

LESSON 23

# Take Up Your Cross

LUKE 9:23-27



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS FACED THE CROSS, AND WE MUST FOLLOW HIM

**LESSON SNAPSHOT**

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION ..... 5 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** whiteboard; dry erase markers

2. BIBLE STORY ..... 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 101)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION ..... 5 MIN

**Where Is the Gospel?**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is the Gospel?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS ..... 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** snack food and beverage

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY ..... 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) . . . . 20–30 MIN

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:** coloring page for NT Lesson 23—one for each child; markers or crayons

**The Best Treasure**

**SUPPLIES:** several dollars worth of new and shiny coins; a Bible

**Pick Up Your Cross**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large cross made from 2x4 lumber (nail a 12-inch crossbar to an 18-inch upright) or use foamcore board or cardboard
- ✓ candy bar
- ✓ man’s wallet with a ten-dollar bill in it
- ✓ electronic video game controller

7. CLOSING PRAYER ..... 5 MIN

**TOTAL 60–75 MIN**

**THE LESSON**

**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

today’s lesson the children will learn that there is a cost to following Jesus.

Jesus said that anyone who wanted to come after him must pick up his cross and follow. This is a difficult thing to help young children understand.

Ask for a volunteer to come to the whiteboard and draw a cross. (At your discretion, give as many children as desire an opportunity to participate.)

Then ask, “What does a cross have to do with Jesus?” (Jesus died on a cross.)

Tell the class that Jesus obeyed his Father in going to the cross to save all of us. (See Philippians 2:8). We also need to obey. Ask the class, Who do you need to obey? (They will likely say their mom and dad. Explain to them the reason they need to obey their parents is because God tells them to.)

It is ultimately God’s Word we need to obey. Taking up our cross means that we can’t do what we want but must follow what God tells us to do.

Have the children form a line behind you. Then have each child place their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Tell everyone to close their eyes. Lead them around the room slowly. Remind them to keep their eyes closed. Then, sit everyone back down and ask them how they were able to walk around the room without running into trouble? (They were able to get around even though their eyes were closed by following you.) Explain to the kids that the Bible tells us that we are blind in our sin but we can live by following Jesus and placing our trust in him!

Take time to pray and thank God for giving us his Word. Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read story 101, “Take Up Your Cross,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION** ..... **5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- **What did Jesus say we should give up in order to follow him?**  
*(all the world)*
  
- **What does Jesus mean when he says we should give up the whole world?**  
*(Jesus is the most important treasure of all. Nothing is more valuable than he is, not even all the treasure of the world.)*
  
- **Why are Jesus and his Word so special?**  
*(There is only one God who creates. Jesus made the earth and he died on the cross for our sin so that we could be forgiven and live with him in heaven one day. His Word tells us this story of the gospel so that we can believe.)*

**Where Is the Gospel?** \_\_\_\_\_

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

In Luke 9:22, Jesus specifically predicted his death and resurrection, which is the core of the gospel. He continues in verse 23 to describe how the path to following him involves our own cross. We must be willing to give up everything, even our lives. Physical death is not a requirement, but death to self and the pleasures of this world are a definite cost of following Jesus. If we try to secure salvation or save our own lives by any other means, we will fail. Whether by our good works or our own understanding, all paths outside the gospel fail and lead to eternal death. We can only have life if we trust in Jesus and in what he has done on the cross on our behalf.

The passing treasures of this life may bring temporary happiness, but all the treasures of the earth are not equal in value to our salvation in Christ. Money cannot buy eternal joy. Good works cannot save.

**SNACK QUESTIONS** ..... **10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Why is the Bible a special book?**  
*(The Bible is God's Word. Other books might have great stories, but they are just the words of people.)*
- **What does it mean not to be ashamed of God's Word?**  
*(Luke 9:26)? (We should not be afraid to tell others we believe the Bible is God's Word. We are ashamed when we don't want others to know that we believe and follow God's Word.)*
- **What story does the Bible teach us?**  
*(The Bible teaches us the story of Jesus. From the very beginning to the very end the Bible is the story of how God created the earth and is saving the earth from the evil of sin through what Jesus did on the cross.)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY** ..... **5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS** ..... **20-30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 23—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- **Who can solve the maze and help the two children find their way to Jesus in heaven?**  
*(Have the children draw a line along the path to Jesus.)*
- **What did the two children have to pass up to get to heaven?**  
*(earthly treasure and earthly pleasure)*

■ **What is drawn along the path to help their way?**

*(The crosses drawn along the path guide their way. Explain that the cross represents the gospel and that it is through what Jesus did on the cross that we can get to heaven. We need to embrace the teaching of the Bible and be willing to pass up the treasures and pleasures of this life. This is taking up our cross and following Jesus.)*

**The Best Treasure**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ several dollars worth of new and shiny coins
- ✓ a Bible

Place the loose change in a pile on a table next to an open Bible. Ask, “If you had to choose one or the other (the money or the Bible) which would you choose?”

Help them to see how much more valuable the gospel message of the Bible is over the treasures of this earth. The Word of God gives eternal life. Money doesn't give us any life. The gospel promises everlasting joy with Christ. The money could buy a candy bar that could give us brief pleasure. The money could provide for us for a while, but the Bible promises that God will take care of our needs—what we need to eat, drink, and wear.

Money can't buy what the Bible offers. The person who chooses God's Word can trust God to provide everything he needs.

**Pick Up Your Cross**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ large cross made from 2x4 lumber (nail a 12-inch crossbar to an 18-inch upright) or use foamcore board or cardboard
- ✓ candy bar
- ✓ man's wallet with a ten-dollar bill in it
- ✓ electronic video game controller

Show all the objects (except the cross) to the children and explain that while all of these things are fun, God doesn't want us to love anything more than we love Jesus. Show them the cross and say it represents loving Jesus. When Jesus says, “whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it” (Luke 9:24), it means that we can't love anything in life more than Jesus.

Call for three volunteers and give each of them the candy bar, wallet, or controller to hold in their right hand. Tell them the candy represents the pleasures or the things we love in the world, the wallet represents riches, and the video game represents the fun of the world. Now, ask them, one at a time, to try to pick up the cross in their right hand without letting go of the object they are holding.

They will not be able to do it. Now have them put down the item they're holding and then pick up the cross.

Explain to them that Jesus wants us to love him and live for him. We can enjoy things, but nothing should take up more of our life than God.

**CLOSING PRAYER** ..... **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for what you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as a way for the children to remember today's lesson.

LESSON 23 - TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

