



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: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The people welcomed Jesus as King, but they did not recognize Him as their Savior. Jesus calls all people to trust in Him as Savior and Lord. When we do, we will be saved from sin and death.

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



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

All four Gospels offer a glimpse into the joy that overtook the crowds of Jerusalem as King Jesus made His way through the city gates. The events that would take place in the city just one week later would starkly contrast to the high-spirited festivities of Jesus' triumphal entry. In His sovereignty, Christ knew He would face crucifixion at the hands of His own people; yet He willingly approached the cross for our salvation.

What was the significance of the people's shouts for the King and His coming kingdom? What do we learn about Christ's heart for the lost?

Crowds poured into Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and many of them participated in creating a grand entrance for Jesus. They waved palm branches, a symbol of pride for the Jews, and called out for their new King to usher in a new reign for God's people. They had heard reports of how He raised Lazarus from the dead and were eager to see His next miracle. Yet, they misunderstood the purpose of His entry into the holy city—it was not to overthrow their oppressors but to offer salvation to all who would turn to Him in faith. They sought a mighty conqueror in Jesus, not knowing that the Father would instead send a Suffering Servant to be sacrificed on their behalf. They wanted an earthly king to reign amid their difficult circumstances, not a Messiah who would be publicly humiliated on a cross. Despite what His people desired, God knew what His people needed and sent His Son to save them.

As Jesus approached the city, He wept for it—knowing the fate that would soon befall Him and the great price He would pay to establish peace between God and man. We later see His heart for the lost as He pleaded for the Father to forgive the people's sins. What God's people didn't know then is the story we get to proclaim now: Christ died for sinners! Lead boys and girls to see that Jesus is greater than our earthly rulers and worldly desires. He is the sovereign Savior and Lord who has already paid the price for our greatest need: salvation!



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

- ☐ "Through the City" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ plastic tablecloths
- ☐ air-dry clay or modeling clay, 1 small canister per kid
- ☐ leaves
- ☐ paint
- ☐ paintbrushes

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ crown made from cardstock



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ crown sticker

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ index cards, 1 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Finish the Story" 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)

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "If My People (2 Chronicles 7:14)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ poster board
- ☐ 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 would you prepare for a visit from someone very important like a president or a king? Would you tidy up your room or prepare a special meal?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Through the City” activity page.

SAY “In today’s story, we will see how **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: LEAF PRINTS

Cover tables with plastic tablecloths to avoid getting paint on the tables. Provide each kid with some air-dry clay or modeling clay. Lead kids to roll out their clay with their hands until they have a square, ½ inch thick slab. Distribute leaves of varying sizes to kids. Invite kids to press the leaves into the clay, creating an imprint of the leaves. Encourage kids to be creative with their design. Then provide kids with paint and paint brushes. Invite kids to paint the leaves. Distribute a plastic baggie for kids to take their leaf prints home as a reminder of the true victory we have in Jesus.

SAY “Before His death, He rode on a donkey toward Jerusalem. **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING.** They laid palm branches down as a sign of victory. Yet, we’ll see how the people misunderstood the true victory Jesus came to secure. Let’s get ready to hear our Bible story.”

☐ OPTION 2: CAPTURE THE CROWN



Form kids into two teams. Place a crown made from cardstock in the center of the room. Assign kids on each team their own number, making sure both teams have a kid with each number. Line up teams on either side of the crown. Then call out a number such as “3” and challenge the two kids assigned the number three to capture the crown. The kid who captures the crown and brings it back to their team earns a point. Repeat as time allows and declare the team with the most points as the winner.

SAY “Today, we will learn how the **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING.** They thought Jesus had come to be an earthly king who would defeat Roman rule. However, we’ll see that Jesus came for much more than physical rescue. We’ll see that Jesus is the eternal King who rescues people from sin and death.”





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 “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I am looking forward to spending time studying God’s Word together. Today is a special day because we’ll be learning about an event that happened just before Jesus’ death on the cross. 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.] Let’s turn to the New Testament.

In our story today, we will see how the **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**, but they did not see Him as the Savior of the world. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s ask God to open our hearts as we prepare to hear a story from His Word: ‘Lord, thank You for Your Word. Help us focus on what You want to show us today and be obedient to what You tell us to do. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Today, we will discuss our big picture question: **What is repentance?** What is the answer we’ve learned? [Allow responses.] **Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.**

Throughout our story today, we will see how many people in Jerusalem welcomed Jesus as their King, but they did not see Him as the One who had come to save them from their sins. Every person is a sinner. We can either repent of our sin and turn to Jesus, asking Him to be our Savior, or suffer the punishment of our sin—eternal destruction in hell. Jesus came to call people to repent and trust in Him by faith. When we do, we are forgiven of our sin and are given eternal life with Him. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “Because of Adam and Eve’s disobedience toward God in the garden of Eden, all people now sin and need a Savior. In the Old Testament, we learn how God promised to send a Savior to rescue His people from sin. God told Abraham that the whole world would be blessed through his family. Over time, God’s people—the Israelites—sinned against God and turned away from Him. But God is faithful to His promises despite His people’s unfaithfulness. At the right time, God faithfully provided His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus was born in Bethlehem. He grew up and began a three-year ministry, calling people to repent for the kingdom of God had come. Today, we will see how Jesus was welcomed into Jerusalem before His death on the cross. ”



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 21:1-9; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19. 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

“ Jesus and His disciples were approaching Bethphage and Bethany, two villages on the way to the great city of Jerusalem. He sent two of the disciples ahead, saying, “As you enter the village, you will find a young donkey tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. And if anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say this: ‘The Lord needs it.’”

They went ahead and found it just as Jesus had told them. When the owners said, “Why are you untying the donkey?”, they replied, “The Lord needs it.”

This took place so that the prophecy would be fulfilled that says, “See, your King is coming to you, gentle, and mounted on a donkey.”

The two disciples brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their clothes on it, and helped Jesus get on it. As He was going along, a large crowd of people spread their clothes on the road and cut palm branches from trees to place on the road as well. They said, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

Some of the Pharisees were upset and asked Jesus to tell the people to be quiet. Jesus replied, “If they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out.”

As Jesus approached the city, He cried for it. He said, “Because you will not recognize the time when God visits you, sad days will come. Enemies will build a barricade around you and will crush you and destroy the city.” He was sad for the people because of the consequences that would come for not recognizing Him as God and Savior.

The Pharisees saw the way the people praised Jesus as King because they had seen Him do miracles like raising Lazarus from the dead. They said to one another, “See? We have accomplished nothing to stop the people from following Jesus. The world has gone after Him!”

Christ Connection: The people welcomed Jesus as King, but they did not recognize Him as their Savior. Jesus calls all people to trust in Him as Savior and Lord. When we do, we will be saved from sin and death. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Dress up: Dress up and tell the story as if you were a person in the crowd welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem.

Define it: Tell kids that Hosanna means “save, please” or “save us now.” Remind kids that the people’s idea of salvation was different than the salvation Jesus came to offer.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ As Jesus neared the end of His earthly ministry, He and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem. Outside of Jerusalem, Jesus sent two of His disciples to find a young donkey on which Jesus would ride into Jerusalem. Why was this event important? Look at Zechariah 9:9. **[Choose a volunteer to read Zechariah 9:9 aloud.]** In the book of Zechariah, the Old Testament Scriptures testified to this event, and it acted as a sign for the coming King. Jesus came as the promised Messiah. God always keeps His promises, and Jesus rode into Jerusalem just as the Scriptures prophesied.

As Jesus entered the city, people began to gather. The **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. They had heard about Jesus and all the miracles He had performed throughout His ministry. What did the people shout as they welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem? Look at Mark 11:9. **[Choose a volunteer to read Mark 11:9 aloud.]** The people shouted, ‘Hosanna,’ and they laid their clothes on the ground. The people placed palm branches on the ground as a sign of victory for their chosen King. They thought Jesus had come to give them victory from the Romans who ruled over the Jewish people. But Jesus came to bring greater freedom: He came to rescue people from sin and death.

When Jesus was in Jerusalem, He cried for the city. Why did Jesus cry for Jerusalem? Look at Luke 19:41-44. **[Choose a volunteer read Luke 19:41-44 aloud.]** The people eagerly welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem as a king, but they missed the most important part; He is the Savior of the world. God the Son had entered their city, and they missed it. Even the most ‘religious’ people, the Pharisees, didn’t see Jesus as their Savior. Rather, they wanted to stop Jesus’ ministry and quiet the praise of the people. Sadly, this happens today. People may know about Jesus and see Him as a good teacher but refuse to trust Him as their Savior. It is the mission of believers to share the reason why He came: to rescue people from their sin.

The people welcomed Jesus as King, but they did not recognize Him as their Savior. Jesus calls all people to trust in Him as Savior and Lord. When we do, we will be saved from sin and death. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ The people of Jerusalem knew about all Jesus’ miracles and good teaching. They knew He had power. But they didn’t truly see Jesus for who He is: God’s Son who came to be their Savior. To be saved from our sin, we must go beyond just knowing about Jesus. We must trust in Him as Savior and Lord. If you would like to learn more about trusting Jesus as your Savior, 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.)



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

4 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write out each word of the key passage on a poster board. Cover each word with a sticky note. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Chronicles 7:14 together.

SAY “ Our key passage reminds us that when we repent and turn to God, He is faithful to forgive our sin. Let’s continue memorizing this important verse. ”

Challenge kids to shout out the first word of the key passage. Once they have said the correct word, remove the sticky note. Then challenge them to shout out the last word of the key passage. Continue pointing to sticky notes, challenging them to shout out the correct word, and removing the sticky notes until the entire key passage is revealed.

Lead kids to sing “If My People (2 Chronicles 7:14).” 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, God, for sending Jesus to be our Savior. Help us share this good news with others, so that they can experience the forgiveness, joy, and peace that comes from following You. 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 John 12. Explain that the Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Tell kids these books contain stories from Jesus' life and ministry and were written by men who were either disciples of Jesus, like Matthew and John, or people who interviewed eyewitnesses of Jesus' life and miracles, like Luke and Mark.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud John 12:17-18 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Before Jesus entered Jerusalem, He had raised a man named Lazarus from the dead. The people heard about this amazing miracle, and they recognized the power of Jesus. They followed Him because of His miracles, not because they trusted in Him as their Savior.

The people wanted something from Jesus, but they didn't want to give their hearts to Jesus. Jesus is the true King who is worthy of our worship and praise because of who He is—not because we think He has the power to give us what we want in this world. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, He gives us something greater than our earthly desires: He gives us Himself. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What is the difference between knowing about Jesus and trusting in Him as Savior? ”

Remind kids that the people of Jerusalem knew about Jesus and all the miracles He performed throughout His ministry, but they didn't know Him for who He truly was: the Savior of the world. We can know all about Jesus, go to church, and even read the Bible, but still not have a saving relationship with Jesus. When we trust in Jesus as Savior, we are saved from sin and made right with God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 1:10-13.)

SAY “ How can we make Jesus the King of our lives? ”

Explain that once we have trusted in Jesus as Savior, we must surrender to His lordship in our life. This means we follow where He leads and are obedient to what He says. We no longer desire to be in control of our life, but we trust God to show us how to live to bring Him glory. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Gal. 2:20.)

SAY “ Why is it important for believers to share Jesus with others? ”

Discuss how the consequence of sin is eternal punishment in hell. Jesus preached the good news and called people to repent. When we follow Him, we also are called to share the gospel. The only way for people to be saved is by trusting in Jesus. If we don't share the gospel with them, how will they hear? (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 10:14-15.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: MUSICAL THRONE



Set up chairs in a large circle, with the seats of the chairs facing out. Provide enough seats for everyone. Place a crown sticker on one chair. Direct kids to begin walking in a circle around the chairs as you begin playing music. After several seconds, stop the music and challenge the kids to sit down in an empty chair. The kid who sits in the chair with the crown sticker is out. Continue the game, removing a chair without the sticker after each round, until there is one kid remaining.

SAY “ Today, we saw that **PEOPLE WELCOMED JESUS TO JERUSALEM AS THEIR KING**. But ultimately they rejected Him as their Savior. Like the kid who sat in the ‘crown’ chair was ejected from the game, the people turned against Jesus one week later and nailed Him to a cross. However, Jesus—the true King—was raised to life, and now He sits at the right hand of the Father, where God has exalted Him above every name. ”

☐ OPTION 2: I HAVE ... WHO HAS?

Distribute an index card to each kid. Beginning from Exodus, discretely assign a book of the Bible to each kid and lead them to write the book name on their card. For example, kid one would be assigned “Exodus,” kid two “Leviticus,” kid three “Deuteronomy,” and so on.

Challenge kids to determine if they have the card for the book of the Bible that comes after Genesis. The kid with the Exodus will stand up and say, “I have Exodus... Who has...” The kid with the book after Exodus will then stand up and say, “I have Leviticus... Who has...” Repeat, until the group has made it through the books of the Bible assigned to them. Allow kids to use a Bible’s Table of Contents if they need help.

SAY “ The Old Testament books were written before Jesus came to earth, but they all testified about Him. The whole Bible is one story of how God saves people through faith in Jesus. ”

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, asking God to give us strength and courage to share the good news of Jesus with those around us this week. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Finish the Story” on the activity page.

EASTER BONUS SESSION 2

JESUS SAVES US FROM OUR ENEMIES

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



KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

CHRIST CONNECTION: God's plan was always to send Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose on the third day. All who place their faith in Him will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life.

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



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Amid the grief of Christ's death by crucifixion, we find the gospel's good news for sinners: "Don't be afraid, because I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here. For he has risen, just as he said" (Matthew 28:5-6). The basis of Christian hope is found within these words as an angel of the Lord reminds us of Jesus' victory over sin and death. Jesus alone has saved us from our enemies: sin and death.

What was the significance of Christ's cries from the cross to the Father? How should the reality of the resurrection impact our lives as followers of Jesus?

All four Gospels recount the brutality of the crucifixion and how our sinless Savior was mercilessly mocked and killed by sinful men. In previous chapters, we read that Jesus' sweat was like drops of blood in the garden of Gethsemane, as He knew the treacherous darkness He would face. Yet, Christ's obedience to His Father's will was motivated by the joy He would experience on the other side of the cross. Jesus cried out to the Father, "Why have you abandoned me?" He knew, however, that His sacrificial death was the only way for people to be saved. Jesus bore our sin and shame to set us free from sin and death, allowing those who trust in Him to be born again through the Spirit and welcomed into God's kingdom forever. Every believer has resurrection hope both now and for all eternity. Not only will we spend eternity in the presence of our Savior, but the life we now live, we live by faith in Jesus (Galatians 2:20).

Consider the simplicity of the gospel's good news: Jesus died for sinners so we could be set free from the tyranny of sin and death with the hope of eternal life. Those who were enemies of God can draw near to Him by faith in the Son who has paid our debts and given us new life. Lead boys and girls to see the power of the resurrection within our everyday lives as believers—no longer slaves to sin but children of God with good news to share!



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

- ☐ "Match the Verse" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ sticky notes, 1 per kid
- ☐ cup

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ wooden cross
- ☐ spray bottle filled with water
- ☐ iodine solution
- ☐ film developing powder
- ☐ tall vase filled with water (large enough to fit the wooden cross inside)
- ☐ paper towel



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ ironing board
- ☐ iron
- ☐ fuse beads
- ☐ fuse bead boards, 1 per kid
- ☐ bowl
- ☐ parchment paper

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ dry erase board and marker

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Before and After" 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 from Our Enemies" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ wooden cross (optional)

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "If My People (2 Chronicles 7:14)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ crosses made from brown construction paper, 12 per group



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 “Has anyone ever paid for something you wanted because you didn’t have enough money to pay for it on your own? How did that make you feel?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Match the Verse” activity page.

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

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: EASTER ICE BREAKER



Distribute one sticky note and a pen to each kid. Challenge kids to think of one description about what they are wearing and write it on a sticky note. Then collect the sticky notes, fold them, and place them in a cup. Invite a kid to select one note from the cup and read aloud what is written on the note. Challenge her to guess which kid wrote that description. If she guesses correctly, allow her to keep the note. If she guesses incorrectly, direct her to put the note back in the cup. Continue around the circle until all the notes are taken.

SAY “Each of us are different, but the Bible tells us how we all have something in common: We have all sinned. Because of God’s love for us, He made the way for people to be forgiven of their sin. Today, we will learn how **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY FOR SIN AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH.**”

☐ OPTION 2: FORGIVEN AND FREE

Before the session, prepare the object lesson by spraying one side of the wooden cross with water, making sure it’s damp. Then sprinkle the film developing powder to the wet side of the cross, allowing the powder to dry and adhere to the cross.

Show kids the tall vase filled with water. Explain how God created Adam and Eve without sin. Discuss how sin came into the world through their disobedience. Add several drops of the iodine solution to the water until the water is dark to indicate “sin.” Explain how all people sin because everyone disobeys God. Talk through God’s plan to save sinners through Jesus, including Jesus’ birth and ministry. Then hold up the cross. Tell kids that God’s plan has always been to save sinners through His Son, Jesus. Place the cross in the iodine water and swirl it around, until the water becomes clear.

SAY “Only faith in Jesus takes away our sin. **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY FOR SIN AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH.** Through Jesus, we are forgiven and free of sin’s power in our lives. He gives us victory!”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





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! My name is [your name], and I am looking forward to learning from God’s Word, the Bible, with you. 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.]

In our story today, we will see how **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY FOR SIN AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] During this time of year, we like to pause and focus on Jesus coming to the earth as the perfect sacrifice for our sins. Jesus’ death and resurrection is recorded in the New Testament section of the Bible, but as we learn every week, we can see Jesus throughout the entire Bible. Ever since sin entered the world, people have needed a Savior. The Bible tells us we are dead in our sin. This means we are separated from God, the only source of true life. But God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Let’s pray as we prepare to hear from His Word: ‘Lord, thank You for Your love for us and for sending Jesus to die for our sin. Thank You for providing the way to be forgiven and have eternal life. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Today, we will discuss our big picture question: **What is repentance?** What is the answer we’ve learned? [Allow responses.] **Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.**

Sin is disobedience toward God, and it leads us away from Him. That’s why it is so important to repent of our sin. When we repent, we agree with God that our sin is wrong, turn from that sin, and follow Jesus. Following Jesus allows us to find forgiveness and life forever with God. It is only because of what Jesus has done for us through His life, death, and resurrection that we can have forgiveness and eternal life. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “God created a good world without sin. But when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, sin entered the world. God promised to one day send a Savior who would defeat sin and death once and for all. From Abraham to Moses, and through all the kings and prophets, God continued to remind His people of His promise to save them from sin. At the right time, just as God had planned, Jesus was born. He lived a perfect life, always obeying God the Father. He performed miracles, showing everyone He really is God’s Son. And He taught the Scriptures and truth, to lead people to life in Him. However, Jesus was ultimately rejected by the people He came to save. Today, we’ll see how He died and rose again. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Matthew 27:27–28:10; Mark 15:16–16:8; Luke 23:26–24:12; John 19:16–20:18. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus Saves Us from Our Enemies.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JESUS SAVES US FROM OUR ENEMIES

“After **Jesus’** triumphal entry in Jerusalem, He **was later arrested and put on trial. The governor Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified.** Pilate had a sign made that said, “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews,” and had it placed on the cross.

The soldiers dressed Jesus in a scarlet robe. They made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, spit on Him, hit Him, and made fun of Him, saying “Hail, King of the Jews!” Then they led Him away to crucify Him.

Two criminals were crucified along with Him, one on His right and one on His left. **Those who passed by shook their heads, saying “If you really are the Son of God, come down from the cross!”**

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

One of the criminals joined those making fun of Jesus. But the other criminal said, “We are getting what we deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong!” Then he said to Jesus, “Please remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”

Jesus replied to him, “Truly I tell you, today You will be with Me in paradise.”

Darkness covered the whole land for three hours. Jesus cried out, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have You abandoned me?” Then He cried out again with a loud voice, saying, “Father, into Your hands I entrust My spirit. It is finished.” The curtain of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom.

A man named Joseph came and asked for Jesus’ body. He took it, wrapped it in clean linen, and placed it in his own tomb. A great stone was rolled against the entrance. Pilate told the Pharisees to make the tomb as secure as they could. **They placed a seal on the stone and placed a guard there to make sure no one came to take His body.**

After the Sabbath day, Mary Magdalene and another Mary came to the tomb. They found an angel of the Lord had rolled back the stone and was sitting on it. He told the women, “Do not be afraid! Jesus, who was crucified, is not here. He has risen, just as He said!” They ran to tell the disciples the good news!

Christ Connection: God’s plan was always to send Jesus to die for the sins of the

STORYTELLING TIPS

Vary your tone: Use a dramatic, sad, and excited voice as you tell the story to help kids stay engaged.

Display it: Display a wooden cross and point to it when you tell how Jesus was crucified.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

world. Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose on the third day. All who place their faith in Him will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified, a punishment designed for criminals. But Jesus wasn’t a criminal. Jesus had never sinned. The soldiers mocked Jesus, spit on Him, and hurt Him. Jesus was placed on a cross between two criminals. Darkness filled the earth. Then, Jesus cried out to God. What did He say? Look at Matthew 27:46. **[Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 27:46.]** Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 as He cried out and asked God why He had abandoned Him. As Jesus died on the cross, He took the punishment our sins deserve. God is holy and will not accept sin, so as Jesus took our sins on Himself, God poured out His wrath over sin. God didn’t save His Son from punishment because Jesus’ sacrifice is the only way for sinners to be saved.

Even as Jesus suffered on the cross, He displayed the love He has for people. He prayed for God to forgive those who mocked Him. And He even welcomed the criminal on the cross next to Him into the kingdom of God because the man believed in Him. Eventually, Jesus’ work was finished, and He died. What happened after Jesus died? Look at Matthew 27:51. **[Choose a volunteer to read Matthew 27:51.]** The temple curtain tore in two from top to bottom. The curtain that once separated every person from the Holy of Holies, except the high priest, was now torn because of Jesus’ work on the cross. Jesus’ death made the way for anyone who trusts in Him to come before God. He defeated sin, so we can find forgiveness and be made right with God.

A man named Joseph buried Jesus’ body in his own tomb and rolled a stone to close the entrance. After the Sabbath, some women who were followers of Jesus made their way to the tomb. When they arrived, they saw two angels. What did the angels say to them? Look at Luke 24:5-7. **[Choose a volunteer to read Luke 24:5-7 aloud.]** They told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead, just as He had said He would. The women ran to tell the disciples the good news that Jesus was alive.

JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY FOR SIN AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH. God’s plan was always to send Jesus to die for the sins of the world. Jesus died on the cross, was buried, and rose on the third day. All who place their faith in Him will receive forgiveness of sins and eternal life. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ We could never pay for our sin because we can never live a perfect life. Jesus did that for us. Jesus died to pay for our sin. He rose again, showing He has power over sin and death. Anyone who trusts in Him as Savior will be forgiven of their sins and receive eternal life. If you would like to know more about accepting Jesus as your Savior, I would love to speak 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.)



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4 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Before the session, write the words of the key passage on 12 crosses made from brown construction paper. Place the crosses in a random order on a table or the floor. Create a set for each group of four kids. Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 2 Chronicles 7:14 together.

SAY “When we repent of our sin and trust in Jesus, we are forgiven. Jesus’ death paid for our sin, and His resurrection gives us victory over sin and death forever.”

Challenge groups of four kids to arrange the crosses in order of the key passage. Then guide kids to remove a cross, scramble the remaining crosses around, place them in the correct order, and say the key passage aloud. Guide kids to continue removing crosses, until they can say the key passage aloud from memory.

Lead kids to sing “If My People (2 Chronicles 7:14).” 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 Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for our sin and rise from the grave on the third day so we can receive forgiveness and eternal life. Help us share this good news with others. 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 24. Explain that Jesus' death and resurrection are recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). Each of the Gospel writers provided details about what happened. Some details are the same, while others provided different insight into the events.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Luke 24:9-10 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “After hearing the good news of Jesus’ resurrection, the women ran from the tomb and went to tell Jesus’ followers. The women’s weeping turned into joy, and they rushed to share the hope they had heard. Jesus’ words from John 11:25 ring true: ‘I am the resurrection and the life.’

The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that death will never have the victory for those who trust in Him. All our sadness, sin, and struggles will one day be gone forever. The future for those in Jesus is endless joy. And we have the mission to share this joy with others, like the women at the tomb did. We can share the gospel and give people a hope that will never fade away.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Why did Jesus have to die on the cross to pay for our sins?”

Discuss how because God is holy, sin demands a payment. The Bible tells us that the cost of sin is death. For hundreds of years, God’s people had sacrificed animals to show that their sins required payment. But because of God’s faithful love for us, He sent Jesus as the final and perfect Sacrifice for our sin. Those who trust Jesus as Savior are forgiven and made right before God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 5:8.)

SAY “Why is it important that Jesus rose from the dead?”

Remind kids that Jesus’ resurrection shows God’s powerful victory over sin and death. It also displays that Jesus is truly the promised Messiah the prophets wrote about long ago. Jesus’ resurrection also points to the resurrection all believers will have one day. The Bible says we will be raised just as Jesus was raised. Those who trust in Jesus as Savior have eternal life forever with God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Cor. 15:55-57.)

SAY “Who do you know that needs to hear the gospel and its message of hope and joy?”

Answers will vary. Encourage kids who are believers to remember how Jesus called His followers to share the good news. Remind kids how the women at the empty tomb ran and told others the good news. Help kids understand how people need to hear the gospel and respond by faith to be saved. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 11:25-26.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BEADED CROSS

Before the session, set up an iron and ironing board in a corner of the room. Place a bowl of fuse beads at tables and distribute a fuse bead board to each kid. Challenge kids to arrange fuse beads in the shape of a cross on the fuse bead board. Then lead kids to carefully carry their board to the leader with the iron. The leader will carefully cover the cross with parchment paper and place the iron on top, moving it around the design to melt the beads. Then carefully remove the cross from the board once it has cooled.

SAY “ The cross is a reminder of what Jesus has done for us, how He paid the price for sin He never committed. Perhaps you can show your cross to someone and share the good news of what Jesus has done for them: **JESUS DIED ON THE CROSS TO PAY FOR SIN AND ROSE AGAIN TO DEFEAT DEATH.** ”

☐ OPTION 2: BECAUSE OF JESUS



Before the session, write the following Bible references on a dry erase board: John 1:12; 2 Corinthians 5:17; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:9. Explain to kids that these verses highlight who we are or what we have because of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection.

Form kids into groups of three or four and distribute a Bible to each group. Challenge kids to look up the first reference in their Bibles. Then invite a kid from a group to read the verse aloud. Discuss what that verse reveals about who we are or what we have because of Jesus and make a list on the dry erase board. Continue until all the verses have been read.

SAY “ Because Jesus died on the cross and rose again, those who trust in Him have a new identity and purpose. Our lives are hidden with Christ, and we live in His victory. ”

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?

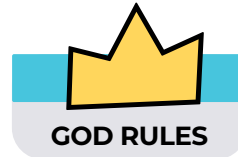
Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, thanking God for sending Jesus as our Savior so that we, too, can have victory over sin and death. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Before and After” on the activity page.



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.