



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 2

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT:

Jesus died on the cross and is alive.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

TEACH THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
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REVIEW THE STORY
(10+ MINUTES)
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LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are essential to the Christian faith. If we teach Jesus as a respected teacher and miracle-worker who claimed to be the Messiah and who was crucified on the cross—but who was not resurrected—then we are teaching the Jesus of Judaism. If we teach Jesus as a wise teacher and prophet who ascended into heaven—but who was not crucified—then we are teaching the Jesus of Islam.

Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins. (Matt. 1:21) He died to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus died so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus died to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

The time between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning must have been dark hours for Jesus' disciples. Fear, doubt, and confusion certainly overwhelmed their thoughts. Jesus, their Lord, was dead. He had been unjustly arrested, falsely accused, and severely beaten. Even worse, He had been killed in a horrible manner: by crucifixion.

The story doesn't end there. Jesus' body was laid in a tomb. The tomb was sealed and guards watched over it. The Jews remembered Jesus' claim that He would rise from the dead (John 2:19-21), and they made sure no one could steal His body and insist He had risen. Imagine their surprise when Jesus did rise from the dead!

Jesus' resurrection gives us joy and hope for our own resurrection. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life. (Rom. 8:11)

As you teach preschoolers this Bible story, emphasize the gospel: the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done. We do not worship a dead Savior. Jesus is alive! Sadness turns to joy. There is hope for sinners.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28; John 20

Jesus had been arrested and taken to Pilate, the governor. Pilate's soldiers put a purple robe around Jesus and made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head. They pretended to bow down to Him. Then they led Jesus away.

Jesus was put on a cross. They put a sign above Jesus' head that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

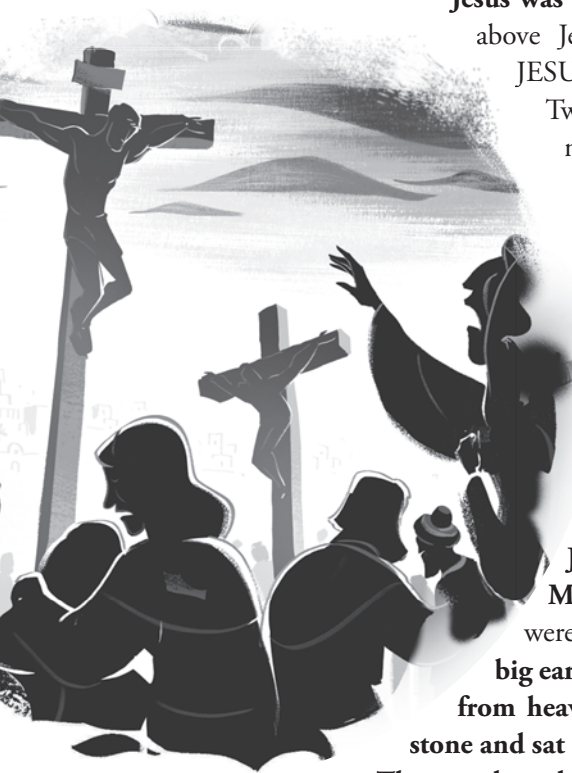
Two criminals were put on crosses next to Jesus.

Darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" **Jesus died and was buried in a tomb. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb, and Pilate's soldiers guarded the tomb** so that no one would steal Jesus' body.

On the third day, two of Jesus' friends, both named Mary, went to the tomb. They were very sad. **Suddenly there was a big earthquake as an angel came down from heaven. The angel rolled away the stone and sat on it. The guards fainted.**

The angel spoke to the women, "Do not be afraid! Jesus is not here! He has risen from the dead, just as He said He would."

The women were so happy! Jesus was alive! They left the tomb to



tell Jesus' friends the good news. Just then, Jesus greeted them. The women worshiped Him. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. Tell My friends to go to Galilee. I will meet them there."

Christ Connection: The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Jesus is alive! When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use a play dough tomb:** Form an empty tomb with play dough and roll a ball to serve as the stone. Display the play dough tomb on a flat surface. Roll the stone in front of and away from the opening at the appropriate moments in the Bible story.
- **Show emotions:** Invite preschoolers to make facial expressions to show how they think the people in the Bible story are feeling as you tell it. Demonstrate sadness, joy, and so forth.

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Welcome and worship with song

- "Nobody Like Him" song
- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song

Greet preschoolers with a smile. As preschoolers arrive, sing an action song such as "Nobody Like Him" to engage and welcome them. Begin worship by leading preschoolers in the theme song "The Gospel Is for Everyone."

Watch or tell the Bible story

- cross
- Bible
- "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster
- Giant Timeline

Hold a cross for preschoolers to see.

SAY • What have I brought with me today? That's right, it's a cross! You may have seen these in church buildings, in pictures, and even on earrings or necklaces. The cross is very important to Christians because it's what Jesus died on before He rose again. Our Bible story is about how **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.**

Open your Bible to Matthew 26. Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

- Bible
- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)" song

Place the key passage marker at 1 Chronicles 16:31. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Guide children to say the verse with you three times: once with arms out in the shape of a cross, once lying down as if in a tomb, and once jumping up and down joyfully because Jesus is alive!

SAY • When we say *The Lord reigns*, we mean that God is in control. He has power over everything, including death! Even though Jesus died on a cross to take the punishment for our sins, He rose from the dead and is alive today!

Sing the key passage song “The Lord Reigns” together.

Learn the big picture question and answer

SAY • Our big picture question is, *What is the gospel?*
The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners. He rescued sinners by dying on a cross to take the punishment for our sin and rising again.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Respond through song and prayer

SAY • **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died on a cross and was raised from the dead. Jesus is alive! When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Sing “The Gospel Is for Everyone” and “F-A-I-T-H” as preschoolers move with the music. Prepare for prayer by singing “He Came Into the World.” Collect an offering.

SAY • God, thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. We are amazed at Your power over death and sin! You raised Jesus from the dead, and He is alive today! Help us to turn away from our sin and follow Him. Amen.

• Story Point Poster
• “The Gospel Is for Everyone” song
• “F-A-I-T-H” song
• “He Came Into the World” song
• offering basket

Transition to experience the story

• countdown video (optional)

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

Shake and fall

Invite preschoolers to pretend to be the soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb. When you say, "earthquake," they will pretend the ground is shaking. When you say, "angel," they will gently fall to the ground and pretend to sleep, as if they fainted. Continue to play as interest remains.

SAY • The soldiers did not expect an earthquake or to see an angel. This was no ordinary man buried in the tomb. God's Son, **Jesus, died on the cross and is alive.** Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Make empty tomb art

- construction paper, including brown or gray
- scissors (adult use)
- glue sticks
- brass fasteners, 1 per child
- markers

Cut a tomb shape for each preschooler from gray or brown construction paper by cutting out the center of a half circle. Cut out a full circle for the stone in front of the tomb.

Invite children to glue their tomb to a sheet of construction paper. Assist children in using a brass fastener to attach the stone to the entrance of the tomb in such a way that it can be slid away. Write the story point on each child's artwork.

SAY • The empty tomb reminds us that Jesus is not dead anymore. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was punished for our sin. When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Roll stones

Provide 1 to 2-inch stones or, if time allows, lead children outside to find their own stones. Guide preschoolers to gently roll their stones a few feet in front of them.

- 1 to 2-inch stones
- walking rope (optional)

SAY • You rolled these small stones. Do you think you could roll a stone as large as a car? Of course not! The huge stone in front of Jesus' tomb was rolled away. Amazing! What is more amazing is that He died and rose again! **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.**

Play with play dough

Invite children to form a cross or tomb with play dough.

- play dough

SAY • The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died on a cross to save sinners. He lived a perfect life for us and died to take the punishment for our sins. Then He rose again! That is good news, and it is called the gospel. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Open and close containers

Provide many lidded containers of different shapes and sizes. Encourage preschoolers to open and close the various containers or match lids to containers.

- lidded containers

SAY • When they put Jesus in a tomb, they sealed it closed with a stone. Later, His friends found the tomb open and empty, because He was no longer dead! **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Tip: Avoid using medicine containers so that children are not tempted to play with them other places.

Transition to review the story

- countdown video (optional)

REVIEW the Story



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Review

Point to the giant timeline as you review today's Bible story.

Ask the following review questions:

- Bible
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Giant Timeline
- Story Point Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Key Passage Poster
- "The Gospel Is for Everyone" song (optional)
- "The Lord Reigns (1 Chronicles 16:31)" song (optional)

1. What was Jesus put on to die? (*a cross*)
2. What was rolled in front of the tomb Jesus' body was put in? (*a large stone*)
3. Did the angel tell Jesus' friends to be afraid or to not be afraid? (*not be afraid*)
4. Were Jesus' friends happy or sad that He was alive? (*happy*)
5. Who died on the cross and is alive? (**Jesus died on the cross and is alive.**)
6. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

SAY • Jesus lived a perfect life that pleased God. We all have sinned and done things that do not please God. Jesus was perfect. He never sinned. He did not deserve to die, but He took the punishment for our sin by dying on the cross. But Jesus did not stay dead. He is alive! When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Sing the theme song "The Gospel Is for Everyone" or key passage song "The Lord Reigns."

Pray

Invite preschoolers to tell you any prayer requests they have.

SAY • God, thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment for our sin on the cross. We are so happy that you raised Him from the dead, and He is alive today! Thank You for rescuing sinners like us. Amen.



Missions moment

SAY • The Wiltons know **Jesus died on the cross and is alive!** They want to spread this joy to others, and they believe preschoolers can do that too! They know that you all have a special job in God's mission

• "Wilton Family
Prayer Requests"
printable

Ask volunteers to hold each photo while you read the requests, pausing after each one to voice a short prayer.

Decide if it's alive

Tell preschoolers you will say the name of something. If they think that something is alive, they should stand up. If they think that something is not alive, they should sit down. Include obvious words, such as rocks, pillows, dogs, and ants. Also include tricky words, such as wind, trees, or fire. Say *Jesus* several times throughout and celebrate that He is alive when you do!

SAY • Animals, plants, insects, and people are alive. Other objects are not. Jesus is alive, even though He died on a cross. He rose again! The most important thing that ever happened is that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.