



EASTER BONUS SESSIONS

YOUNGER 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

- ☐ "Spot the Differences" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ butcher paper

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ cardstock cut into bookmark shapes
- ☐ art supplies such as stickers
- ☐ hole punch
- ☐ ribbon or yarn



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
- ☐ Bible times costume (optional)
- ☐ pictures of modern-day Jerusalem (optional)

Key Passage Activity

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



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ white cardstock
- ☐ washable green finger paint
- ☐ foam brush
- ☐ paper plates
- ☐ wooden craft sticks
- ☐ paper towels

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ small stones or rocks
- ☐ acrylic paint
- ☐ googly eyes
- ☐ paper plates
- ☐ paint brushes
- ☐ tablecloths
- ☐ paper towels
- ☐ water
- ☐ painting aprons (optional)

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



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 would you welcome a special guest into your home? Would you decorate in a special way, cook a certain meal, wear special clothes, etc.?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Spot the Differences” on the activity page.

SAY “Today we will see how **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS INTO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. Even though the people welcomed Him, many did not realize that He is the Messiah, the one who came to save them from their sins.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: WELCOME!

Roll out a large piece of butcher paper and write the word **WELCOME** in large letters across it. Lead the kids to decorate the banner using markers and crayons. As they draw, encourage them to talk about how they would welcome someone to a special event or party.

SAY “Today we are learning about when **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. Just like we get excited when a special guest comes to spend time with us, the people were excited to have Jesus enter Jerusalem. I am looking forward to sharing this important story with you today.”

☐ OPTION 2: HOSANNA BOOKMARKS



Before this activity, write or type the word **HOSANNA** vertically down each bookmark. Write lightly so that kids can trace this word with their markers. Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute one bookmark to each kid. Place art supplies in the center of each table. Challenge kids to use a marker to trace the word **HOSANNA** on their bookmarks. Discuss how **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING** by shouting “Hosanna!” Then, encourage kids to use art supplies to decorate their bookmarks. Lastly, go around to each kid and punch a hole on the top of each bookmark. Allow kids to select a piece of ribbon or yarn to string through the top of their bookmarks.

SAY “**PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING** by shouting, ‘Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!’ I am looking forward to sharing more of this story with you today.”





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 “Hi, kids! I am so glad you’re here. My name is [your name], and today I am excited to study a true story from the Bible together. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out and place it in your lap? (Distribute Bibles to kids who do not have one.) Guide kids to open their Bibles to the beginning of the New Testament. Remind kids that the stories of Jesus’ life are found in the New Testament.

Today we will learn about the last time Jesus would enter the city of Jerusalem during His ministry on earth. **THE PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**, but He was not the kind of king they expected. Jesus wept for the people because they did not realize that He is God’s Son, the Messiah, who came to take away the sins of the world. I am looking forward to sharing more of this story with you today.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

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

Today we will see how **THE PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS INTO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. They had heard of Jesus and all the amazing miracles He did. They were excited to welcome Him into the city, but they did not know who Jesus really is—the Son of God and the Savior of the world. Jesus never sinned which means He is the perfect sacrifice who could pay the price our sin demands and save those who trust Him as Lord.”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “Over the last several weeks we have learned about many important moments in Jesus’ earthly ministry from His first miracle, to cleaning out the temple, to His interactions with John the Baptist, Nicodemus, and the Samaritan woman at the well. All of Jesus’ earthly ministry had led up to this point, the beginning of the most important week. Today we will learn how **THE PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS INTO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**.”



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 “ Jerusalem was full of people who had come to celebrate the Passover. People had heard that Jesus was coming to the city to celebrate, so they went out to meet Him. Why did Jesus ride into Jerusalem on a donkey? [Allow responses.] The Bible tells us that Jesus rode into the city on a donkey to fulfill the prophecy written in the book of Zechariah. Jesus was the long-promised Messiah. All the promises the prophets had written throughout the Old Testament about the Messiah are fulfilled in Jesus.

What did Jesus do when He approached the city of Jerusalem? [Allow responses.] He cried because the people in that city did not understand that He was the promised Messiah, the Savior of the world. **THE PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS INTO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**, but many of them missed the most important part. Jesus wanted the people to turn from their sin and trust Him as Savior.

There are many people today, even people you know, who say they like Jesus and think He was a good person and teacher. However, if they don't believe He is God, they are missing the most important truth: Jesus is the Savior of the world. A person can only be saved from their sins by trusting in Jesus as Savior.

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 wants all people to turn from their sin and trust in Jesus for salvation and eternal life. If you haven't trusted Jesus as Savior or have questions about this, I would love to share more 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.)

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

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

SAY “ Let's continue memorizing our key passage together! It is so important to hide God's Word in our hearts so that we can always have it with us. ”

Before this activity, tape pieces of construction paper on the floor with one word of the key passage on each piece of paper. Invite kids to line up, one behind the other. Challenge the first kid in line to hop from one paper to the next while saying the key passage as he lands on each word. Then, direct the next kid in line to hop through the key passage. Continue until all kids have had a chance to complete the activity.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, Lord, for sending Your Son, Jesus, to be the Savior of the world. Help us to share the good news that Jesus came to save anyone who accepts the free gift of salvation. In Jesus’ 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 19. Explain that the entire Bible is one big story, and it all points to Jesus. Throughout the Old Testament we see the problem of sin and our need for a Savior. We also see many references in the Old Testament pointing to the Messiah who would save the world from sin.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 19:37-40, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses.

SAY “As Jesus approached the city of Jerusalem, His disciples and the crowd began singing and praising God for all the things they had seen as they traveled with Jesus. Some of the Pharisees did not like the disciples praising Jesus in this way and told Jesus to make the disciples stop. How did Jesus respond? [Allow responses.] Jesus told the Pharisees that if the disciples stopped praising Him, the rocks would cry out with praise.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Why do we have to turn from our sin to trust Jesus as Savior?”

Following Jesus is the opposite of sinning. When we sin, we walk away from God and toward our own sinful desires. To trust Jesus as Savior, we must turn from our sins and walk in the opposite direction, toward Jesus, following His will and plan for our lives.

SAY “What does the word hosanna mean?”

The word hosanna means “save us.” The people of Jerusalem were shouting for Jesus to save them. The people thought Jesus had come as king to save them from the Roman government, but really, He had come to do something much better. He had come to save people from their sins.

SAY “How should we respond to the fact that many people do not know Jesus as their Savior?”

Jesus cried because the people of Jerusalem did not know He is the Messiah, their Savior. We should have this same kind of compassion and love for people. We should be concerned that people do not know about Jesus and share the good news of Jesus with them.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: PALM BRANCH PARADE

Give each adult volunteer a plate with green paint on it and a foam brush. Invite kids to come up one by one to an adult volunteer. Direct kids to stand still as the adult volunteer paints green paint onto their hand and helps them stamp their handprint onto a piece of cardstock. Then, distribute a wooden craft stick to each kid. Place scissors and tape in the center of each table. Direct kids to write their names on their craft sticks using a pencil. Once their handprints are dry, challenge kids to carefully cut around their handprint using scissors and tape the handprint cutout to the end of the craft stick, creating a “palm branch.” Then, have a “palm branch parade” around the church and invite kids to wave their palm branches as they walk.

SAY “ Today we heard about how **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. They placed articles of clothing and palm branches on the ground to celebrate Jesus. Jesus came to save us from our sin and give us eternal life with God. ”

☐ OPTION 2: ... OR THE ROCKS WILL CRY OUT

Before this activity, cover several tables with disposable tablecloths. Invite kids to sit around tables and distribute a rock, a paint brush, a paper plate, and an apron to each kid. Go around to each kid and squirt a paint color of their choosing onto their plates. Challenge kids to use their paint brushes to paint their rocks. Remind them not to use too much paint so the paint will dry quickly. As time allows, invite kids to use a second color to paint stripes, patterns, etc. on their rocks. Once the paint has dried, invite kids to glue googly eyes to their rocks.

SAY “ Jesus told the Pharisees that if the disciples stopped praising Him, the rocks would cry out in worship. I hope you will take your rock home and remember that Jesus deserves all our worship and praise. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.

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.



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

- ☐ "Rockin' Reveal" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ several small items (pencils, yo-yos, toys, books, etc.)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ backpacks, 2
- ☐ heavy objects (bricks, rocks, etc.)

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ mini chocolate donuts
- ☐ miniature chocolate sandwich cookie
- ☐ green icing
- ☐ paper plate
- ☐ plastic knife
- ☐ Allergy Alert

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring 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
- ☐ dry erase board
- ☐ dry erase marker and eraser
- ☐ 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 “Can you think of someone who has given up something for you? Who was it, and what did they sacrifice for you?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Rockin’ Reveal” on the activity page.

SAY “Great work using the pictures to decipher today’s story point! Together, we are going to learn that through His death and resurrection, Jesus has defeated sin and death once and for all.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: MEMORIZATION MADNESS

Before the session, gather several small items the kids can easily recognize. Lay the items out on a table, keeping them relatively close together. Gather the kids around the table and allow them to carefully note all the items they see. After about 10 seconds, instruct the kids to close their eyes while you remove one of the items from the table. Once an item has been removed, invite the kids to open their eyes and attempt to discover which item is missing. Repeat this several times, removing a different item each time.

SAY “One moment the items were there, then some were gone! Jesus died and was buried in a tomb, but He didn’t stay there. Today, we will learn that **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.**”

☐ OPTION 2: THREE DAYS!



Form two teams of kids. Challenge each team to make a list of things any person on their team has done in the last three days (played video games, ate at a fast-food restaurant, colored a picture, rode a bike, etc.). Assign a volunteer (leader or kid) to be the team’s scribe and write down all the things the team names. Caution teams not to let the other team hear their list. Call time after three minutes.

Direct teams to take turns calling out an item on their lists. If both teams had that item, both teams will mark it off. Teams score points for any item that was only on their team’s list. The team with the most points wins.

SAY “Wow, when you started thinking about it, you realized that a lot can happen in three days. Today, we are going to learn about three very significant days. During that time, **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT SIN AND DEATH.**”





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 “Hello, everyone! My name is [your name]. I can’t wait to explore today’s Bible story with you! Together, we are going to read about God’s great love for us, which He showed through His Son Jesus. If you brought your Bible, please take it out and turn to the New Testament. **[Distribute Bibles to any kid who needs one.]** Our story can be found in the Gospels. The word gospel means ‘good news.’ Can anyone remember the names of the four Gospels? **[Allow responses.]** Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John wrote the Gospels to share the good news of Jesus with others. Let’s pray together before we open God’s Word. Lead kids in a time of prayer, ‘Thank You, God, for showing Your love for us through Your Son Jesus. Give us listening ears to hear what You have shown us in Your Word. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “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 made the way to restore our relationship with God the Father. When we turn away from sin and believe in 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!

Let’s review our big picture question: **Who is Jesus?** What is the answer we learned? **[Allow responses.] Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, who came to earth to save us.** ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “Jesus was born in Bethlehem, just as the prophets promised, to save us from sin. Many people recognized that God had kept His promise and worshiped Jesus as the Messiah. But there were some, like King Herod, who rejected Jesus’ kingship. As Jesus grew and found favor with the people around Him, He obeyed God’s will, just as He had been sent to do. Jesus perfectly obeyed God the Father, all the way to death on the cross. Today, we will see that Jesus has defeated our greatest enemies: 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 “ The religious leaders didn’t believe Jesus is the Son of God, and they were jealous of Him, so they had Him crucified. What did the leaders call Jesus as they mocked Him? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus really was the king of the Jews who had come to bring salvation, and through His death, He was carrying out God’s plan. At any moment, Jesus could have ended His suffering. But in perfect obedience to God the Father, Jesus remained on the cross to save us from sin.

It’s hard to forgive someone who has treated us badly, but Jesus demonstrated great love by forgiving the people who were crucifying and mocking Him. Can you remember what the guard said when the earth went dark, the ground shook, and the veil tore? **[Allow responses.]** As a result of these events that the guard witnessed, he concluded that Jesus really is God’s Son!

Why did the leaders place a guard in front of Jesus’ tomb? **[Allow responses.]** The leaders were scared that Jesus’ disciples would come and take His body, but Jesus showed that He is more powerful than any guard or stone. What did the angel tell the women when they came to the tomb? **[Allow responses.]** Jesus fulfilled His promises and completed God’s plan for salvation through His resurrection. Just as the angel told the women, we don’t have to fear! Jesus has defeated our greatest enemies, sin and death, forever.

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. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Each of us has treated God badly by sinning against Him. But on the cross, Jesus, the perfect sacrifice, took God’s anger for sin upon Himself. When we repent of our sins and trust that Jesus died and rose again as Lord, He forgives us and offers us life with Him forever. If you would like to learn more about what it means to trust your life to Jesus, please talk to your parents, to me, or to another leader at church. ”

(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

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

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

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that Jesus is the Son of God who came to conquer sin and death. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus offers us new life in Him!”

Write the key passage on a dry erase board. Invite the kids to read the key passage aloud with you one time through. Erase one or two words and have the kids read it again, this time filling in the missing words. Continue doing this, erasing more words each time the kids read. Build up to erasing the entire verse and encourage the kids to say the entire key passage from memory.

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

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Thank You, God, for sending Your only Son to take on the punishment for our sins so that we can experience salvation. Help us live out and share the hope of Jesus’ resurrection with others. 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 John 19. Explain that all four Gospels record similar accounts of Jesus' death and resurrection. John shares that his account was written so that his readers would believe Jesus is the Christ, God's Son, and would have life by believing in Him (John 20:30-31).

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 19:30, or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses.

SAY “What does it mean to finish something? [Allow responses.] Whether it's completing a test at school or crossing the finish line of a race, when we finish something it means that activity has ended. Jesus declared from the cross that the work God the Father sent Him to do was finished. Salvation has nothing to do with what we can do; it has everything to do with what God has already done through Jesus! On the cross, Jesus died for everyone who would come to trust Him as Lord. The gift of salvation is freely offered to anyone who repents and believes that Jesus died and rose again. The gospel really is good news, and God wants us to share it with others!”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “How could the land go dark in the middle of the day?”

Explain that this event was a supernatural act of God that demonstrated His judgment on humanity for crucifying His Son. Remind kids that God is Creator and He controls everything in the universe to bring about His plan.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Daniel 2:21.)

SAY “What do you think the torn veil in the temple demonstrated?”

Consider showing a diagram of the temple. Explain that the temple veil separated the people from God's presence. The high priest was the only one who could enter behind the veil once a year. When Jesus died, it ended the separation between God and His people that sin had caused. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Hebrews 9:12.)

SAY “How can we know that Jesus really rose from the dead?”

Remind the kids that God's Word is true. The Gospels were written based on the testimony of those who walked with Jesus and witnessed these events firsthand. Jesus also appeared to His mother Mary, Mary Magdalene, His disciples, and as Paul noted, more than 500 people at one time! (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Corinthians 15:3-7.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BACKPACK RELAY

Place several heavy items such as bricks or rocks in two backpacks. Divide the kids into two teams and have them form a circle standing up. Give each team a backpack. Begin by having one kid from each team place the backpack on his or her shoulders. He or she must run around the circle once and hand off the backpack to the kid on his or her right. Have this kid repeat the challenge, handing it off to the kid on his or her right and so on. The first team whose backpack makes it all the way around the circle wins.

SAY “ Like the weight of the backpack, we are weighed down by sin. But on the cross, Jesus took our sin upon Himself. Because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, He has defeated sin and death forever! ”

☐ OPTION 2: EMPTY TOMB SNACK



Make a sample “Empty Tomb Snack” to show the kids how to make it.

Spread green icing around the center of the plate for grass.

Make a thin slice from one side of the doughnut so it will sit flat and upright on the plate. Use a bit of icing to adhere the doughnut to the plate.

Attach the miniature chocolate sandwich cookie to the doughnut just to the side of the “hole” in the doughnut.

Optional: Provide extra doughnuts, cookies, and water for a snack.

SAY “ Our snack sculptures remind us that the tomb was empty. Jesus is alive! Jesus was placed in the tomb, but He rose again just as He promised! Through His death and resurrection, Jesus has defeated sin and death. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.

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.