep silent the stones themselves would cry out!”

As Jesus approached the city, He wept for the city. He said, “If you only knew who I am and what is about to happen! But it is hidden from your eyes. You are unable to see that God is visiting you.”

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

STORYTELLING TIPS

Act It Out! Dress up and tell the story as a person who witnessed Jesus entering Jerusalem.

Modern-day Jerusalem: Display pictures of modern-day Jerusalem for kids to see and realize that Jerusalem is a real place and that you can still see many of the sites mentioned in the Bible.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

| turn away from their sin, trust in Jesus, and accept the free gift of salvation and eternal life. ” |

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Every year God’s people celebrated the Passover. Why was the Passover celebrated? [Allow responses.] The people were celebrating to remember how God rescued them from death as He passed over the houses that were marked with the blood of the Passover lamb. As people flooded into Jerusalem to celebrate this festival of remembrance, Jesus also came to celebrate. People had heard that Jesus had performed great miracles, and they were excited He was now on the way to the city. How did Jesus enter the city? [Allow responses.] Exactly! Jesus entered the city on a donkey just as the prophet Zechariah had said He would (Zechariah 9:9). To many people, this was an odd way for a king to enter into a city. They would normally expect a king to be on a horse, not a donkey.

While many celebrated and praised Jesus as the promised Messiah who would bring salvation, others did not believe. Many of God’s people were expecting a king who would be a warrior and conquer the Roman army. They did not realize Jesus wasn’t there to save them from their physical enemies, but to save them from the enemy of sin. Sin is the greatest enemy we have, and only through Jesus do we find victory and freedom.

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. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ God will one day return to make a new heaven and new earth, where He will live with His people forever! There are many people in this world who have not heard the gospel and do not know that salvation only comes when we put our faith in Jesus and believe that His death on the cross and His resurrection provide freedom from the punishment for our sin, death. The Bible tells us that if we call upon the name of the Lord, we will be saved (Romans 10:13). Have you called upon Jesus and are you following Him as your Lord and Savior? [Allow responses.] If you do not know how to answer that, or if you have questions, I would love to talk with you more about this. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

4 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session write each word of the key passage (including the reference) on sticky notes, one word per note. Place the sticky notes all over the room. Inform the kids that they will be collecting the sticky notes to put the key passage in the correct order, but they will only be collecting one note at a time. Tell the kids that you will say the first word of the key passage and then point to a kid. That kid will need to find that word and return it to you. As each word is collected, place it on the classroom board, but in jumbled order. Once all of the words have been collected, help all of the kids work together to unscramble the verse.

SAY “ This verse reminds us how much God loves us and what Jesus was willing to do so we could have forgiveness of our sins and live eternally with Him. ”

Lead kids to sing “Eternal Life (John 3:16).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

5 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ God, we are so grateful that You love us. Thank You for sending Jesus to offer salvation to everyone who repents of their sin and trusts in You. Help us live a life of praise for who You are, all that You have done, and all that You will do. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to the book of Mark. Explain that the Gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, sometimes wrote about the same events, and sometimes they wrote about different events from one another. While God's Word was divinely written through human writers, these authors had different perspectives and vantage points to each event or conversation.

Consider pointing out the location of Bethany (15) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Mark 11:11 or ask the kids to follow along as you read aloud.

SAY “ While our lesson mainly takes place in Jerusalem, Bethany was a smaller town about two miles outside of Jerusalem. [Point to it on the New Testament Israel Map.] This town is where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived, very close friends of Jesus. In the verse we just read, we learned that Jesus returned to Bethany shortly after His triumphal entry. Jesus is like us; He had friends, people He cared for deeply. Jesus cares for us. He loves you very much and wants to make you His child and have a close relationship with you. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ If you had been in the crowd that day, how would you have reacted to seeing Jesus? Even without seeing Him now, how do you react to Jesus and His presence in your life? ”

Our response to the King of kings should always be that of praise. He is worthy of our praise! (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 150:6.)

SAY “ The crowds shouted ‘Hosanna’ on the day Jesus entered Jerusalem. Hosanna is an expression used to ask for deliverance or salvation but is also used as a shout of adoration and praise. What words would you say to Jesus? Do you say these things when you pray to Him? ”

Jesus wants to have a close relationship with us. When you are good friends with someone, you probably spend lots of time together doing things and talking. Jesus wants the same thing. Spending time in God's Word and praying is one way to stay close to Him and give Him the praise He deserves. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Psalm 71:8.)

SAY “ Why do you think some people didn't recognize Jesus as the Messiah sent to save them? ”

Today's passage says that some of the religious leaders told Jesus to tell the crowds to be quiet, but Jesus replied that if the people stopped calling out praises, even nature itself would speak of His glory and praise Him. Many of the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus and didn't think they needed the salvation He offers.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 19:35-40.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: LAY IT DOWN

Before class, print a copy of the “Donkey Head” printable for each kid. Remind the kids that the disciples laid their coats on the donkey for Jesus, and that the people laid their clothing and palm branches on the ground as an act of worship. Lead the kids to write different things in their life they can lay down or submit to Jesus around the outline of the donkey head. Some ideas include friendships, sports, time, and possessions.

SAY “ Today we learned that the people in the crowd laid down clothing and palm branches to worship Jesus. Jesus is worthy of giving up everything else for. Even when God asks us to sacrifice something for Him, we can trust that He always has good in store when we follow His plans for our lives. ”

☐ OPTION 2: PRAISE HIM

Give each kid a piece of white paper and scissors. Lead kids to start at the bottom left corner and cut toward the center of the bottom edge. They will then cut from the bottom right corner to meet the first cut in the middle. This will make the bottom look like a banner. Fold the top edge of the paper down about an inch and staple it to make a pocket for the string to thread through. Give kids time to think about and brainstorm together things that could be said in praise to God, or prayers of thanksgiving. Allow the kids time to write these in the middle of their banner flags and then decorate around the praises.

SAY “ Our goal in life is to glorify God. We can do that by praising Him, thanking Him for who He is and what He has done, and by living lives that are holy and pleasing to Him. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for sending Jesus to be our salvation. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Triumphal Word Search” on the activity page.

JESUS SAVES US TO FOLLOW HIM

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



KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

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

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.

STORY POINT: Jesus died on the cross and rose again to defeat sin and death.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The resurrection reveals the astounding nature of God's mercy and grace: that sinners like us can receive forgiveness through faith in His Son—forgiveness that leads to new life. The torment Jesus endured on the cross was not the end of the story. On the third day after His crucifixion, Jesus rose to make the way for fallen people to be reunited to God by faith.

In Luke 23:34, Jesus prays some of His last words before His death: "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing." Though the scoffers and mockers were in control of their hateful words and actions, they did not know the one and only Son of God was hanging on the cross on their behalf.

Jesus, who is fully God and fully man, knew the depths of the people's sins and the lengths He needed to endure to satisfy the wrath of God their sin deserved. Only Jesus has the power to forgive His transgressors, and only Jesus would take to the cross on our behalf for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). The evil that the people planned against Jesus would be used by God to bring about our eternal good: the salvation of all who would believe in Him by faith.

This gift of salvation is for anyone who repents of their sin and turns toward Christ in faith. Lead boys and girls to see that there is not a single person in this story, or in all the Scriptures, or anywhere in the world who is too far lost to receive God's grace. Lead them to understand the lengths Christ was willing to endure so that they might be saved. May we continually find ourselves in awe of the gracious forgiveness God extends to His followers through faith in His Son.



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PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

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



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Cross to the Empty Tomb" activity page

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ thick cardstock or cardboard cut into cross shapes
- ☐ bright colored yarn
- ☐ hot glue gun and glue sticks (teacher use)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ dry erase board and dry erase markers

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "What Happened Next?" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Jesus Saves Us to Follow Him" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "Eternal Life (John 3:16)" song
- ☐ masking tape
- ☐ blocks
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever gotten to share good news with someone? What was the good news? How did they respond? How did you feel getting to share good news with them?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Cross to the Empty Tomb” on the activity page.

SAY “Today, we will learn that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GOOD NEWS



Give each kid a piece of paper and something to write and draw with. Lead them to design a newspaper layout (show an example, if needed), with places for pictures, headlines, a weather report, title, and other details. Lead them to fill it out with good news that they’ve experienced this week, such as playing a fun game with friends, scoring a goal in soccer, studying hard for a test at school, or a special treat after dinner. Afterward, lead kids to share their good news with the class.

SAY “Wow! You guys had lots of great news to share! Our Bible story is all about good news. Today we will hear the good news that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.**”

☐ OPTION 2: YARN-WRAPPED CROSSES

Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute a cross to each kid. Place yarn in the center of the table. Direct kids to choose one color yarn to begin this activity then come to an adult volunteer who will secure the yarn with a hot glue gun. The adult will glue the end of the yarn to the cross. Next, challenge kids to begin wrapping the yarn around the cross. If a kid wants to change colors, direct her to cut the end of the yarn with scissors, choose another color, and take the cross to the volunteer with the glue gun so that she can glue the ends of the yarn. Encourage kids to continue wrapping until their entire cross is covered with yarn.

SAY “Today’s story tells us that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.** I hope this cross will remind you of the forgiveness Jesus offers to everyone who repents and believes in Him.”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! I am so glad you are here! My name is **[your name]**, and today I am looking forward to sharing a story from the Bible with you. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? **[Distribute Bibles to kids who do not have one.]** Today we learned that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH**. This story is the good news of the gospel. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to come to earth. Jesus never sinned, but He went to the cross for our sin, taking the punishment we deserved. By trusting in Jesus, our sins can be forgiven, and we can have eternal life with Him.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Each time we study a story from God’s Word together, we like to think about a big picture question and answer. This question helps us to focus on an important truth from the Bible. Does anyone remember our big picture question? **[Allow responses.]** Our big picture question is: **Who is Jesus?** Do you remember the answer to that question? **[Allow responses.]** **Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.**

Jesus showed that He is the Messiah, the Son of God, when He died on the cross for our sins. Through His death and resurrection, He offers a restored relationship with God the Father. When we turn away from sin and worship Him as Lord, He forgives us. Those who reject that Jesus is God’s Son and don’t turn to Him will be separated from God forever. God wants us to share about Jesus’ offer of salvation with others!”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Some of the events that led up to today’s story are: 1) Jesus telling Nicodemus that people must be born again to enter the kingdom of heaven, 2) John the Baptist pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, and 3) Jesus telling a Samaritan woman that He is the Messiah she had been waiting for. Today we will see that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH**.”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 27. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Saves Us to Follow Him.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS SAVES US TO FOLLOW HIM

“**The religious leaders in Jerusalem** did not like what Jesus was doing and saying. They **did not believe He was the Son of God** and did not want people to follow Him instead of them. **They made a plan to have Him arrested and killed.**

First, **they dressed Him in a scarlet robe, made a crown of thorns and put it on His head, and knelt before Him, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!”** They did not really believe He was king. **They were mocking Him.** Then they led Him away to the cross.

Jesus was nailed to the cross between two criminals. All the people said, “If Jesus was really the Son of God, then God would help him! He would come down from the cross. He saved others, but he can’t save himself!”

These people didn’t know that by dying for sin and rising again, Jesus was saving God’s people. Staying on the cross was exactly what God had planned for Jesus.

Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing.”

Then darkness covered the whole land, even though it was the middle of the day. **Jesus gave a loud cry, and then He died. The curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The ground shook.** One of the guards saw all that was happening and said, “Truly, this Jesus was the Son of God!”

On Friday night, a man named **Joseph from Arimathea** took the body of Jesus down off the cross and placed it in a new tomb cut into rock. Then Joseph rolled a great stone over the entrance.

The leaders of God’s people remembered that Jesus said He would rise from the dead in three days. So, they placed a guard at the tomb of Jesus so that no one could break in, take His body, and pretend like Jesus had risen from the dead.

On Sunday morning, two women, both named Mary, went to the tomb. There was an earthquake, and **an angel of the Lord came down. He rolled away the stone of the tomb** and sat down on it. **He said, “Don’t be afraid! Jesus is not here. He is risen, just as he said! Go and tell his disciples!”**

On the way to tell the disciples, the women saw Jesus! They fell at His feet and worshiped Him, the Savior who died and rose again.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Encourage expression:

As you read the story, ask the kids to smile and clap when something good happens. When something bad happens, they should frown. Jesus’ death was sad, but His resurrection is good news for sinners!

Change location:

If weather permits, consider teaching the lesson outside. Invite kids to think about what it would have looked like for the land to go dark during the day!



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH. What did Jesus say right before He died? Look at John 19:30. [Ask a volunteer to read John 19:30 aloud.] Jesus said, ‘It is finished.’ Jesus said this because He had completed His work on the cross and defeated sin. But that is not the end of the story! Jesus also came to defeat death. Jesus’ body was taken down from the cross and placed in a tomb. Why did Pilate demand that Jesus’ tomb be secured by a guard? Look at Matthew 27:62-64. [Ask a volunteer to read Matthew 27:62-64 aloud.] The religious leaders remembered that Jesus said He would rise from the dead, so they placed a guard at the tomb to make sure no one took Jesus’ body. No one took Jesus’ body, but Jesus did leave the tomb. On Sunday morning, Jesus walked out of the tomb, alive. He had risen from the dead and defeated death, just as He said He would.

This story is good news for all who trust in Jesus as Savior. Because of His death on the cross, we can be forgiven of all our sins, and because of His resurrection from the dead, we can have eternal life with Him. It is the job of every believer to share this good news with those who have not heard.

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 in Him. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Jesus came so that we can be free from sin and death. If you have not yet trusted Jesus as your Savior, I would love to share more about the free gift of salvation with you. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

4 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 3:16 together.

Before this activity, place a piece of masking tape on the blocks and write one word from the key passage on each block. Make several sets.

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that Jesus came to take away our sins when we trust Him as Savior. Let’s continue to memorize this important truth.”

Form kids into teams of two or three. When you say, Go! challenge kids to work together to stack their blocks in the correct order, from bottom to top. The team who completes their key passage stack first wins. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “Eternal Life (John 3:16).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

5 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank you, Lord, for sending Jesus to die on the cross and rise from the dead, defeating sin and death. Help us to share this good news with others, so that they can trust Jesus as Savior. In His name, amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the New Testament Israel Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Luke 23. Explain that the entire story of Scripture up to this point has been leading up to Jesus dying on the cross and rising again to defeat sin and death. Discuss some Old Testament stories that point to Jesus coming to redeem His people such as the story of Abraham offering Isaac as a sacrifice and the first Passover in Exodus.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 23:35-37, or ask the kids to follow along as you read aloud.

SAY “As Jesus hung on the cross, people in the crowd and even one of the criminals hanging next to Jesus mocked Him. They told Jesus that if He really was the Messiah, He should come down off the cross and rescue Himself and the criminals on the crosses next to Him. Why did Jesus stay on the cross? [Allow kids to respond.] Jesus stayed on the cross out of obedience to God’s will and out of His great love for us. Jesus offered Himself willingly as the perfect sacrifice for our sins.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “How does Jesus’ death and resurrection give us hope?”

No matter what hard things we face in this life, anyone who has trusted in Jesus has eternal hope. We know that this broken world is full of sin and is not our final home. God is preparing a place for us in heaven where we will live forever with Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Peter 1:3-4.)

SAY “Why is it significant that the curtain in the temple was torn in two from top to bottom?”

The curtain that was torn in the temple was the curtain that separated the holy of holies, the place where God dwelled, from the other areas in the temple. When Jesus died, He made a way for the barrier between God and humans to be taken away. People who trust Jesus as Savior are no longer separated from God because of their sin. Through Jesus Christians have full access to the Father. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Romans 8:38-39.)

SAY “How should we respond to the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection?”

If you have not yet trusted Jesus as Savior, you can respond to this story by accepting the free gift of salvation. Jesus came so that you can be free from the punishment of sin and death. Followers of Jesus should respond to this story first with praise and thanksgiving to the Savior, Jesus, and by sharing the good news with those who do not know Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 28:19-20.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GO AND TELL



Lead kids to spread out around the room. Choose a kid to go first. Explain that that kid will run to another kid and tell him a truth from today's Bible story. The second kid will then run to a third kid and tell her a different truth from the story. This pattern will continue until everyone has both heard and told a truth from the Bible story. Challenge kids to play a second round and see how fast they can complete the game.

SAY “ When Mary and Mary went to the tomb, they saw it was empty! The angel of the Lord told them to go and tell the disciples about what happened. **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.** He came to rescue us from sin and give us eternal life with Him if we trust Him as Savior and Lord. This is an important truth that we can go and tell others this week. ”

☐ OPTION 2: NAME A BOOK THAT ...

Before the session, think of a list of simple clues about various books of the Bible.

Form two teams of kids and direct them to form two lines in front of you. Challenge the first kid in each line to listen closely as you ask them to name a book of the Bible that fits a description you call out. For example, “Name a book of the Bible that starts with the letter R.” The first kid to call out a correct answer earns a point for his team. Continue through the line until each kid has had a chance to compete at least one time. The team with the most points at the end of the activity wins.

SAY “ Great job! It is important for you to know how the Bible is organized so that you can continue to learn how to use and study the Bible on your own. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to take the punishment for sin on the cross and for rising again to defeat sin. As time allows, lead kids to complete “What Happened Next?” on the activity page.



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.