

EASTER BONUS SESSION 2

JESUS SAVES US TO FOLLOW HIM

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



CHRIST CONNECTION: Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God's family forever.

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

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:16

STORY POINT: Jesus rose from the dead and is alive.



PREPARE

IN ADVANCE TO TEACH 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 what 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.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



LEARN

10–15 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

20–25 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



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



PREPARE

IN ADVANCE TO TEACH THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep these items on hand for each session: Allergy Alert, Bibles, construction paper, copy paper, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, glue sticks, glue, blocks, baby dolls, play dough, world map or globe, snack food, paper cups, and napkins.



LEARN

Welcome and worship with song

- ☐ "Joy, Joy, Joy (God Is Always With Me)" song

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ "Jesus Saves Us to Follow Him" video (optional)
- ☐ storytelling tips props (optional)

Review

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Respond through song and prayer

- ☐ "That's What Jesus Did" song
- ☐ "Jesus Was Born (Away in a Manger)" song



LOVE

Cover the shape

- ☐ painter's tape

Shape a crown

- ☐ sticky notes

Enjoy a snack

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ plain cupcakes
- ☐ spoons
- ☐ vanilla wafers

Color and reveal

- ☐ cardstock
- ☐ painter's tape

Add facial expressions

- ☐ butcher paper
- ☐ tape



LIVE

Learn the Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the Key Passage

- ☐ Key Passage Marker
- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "God Loved the World (John 3:16)" song

Play "Go and Tell"

- ☐ music playing device



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 WELCOME AND WORSHIP WITH SONG

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing a song such as “Joy, Joy, Joy (God Is Always With Me)” or another upbeat worship song of your choice to engage and welcome preschoolers. Lead motions enthusiastically and encourage preschoolers to join you. Help the preschoolers think through what it means to worship God. Take time to talk about any lyrics that might be challenging to understand.

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Demonstrate how to take a deep breath in and gently blow it out. Prompt kids to inhale and exhale.

SAY “ You are breathing, which means you are alive. Today, we will learn the Bible story about when Jesus died. But Jesus did not stay dead. He came back to life! **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** ”

Open your Bible to Matthew 27. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bold version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

JESUS SAVES US TO FOLLOW HIM

“ A big crowd of people had welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as King, but not everyone was happy about Jesus. The religious leaders did not like that Jesus said He is the Son of God. They did not want people to listen to Jesus instead of them. So, they made a plan to stop Jesus.

First, Jesus was arrested and taken to a leader named Pilate. Pilate told the people they could take Jesus away to be killed on a cross.

The soldiers made a crown out of thorns and put it on Jesus’ head. They put a scarlet robe on Him and made fun of Him. They did not believe that Jesus is King. Jesus never did anything wrong, but the people were mean to Him. Yet, Jesus asked God to forgive them.

The soldiers put Jesus on one cross, and they put two criminals on crosses next to Him. Some people who passed by said, “If he were really God’s Son, he would save Himself. He would come down from the cross.”

But Jesus stayed on the cross because that was how He was going to save people from sin. This was part of God’s plan.

Suddenly, the sky was dark. Jesus cried out, and then He died. The big curtain in the temple tore from top to bottom, and the ground shook. One of the guards saw what was happening and said, “This really was the Son of God!”

Jesus’ body was taken down and put it in a special cave called a tomb. A

STORYTELLING TIPS

Dim the lights: Enlist a leader to dim the lights during the part of the Bible story when you mention that the sky was dark and Jesus died. Turn the lights on again when the stone was rolled away and the angel spoke to the women.

Tell the story inside a tomb: Place a couple of tables together and cover them with a large sheet. Encourage children to sit beneath the table. Tell the story while sitting on the floor near the table. Lead boys and girls to imagine they are sitting inside the empty tomb.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

big stone was rolled in front of the tomb, and soldiers stood guard. Pilate wanted to make sure no one took Jesus' body.

On the third day, some women went to the tomb. But guess what? The big stone was moved, and an angel was there! The angel said, "Don't be afraid! Jesus is alive!"

The women were so happy! They ran to tell Jesus' friends the good news. ”

Christ Connection: Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God's family forever.

3 REVIEW

Point to the Giant Timeline as you review today's Bible story. Ask the following review questions.

1. What did you like about the Bible story? (Answers will vary.)
2. What were some things in the Bible story that made the women at the tomb happy or sad? (Answers will vary.)
3. Did everyone believe that Jesus is the Son of God? (No. The religious leaders did not like that Jesus said He was the Son of God.)
4. How were the religious leaders and soldiers mean to Jesus? (They made fun of Jesus and hurt Him. They put Jesus on a cross where He died.)
5. Is Jesus dead or alive? (**JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE**)
6. **Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us.**

SAY ” Jesus was arrested and taken away, yet Jesus never did anything wrong. Jesus asked God to forgive the people who were being so mean to Him. This was part of God's plan to save people from their sins. After Jesus died, His body was put in a special cave called a tomb. A big stone was rolled in front of it. Three days later, some women went to Jesus' tomb. An angel was there and told the women **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** The women ran to tell Jesus' friends the good news. **”**

4 RESPOND THROUGH SONG AND PRAYER

SAY ” Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross. Jesus rose from the dead and is alive! Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God's family forever. **”**

Sing "That's What Jesus Did" as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing "Jesus Was Born (Away in a Manger)." Collect an offering.

SAY ” Jesus, You are alive! You are our Savior and King! Thank You that when we repent and trust You, You will forgive us of our sin. Amen. **”**





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

Choose the activities that best fit your group, space, available resources, and time constraints. Set up activities in one of these ways: 1) as a group, all at the same time, 2) in small groups that rotate through each activity, or 3) set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.

1 COVER THE SHAPE

Use painter's tape to create the shape or outline of a cross on the floor for every three or four preschoolers. Challenge children to outline or cover the cross using wooden blocks. Review the Bible story as children work.

SAY “You used blocks to trace a cross shape. Jesus died on the cross, which was very sad. After Jesus died, His body was placed in a tomb. But there’s more to the story! **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE.** This is very happy news! Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross and coming back to life.”

2 SHAPE A CROWN

Cut a stack of sticky notes into strips before the session, making sure each strip includes part of the sticky section on one end. Prepare several strips for each preschooler. Give each child a stack of pre-cut sticky note strips. Assist children who have difficulty peeling the strips by sticking them to the table for easy rearranging. Demonstrate how to arrange the strips in a circle on a tabletop or hard surface to resemble a crown of thorns. Encourage children to form their own crown shapes using the sticky strips.

SAY “The circle you made reminds me of a crown. Kings wear crowns. The soldiers made a crown out of thorns and put it on Jesus’ head because they did not believe Jesus is the true King. Thorns are very sharp, and the crown hurt Jesus’ head. Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross. **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God’s family forever.”

3 ENJOY A SNACK

Post an Allergy Alert before the session. Give each child a napkin and a plain cupcake. Instruct the kids to use a spoon to scoop out a small portion from the center of the cupcake. Guide children to lay the cupcake on its side and place a vanilla wafer in front of it to resemble a tomb with a stone. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster and point out the tomb in the background. Allow time for children to enjoy their snacks.

SAY “Your cupcake reminds me of a tomb with a stone rolled in front of the opening. After Jesus died on the cross, His body was placed in a tomb. Three days later a group of women went to Jesus’ tomb. When they got there, the stone had been rolled away! An angel was there too! The angel told the women to not be afraid because **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE.**”



LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

4 ☐ COLOR AND REVEAL

Use painter's tape to make a cross shape on cardstock for each child. Invite the kids to use washable markers or crayons to color over the cross. Encourage kids to color the entire paper, especially around the tape. Help the kids gently remove the tape and reveal their cross pictures. (Note: Practice this prior to the activity to make sure the tape does not tear the paper when it is removed.)

SAY “What colors did you use on your picture? What shape is in the middle of your picture? [Allow responses.] It is a cross. Jesus died on a cross. When you see your cross, it can remind you that **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE**. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on a cross for our sin because He loves us. That is really good news!”

5 ☐ ADD FACIAL EXPRESSIONS

Tape a large sheet of butcher paper to a tabletop. Use a marker to draw a variety of different-sized circles on the paper, making sure each child has at least two circles to use. Place colored pencils, washable markers, and crayons on the table. Instruct children to draw a sad face in one circle and a happy face in another. Encourage the kids to color their pictures and decorate the area around their drawings.

SAY “Today, we heard a story about how Jesus died on the cross, which is very sad. We also heard happy news: **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** Today is a happy day because we can celebrate that Jesus is alive. Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God's family forever.”



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 LEARN THE BIG PICTURE QUESTION AND ANSWER

SAY “Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of God who came to earth to save us. Jesus died on a cross; this was part of God’s plan to save people from their sins. But did Jesus stay in the tomb? (no) **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God’s family forever.”

2 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE

Place the Key Passage Marker at John 3:16. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Show a globe or a world map. Invite one child at a time to point to a place on the globe or map. Then, name the place and say, “For God loved the people in _____ (name the place).” After each child has a chance to point to a place, read the verse again.

SAY “God loves you. He made you, me, and all the people in the world. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world because He loves us so much. Jesus made the way for people who trust in Him to be with God forever.”

Sing the key passage song “God Loved the World (John 3:16)” together.

3 PRAY

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have. Pray for them.

SAY “God, thank You that Jesus died on the cross and is now alive. Thank You that if we trust in Jesus, we can have forgiveness and life with You forever. Amen.”

☐ PLAY “GO AND TELL”

Play worship music as preschoolers sing and move to the music. Periodically, stop the music and tell the kids to find a friend and tell something they know about Jesus. If a child is not sure what to say, have an adult leader whisper, “Jesus is alive!” in his ear for him to tell his friends.

SAY “Today, we heard a sad story about how Jesus died on a cross. We also heard happy news. Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners by dying on the cross. **JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD AND IS ALIVE!** Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus is His follower and is welcomed into God’s family forever.”