

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

New Testament 4

DIRECTOR HANDBOOK



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Welcome to Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations is Sunday School with the biblical integrity you've come to expect from Concordia Publishing House. The Bible accounts in Cross Explorations follow the same sequence as Concordia's traditional Sunday School curriculum, Growing in Christ.

Cross Explorations combines the best of large-group/small-group instruction and site rotation. Leaders will love the easy-to-use leader guides as well as the options available for each lesson. Above all, Cross Explorations puts Christ at the center of each and every lesson.

Exploring Cross Explorations

Cross Explorations at a Glance

Engage

Cross Explorations starts with Engage. During Engage, all students take part in an opening activity together, singing and preparing for the rest of their exploration.

Explore

The Explore site divides kids by two age levels. Level 1 includes kids in grades 1–3, while Level 2 covers kids in grades 4–6. During Explore, students dig into the day's Bible story, guided by the Explore Teacher Leaflets and their Explore Student Leaflets. We recommend having eight to ten kids in a group with one leader. So, depending on the number of kids you have, you may have multiple Level 1 and Level 2 groups.

Express

During Express, kids apply the Bible learning from the Explore session to their lives as they create, experiment, sing, serve, and more. Options depend on the time you have available and the talents of your volunteers. The Express leader materials provide numerous options for each week:

- **Express Craft Booklet**—thirteen pull-apart cards provide creative projects for each lesson, complete with supply lists, directions, talking points, and pictures of the completed craft.
- **Express Music CD**—recorded music, music activities for each lesson, and PowerPoint slides with linked music reinforce each lesson with new songs, old favorites, and familiar hymns.
- **Express Skit CD**—brief skits allow students to review each Bible lesson. Ideas for costumes and visual props are included.
- **Express Activities & More CD**—creative snack ideas and group activities for each week. Additional activity ideas, including service projects, are suggested for some weeks. Activities include the following:
 - Group activities
 - Science demonstrations
 - Service projects

Leaders have the option to access materials by week, by topic, or by type of activity.

The amount of time available determines whether students will rotate through one, two, or more Express options each week. If time is limited, vary Express activities from week to week so students get a chance to experience different types of learning.

The Cross Explorations Schedule

Cross Explorations offers flexibility for a variety of settings. Here is a suggested schedule for a traditional 60-minute Sunday morning setting:

- All students at Engage for 15 minutes.
- Students break into Explore Levels 1 and 2 for 20 minutes.
- Students move through two or more Express rotations for 25 minutes.

If you are using Cross Explorations in a Midweek setting, your schedule probably offers more time. In this setting, the Engage and Explore times remain the same, but extra time may be used to include additional small-group Express options.

Flexibility

The flexible Cross Explorations materials allow you to customize the program to fit your specific needs. Here's how one congregation customized Cross Explorations to meet the specific needs in their Sunday School. They have a lot of students in grades 1–3, with smaller numbers in each of the older grades. Their solution:

- Everyone in grades 1–6 starts together in Engage.
- With a smaller number of students in grades 4–6, they move as one group into Explore. Following Explore, the older students split into two groups and rotate through two Express stations.
- Meanwhile, the younger students in grades 1–3 stay in single-grade groups and rotate through three stations. Explore becomes one of the three rotations, and leaders choose the other two stations from the Express materials.

Cross Explorations in a Self-Contained Classroom

Some congregations, by preference or due to limited space or number of students, use Cross Explorations in self-contained classrooms. The flexible Cross Explorations resources easily allow for use in this setting. If needed, divide students into two groups, lower grades (1–3) and upper grades (4–6), and plan on a leader for each group. If most of your students are younger, you could use just the Level 1 materials; likewise, use the Level 2 materials if most of your students are older.

Introduce the lesson to all students, using the Engage Teacher Leaflets and optional PowerPoint slide shows. (Or provide an *Engage CD* to each teacher to use in the classroom.)

Then, divide students into two or more groups for the Explore Bible study. Have them meet with their leader in their classroom or an assigned area of a larger space to dig into the Bible account and work through the student leaflets.

Following Explore, have students continue with Express activities in their classroom or rotate through Express activities with other classes. They can stay in the Explore groups, combine with other groups, or form new groups. Select the Express options that work best for your setting. These options can vary from week to week to keep students excited and engaged in what might happen next week.

Assembling Small Groups

Small groups form the core of Cross Explorations. Groups may be assigned by traditional grade levels or by combining students from the three grades composing each of the two levels for Explore. For instance, you could have two or more groups of students from grades 1–3. Likewise, you could have groups with a mix of students from grades 4–6. Ideally, groups will have eight to ten students in them. If you have more than ten students at either level, plan on two Explore sites for that level. Depending on the age range of your students and their level of maturity, you also might include students in third grade in your Level 2 groups.

What about Other Sunday School Levels?

Preschool

We recommend letting preschoolers learn in their own settings and groups. The Growing in Christ *Early Childhood Teacher Guide* has age-appropriate material for preschoolers that follows the same lesson sequence as Cross Explorations.

Keeping preschoolers separate from your elementary program is beneficial for several reasons. Sunday School is often a preschooler's first group experience. A young child needs a safe environment with predictable routines and the same caring teacher each week to feel secure. Parents and children may feel anxious, timid, or afraid in the midst of the larger Sunday School setting. If you can, give preschoolers separate learning spaces so that they can do age-appropriate activities in an environment suitable to their needs. Preschoolers can get lost among older kids, but in their own space, they can relax, play, and feel more secure. This kind of atmosphere maximizes their ability to learn and remember.

Middle School and High School

Since Cross Explorations is a complementary program to Growing in Christ, you can use Growing in Christ for middle-school and high-school levels. The two programs share a common Bible story, so the whole family is studying the same story each week.

Adults

The Cross Explorations *Explore Adult Bible Study Guide* provides weekly lessons for adult learners. Parents and other adults join children for the large-group Engage session, then continue learning in their own Explore group for thirty minutes. Families continue learning at home through the *Explore More Cards*. These talking points help families take the lesson home each week and engage kids and parents in talking about the faith.

Leading Cross Explorations

Staffing for Cross Explorations lets volunteers work from their strengths. Each Cross Explorations leader works in a role designed to let him or her be most effective. It is beneficial when groups of children have two adults present with them at all times.

Large-Group Leader

The large-group leader begins each week's Cross Explorations adventure during the Engage session. This leader needs the energy and confidence to work with a large group of children. The Engage leader should also have the ability to get kids excited about learning. Since this large-group leader sets the tone for the day, choose this leader—or leadership team—carefully. Because of the variety of ages involved, it is important to select a large-group leader who communicates well with students.

Site Leaders

Your Cross Explorations site leaders do what they do best—crafts, music, science, teaching the lesson, and more. Volunteers who feel comfortable teaching students would be ideal leaders for the Explore Level 1 and Level 2 sites. For the most effective learning environment, Explore leaders should be consistent from week to week. If teaching volunteers like to work in teams, enlist three teachers for each Explore team and encourage at least two of them to be present each week. Volunteers with a love for crafts, music, or other ways to apply the lesson truths would be excellent leaders for the Express sites you choose. Since Express sites may vary each week, volunteers may take turns serving.

Rotation Small-Group Leaders

Cross Explorations small-group leaders serve a very important role. You will need one small-group leader for every eight to ten kids. The small-group leaders may not have to teach; rather, they lead their small group of students from one site to another. Groups may be assigned by age or grade level, or they may be multi-graded. Strive for groups no larger than ten students. Encourage students to select a name for their group in order to develop a sense of group identity. Small-group leaders

- are leaders and encouragers, not bosses;
- develop friendships with every child in their group;

- help and encourage kids to participate, cooperate, and try new things;
- ask questions and lead kids to discover Bible answers;
- keep kids focused on tasks and challenges;
- participate in activities;
- get to know their group members well; and
- are patient and do not yell or express anger.

Older adults and older youth often make ideal small-group leaders. In some situations, you may want to have your small-group leaders actually be the teachers for the Explore or Express sites. For the balance of the time at Cross Explorations, these teachers simply lead their small group. The choice is yours!

Cross Explorations Resources

The Cross Explorations leader materials provide all of the resources your volunteers need to effectively share God’s Word with children.

■ Engage

- **Leader Leaflet** includes opening activities and music suggestions.
- **Engage Music CD** provides selected music for use in Cross Explorations.

■ Explore

- **Level 1 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 1 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art and activities for children in grades 1–3.
- **Level 2 Teacher Leaflets** include resources for teaching the Bible story to children in grades 4–6.
- **Level 2 Student Leaflets** include full-color Bible art, activities, and discussion questions for children in grades 4–6.
- **Explore More Cards** provide family-centered questions and activities to extend the lesson to the home each week.
- **Explore Adult Bible Study Guide** allows parents and other adults to explore the same lesson that kids do each week.

■ Express

- **Express Craft Booklet** uses visuals to guide students as they express the lesson creatively. (Craft activity patterns, when required, are found on the *Express Activities & More CD*.)
- **Express Music CD** allows kids to express the lesson through song.
- **Express Skit CD** lets students express the lesson through drama and role play.
- **Express Activities & More CD** has ideas and activities that vary from week to week. These include science demonstrations, games, snacks, service projects, and more. Each one provides students with unique ways to express their learning. (This CD may also contain craft patterns.)

■ Director CD

- **Director Handbook** contains planning materials for the Sunday School Leader.
- **Preparing the Lesson** leaflets are included for each week. Provide all your volunteer leaders with copies of these devotions as they prepare for each week's lesson.
- **Planning Pages** are designed to help teachers and leaders plan the lessons each week. The planning pages outline the activities available for each section of the lesson.
- **Bulletin Notes** are designed to help connect your congregation and Sunday School by providing a brief lesson highlight and suggested questions for parents and others to discuss with students.
- **Pronunciation Guide** helps teachers and students correctly pronounce more difficult names of people and places in the Bible.
- **Arch Book List** helps teachers reinforce the Bible account by providing another method of sharing the story with students.

The Perfect Setting: Environment Matters

Stress, mess, and chaos hinder learning. Open a door to effective learning by providing a relaxed, comfortable environment.

- Make sure your facility is clean and safe. Eliminate unneeded furniture and supplies.
- Use child-size furniture so kids feel comfortable.
- Decorate to capture curiosity. Nearly 75 percent of people are visual learners who learn best with visual prompts. Thematic decorating helps them understand and remember well.
- Use words and pictures on signs for sites, restrooms, and offices.

Where to Meet

Deciding where to meet for Cross Explorations will depend on the space available in your building.

Engage requires a space large enough for all students to be seated and equipped so the leader can be heard clearly. If you plan to use the recording on the Engage CD, you will need a CD player. If you plan to use the PowerPoint presentation on the Engage CD, you will need a computer and a projector. The church sanctuary, a fellowship hall, or even a gymnasium can work for this session.

Explore requires separate spaces for the two levels. Classrooms equipped with chairs or desks or a section of a larger room that can be screened off will both work for this session. Preschool students, youth, and adults should have their own meeting locations apart from the Explore session.

Express sessions offer the greatest flexibility as far as meeting locations. You could offer multiple Express sites in one large space, provided you can screen off areas to prevent distractions. Rolling dividers, movable walls, or even

fabric panels help block the view from one area to another. In other situations, separate classrooms might offer the best setting for the Express sessions.

Decorating Ideas

Help students experience Cross Explorations by setting the scene for learning. Your decorations may be as simple as Concordia's realistic Bible Story Poster Sets. These sets contain pictures of each Bible story. Use posters to decorate Explore learning areas so teachers can refer to the appropriate picture for that week's lesson. You can view the posters in each set by searching "Bible Story Posters" at www.cph.org/sundayschool.

If you have a dedicated area for Sunday School, consider more extensive decorating to help set the stage for learning. Furnish Explore and Express areas with Bible-times decorations. Piles of brightly striped pillows can double as seating for storytelling time. Use baskets and ceramic vessels to hold craft supplies and student materials for each Express location. You might even set up a Bible-times marketplace to keep students engaged in the learning process.

What Do You Say When . . . ?

by Patricia Hoffman

Children are curious beings. They want to know everything there is to know about everything there is. The favorite question of two- and three-year-olds (and many older students as well) is "why?" We encourage children to discover, to investigate, and to explore. Yet, at times, a Sunday School teacher will hear a question that goes more deeply into theology than the teacher feels prepared to go. We don't want to say the wrong thing or lead children astray with our response. Our first response may be a bit of panic as we search for the right words, the correct answer.

Even the best Sunday School teacher will not have the answer to every question. At times, it may be enough to remind the student that God's Word tells us everything we need to know about His great love for us and the means He provides for our salvation through His Son, Jesus. Some questions can be anticipated by reading the teacher guide and preparing carefully. Let's take a closer look at a few questions that children often raise.

Is Jesus the Only Way to Heaven?

What do you say when children ask, "Is Jesus the only way to heaven?" I certainly do not hold all the answers to children's questions; however, this one really is an easy question to answer. The answer to this question is a resounding "Yes! Jesus is absolutely the only way to heaven!" The child asking the question, however, will most likely respond, "How can you be so sure?" I can answer this with "because the Bible tells me so." While this may seem to be a simple answer to the question, it is also the most honest answer. Scripture does not speak specifically to every issue that we face in today's complex world, but on this question Scripture speaks very clearly. During His time on earth, Jesus was very specific that His sole purpose on earth was to fulfill the Law and save us from sin and the devil. In John 14:6, Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and

the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” Jesus could not have been more clear on this point. He is the way to heaven. There is no alternate route or secondary means of getting to eternal life.

When others tell us to do good things to secure our place in heaven, we need to remind ourselves of Jesus’ words. Jesus saves us from eternal death and damnation. Faith in Jesus is the one and only way we receive the joy of eternal life. Of this we can be certain. Good works will not save us. Being a good and kind person will not save us. Obeying all the rules of school, home, and community will not save us. Jesus and only Jesus saves. His death on the cross and His resurrection is our proof that through faith in Him, we will be given eternal life in heaven. Nothing we do will earn a place in heaven for us, but we can be sure that we will go to heaven because of Jesus’ sacrifice for us on the cross.

What, Then, of Works?

So, what do you say, then, when the child asks, “Why should we bother doing good things if they don’t count for anything?” That’s a good question and a logical one! The child is right. As we’ve just discussed, our good works or kind actions don’t really count for anything in terms of getting us to heaven. We cannot do anything that will get us to heaven on our own. So, why should we bother?

The easy answer here is because it’s the right thing to do. We are commanded by God to live according to His Law and to serve our neighbor through our vocations.

Our parents and teachers tell us: “Be nice to others and they’ll be nice to you.” “Be polite and others will be polite to you.” These are fine guides for our behavior, but they put the focus on what we get out of being good or doing good deeds. All of these guides for our behavior tell us what to do so that others will be kind to us, do good things for us, or behave well toward us. The motivation in all of these guides for behavior is what we will get back for what we do. These are not good works.

Our sinful nature rebels at the notion of truly being good and serving others. Christians are, in this life, both saint and sinner: moved by God and His love shown to us in the sacrifice of Christ to love others, but consistently failing to do so. In truth, even the “good” works we do in this life are flawed by half-hearted effort or sinful motive. Yet, they are the fruit of faith and the means by which God works in this world to benefit others.

So, what are good works? True good works are actions that we do out of love for Jesus and what He has done for us, without thought for anything we might get in return. In reality, our good works are not our works at all, but the work of God, who gives us both the willingness and the ability to do them. We love others because God first loved us (1 John 4:19). We respond to others’ needs joyfully and thankfully out of love for our gracious God.

Many Other Questions

So, what do you say when children ask those difficult questions? First, don’t panic. Children of all ages are going to ask. Remember that the younger the

child is, the less detail will be required. Young children typically just need their question answered. As children get older, however, they think more concretely. Finally, they think abstractly. As their thinking develops, so does their ability to reason. That changes how we answer. As a child's ability to reason increases, our answers become more complex.

Never be afraid to answer a child's question honestly. If you don't know the answer, say so; tell the child that you will try to find the answer. Or an even better response might be that you will search the Scriptures with the child. Consider this a teachable moment; model for the child how you might solve a real-life problem. You can and should feel free to go to the pastor with unanswered questions, perhaps even inviting him to class to address the question. The pastor is called to be the spiritual leader and authority in the congregation, the undershepherd of Jesus. Answering theological questions is part of that call.

God challenges us to share our faith with our children and their children's children. Questions from our students allow us to do just that. Seize the opportunity!

Extra-Grace Kids

by Steve Christopher

You know who the "extra-grace-required kids" are!

They distract from your carefully planned lesson, disrupt the class, draw attention away from the Gospel, and seek to be the focal point in your Sunday School classroom. They also seem to be there every week, and in spite of their antics, there is a lovable quality about them. What do you do with them? How do you, as a volunteer Sunday School teacher, address this issue? Here are four steps to use.

Step 1: Rename It!

Let's address these children not with negative "disruptive, undisciplined, out-of-control" types of titles, but rather with "Extra-Grace Kids." So often, how we perceive someone, especially if it is negative, causes us to think and behave in ways that further the negative rather than draw out the positive. Whether we call these students Extra-Grace Kids or something similar, we need to drop the stereotypes. We need to start fresh in how we perceive these special children of God.

Step 2: Celebrate!

Give thanks to God that He has delivered this special child to your classroom! It is not by accident that this child arrived in your class—it is by divine design. Our Lord, who is also present in your classroom, wants to encounter this child and all the children in attendance. What an opportunity to share the message of salvation in the Gospel of Jesus through Bible stories, learning activities, and your loving presence as a teacher. You only have these students for a short period of time; let them know Jesus wants them as His own for all time and eternity! What a blessing!

Step 3: In-Class Strategies

You can address the various challenges these Extra-Grace Kids bring with them into your classroom.

Classroom Rules. Normally, Sunday School classrooms do not adhere to all the rules a regular school classroom would have. However, it is still a classroom and needs to have some simple, clear, and understandable rules that everyone follows. Set these rules at the beginning of the year, along with the appropriate consequences for violations. Review them often.

Classroom Arrangement. How are chairs and desks positioned? Are students seated around a table? How close will the children sit to one another? Can you reduce the temptation for physical contact by creating “safe space” for each student? A carefully arranged room created by the teacher helps set a positive tone for student learning and behavior.

Assigned Seating. Children enjoy regular patterns and habits. The routine of knowing where students sit helps avoid uncertainty every Sunday. It can create positive norms in the class environment. As the teacher, you may also use seating strategy to position your Extra-Grace Kids near you and away from other distractions without it becoming a big deal for your students.

Engaging Activities. The movement and variety of teaching techniques that capture the attention of students can help avoid disruptions. Many children who act out are simply bored and decide to create their own excitement. Stay one step ahead of them! When needed, employ a hands-on activity pertaining to the lesson; have another one waiting in the wings.

Special Responsibilities. There may be routine responsibilities in your classroom that an Extra-Grace Kid could do, such as taking attendance, collecting the offering, or handing out Bibles. Many times, these children just need to stay busy and receive positive attention from an adult. Use your everyday routines to engage them in positive ways.

Control Yourself. Nothing gets a class off track more than a teacher “losing it” over a child’s behavior. This is a real challenge—asking you to remain calm and to rise above the antics of a child. Take a deep breath, address the issue calmly, listen intently, pause to pray, and move forward. Don’t let a moment of frustration take over the lesson.

Step 4: Beyond-Class Strategies

You are not just a Sunday-morning teacher; you are an all-week teacher as well. You may see your students in worship services and at other church activities and even out in the community. Your influence extends beyond that one hour and into their lives at other moments. Consider the following opportunities to connect and support these Extra-Grace Kids.

Get to know their parents. Chances are, the behaviors you see for an hour on a Sunday morning are nothing new to them. Parents may welcome support and understanding from another adult who experiences the same challenges with their child they do. Be a listener, be a supporter, and thank them for the spiritual support they show by bringing their child to Sunday School and wor-

ship. See parents as allies in the spiritual growth process of this special child of God.

Follow up during the week. Send notes of support and thanks to Extra-Grace Kids (and the rest of your students as well) at special times of their year—their birthday, their Baptism birthday, Christmas, and Easter. Take time to ask what they are doing this coming week, and follow up on these experiences the next Sunday before or after class (or even as part of the lesson, if it is fitting).

Pray for them. While Extra-Grace Kids may get up our angst or cause frustration, we can turn it all over to God. We can pray for those who frustrate us. We can ask God to change their behavior and our attitude toward them as well. Prayer changes things—sometimes, it changes us!

Develop a bad memory. Learn to forget the harm and frustration caused by others by forgiving—in heart and head. Then move forward in an outward, supportive relationship with that person. Holding grudges, withholding love and care, being indifferent toward others (especially a child) doesn't resolve much at all. Displaying a forgiving spirit and a loving heart can do wonders for an Extra-Grace Kid, as well as present a wonderful witness to his or her parents and other students in the class.



Lesson Scope and Sequence: Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

These lessons focus on New Testament accounts including the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus.

Lesson	Title	Text
1	Jesus and Zacchaeus	Luke 19:1–10
2	The Triumphal Entry	Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40
3	The Widow’s Offering	Mark 12:41–44
4	The Lord’s Supper	Luke 22:1–23
5	Peter Denies Jesus	Mark 14:26–72
6	The Passion of Christ	Matthew 27:11–66
7	The Resurrection of Jesus	Matthew 28:1–10
8	The Empty Tomb	John 20:1–18
9	Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road	Luke 24:13–35
10	Jesus Appears to Thomas	John 20:19–31
11	Jesus Appears in Galilee	John 21:1–19
12	Jesus Ascends into Heaven	Acts 1:1–11; Luke 24:44–53
13	John’s Vision of Heaven	Revelation 21–22

Weekly Podcasts

For teachers using the Cross Explorations Sunday School material, there is a wonderful weekly podcast resource available at www.cph.org/sundayschool. Click on “Seeds of Faith Podcast” in the Sunday School tools. This weekly interview unpacks the richness of the Bible text. Teachers will gain practical, relevant, biblical information to inform their teaching of the lesson.

Preparing the Lesson

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

Date of Use

Key Point

Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I ignore my own sinfulness and focus on the sinfulness of others, rejecting them because of it. **Christ's blood covers not only my sins but also the sins of every sinner, no strings attached.**

Context

Jesus is on the last leg of His journey to Jerusalem as He passes through Jericho. It is a few days before Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28–40). Having already extended mercy to a blind beggar, a resident of Jericho (18:35–43), Jesus now runs into another resident of Jericho in need of mercy—Zacchaeus. Because tax collectors worked for the Roman government and overtaxed people to pad their own wallets, the Jews detested them as thieves and traitors. Since Zacchaeus was rich and a chief among the tax collectors (19:2), he was the object of particular spite, shunned as a “sinner” (v. 7).

Commentary

Thanks to the well-known ditty about this “wee little man,” Zacchaeus has often been portrayed as a sort of patron saint of the height challenged. But this is to miss the point. Short though he was, mammoth were his sins. If he is the patron saint of anyone, it is of those who become rich by sucking the lifeblood out of others. Zacchaeus was in the business that no respectable Jew would consider, indeed, that they would abhor as equal to prostituting oneself to the Romans. To make matters worse, such men often became wealthy, doubly damning them in the eyes of their countrymen.

So when Jesus invited Zacchaeus to come down from his sycamore perch and serve Him supper, “all grumbled,” saying, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (v. 7). This is as much, or more, an indictment of Jesus as of the tax collector. “How dare He even speak to such filth, much less invite Himself over for a meal with that scoundrel!” the people scowled. For Zacchaeus had not only sinned in general, but he had also sinned against them. He had siphoned off their income. Jesus would be dining in a home built with money stolen from them, eating food purchased with cash that was rightfully theirs. If they wanted Jesus to do anything with Zacchaeus, it was to yank a switch from that sycamore tree and publicly whip him for his greed!

Perhaps because he overheard the grumbling and was moved by repentance and faith, this infamous sinner announced, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (v. 8). What a promise! What faith! As a clear fruit of his own repentance, Zacchaeus astounded everyone by such lavish generosity.

Salvation came to this man not because of his big-heartedness but because of his faith in Jesus, which was evidenced in this giving away of wealth. He is among the “lost” whom the Son of Man seeks, as are we, who are forgiven and called to forgive those who sin against us, no matter how Zacchaeus-like their sins may be.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Preparing the Lesson

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Date of Use

Key Point

The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Law/Gospel

Sin brought death into the world for me and all people. **Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be my Savior and King, dying in my place and rising three days later to save me from sin and give me new life in His kingdom.**

Context

At Jesus’ Baptism, God declared Him to be the bearer of the sins of the whole world. For three years, He preached, taught, and worked miracles to show the people that the Old Testament promise of the Messiah had come true. Now, in the last week of His earthly ministry, Jesus “set His face to go to Jerusalem” on His way to the cross (Luke 9:51).

Jesus entered Jerusalem from a small town near the Mount of Olives called Bethphage. It was a town near Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived.

Commentary

Jesus chose to enter the city on a donkey, displaying the humble nature of His incarnation. He did not come into this world to sit on an earthly throne and rule over an earthly kingdom. He did not ride into King David’s city to restore King David’s earthly kingdom. If He wanted to do this, He would have ridden on a warhorse, leading an army of soldiers to fight the Romans, who occupied not only Jerusalem but all of the land of Israel. Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world.

Instead, Jesus entered upon a donkey and was followed by a multitude that included the poor, the destitute, and even children. They were people who had been waiting to be rescued from their sins. Many in the crowd

believed the Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would be David’s son and would come to them humble, riding on a donkey, as the prophet Zechariah had written, “Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is He, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (9:9). Animals that had not yet been used were especially appropriate for holy purposes. Jesus was not coming with the riches of an earthly king. No, He rode into Jerusalem with the accolades of a messianic, heavenly king, coming to give the people righteousness and salvation, forgiveness from their sins. This was the first time Jesus allowed people to treat Him as a king.

In a display of divine knowledge, Jesus described to His disciples where and how to find the donkey He would ride. After spreading their cloaks on the donkey, the disciples led the procession into Jerusalem, and the crowds followed. They shouted, “Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Mark 11:9). *Hosanna* means “save us now.” The spreading of garments and palm branches is a ceremony of honor, respect, and reverence.

We know something about this crowd from the Gospels. Luke records that the people were rejoicing and praising God for all the great works that they had seen. John 12:17–18 expands on what these works were. These people, or at least a portion of them, had witnessed Jesus raising Lazarus from the tomb after he had been dead four days. The feeding of the five thousand happened just before Jesus “set His face to go to Jerusalem,” so those people were also on their way up to Jerusalem at this time.

All of Jesus’ ministry led up to this point. In fact, all of Holy Scripture anticipated this moment when God would save His people from their sins in Jesus.

To hear an in-depth discussion of this Bible account, visit cph.org/podcast and listen to our Seeds of Faith podcast each week.

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use _____

Jesus and Zacchaeus

Luke 19:1–10

Key Point

Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save. Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Law/Gospel

I sin when I ignore my own sinfulness and focus on the sinfulness of others, rejecting them because of it. **Christ's blood covers not only my sins but also the sins of every sinner, no strings attached.**

Context

Jesus is on the last leg of His journey to Jerusalem as He passes through Jericho. It is a few days before Palm Sunday (Luke 19:28–40). Having already extended mercy to a blind beggar, a resident of Jericho (18:35–43), Jesus now runs into another resident of Jericho in need of mercy—Zacchaeus. Because tax collectors worked for the Roman government and overtaxed people to pad their own wallets, the Jews detested them as thieves and traitors. Since Zacchaeus was rich and a chief among the tax collectors (19:2), he was the object of particular spite, shunned as a “sinner” (v. 7).

Commentary

Thanks to the well-known ditty about this “wee little man,” Zacchaeus has often been portrayed as a sort of patron saint of the height challenged. But this is to miss the point. Short though he was, mammoth were his sins. If he is the patron saint of anyone, it is of those who become rich by sucking the lifeblood out of others. Zacchaeus was in the business that no respectable Jew would consider, indeed, that they would abhor as equal to prostituting oneself to the Romans. To make matters worse, such men often became wealthy, doubly damning them in the eyes of their countrymen.

So when Jesus invited Zacchaeus to come down from his sycamore perch and serve Him supper, “all grumbled,” saying, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner” (v. 7). This is as much, or more, an indictment of Jesus as of the tax collector. “How dare He even speak to

such filth, much less invite Himself over for a meal with that scoundrel!” the people scowled. For Zacchaeus had not only sinned in general, but he had also sinned against them. He had siphoned off their income. Jesus would be dining in a home built with money stolen from them, eating food purchased with cash that was rightfully theirs. If they wanted Jesus to do anything with Zacchaeus, it was to yank a switch from that sycamore tree and publicly whip him for his greed!

Perhaps because he overheard the grumbling and was moved by repentance and faith, this infamous sinner announced, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold” (v. 8). What a promise! What faith! As a clear fruit of his own repentance, Zacchaeus astounded everyone by such lavish generosity.

Salvation came to this man not because of his bigheartedness but because of his faith in Jesus, which was evidenced in this giving away of wealth. He is among the “lost” whom the Son of Man seeks, as are we, who are forgiven and called to forgive those who sin against us, no matter how Zacchaeus-like their sins may be.



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Painting by Greg Copeland © CPH

Preparing the Lesson

Date of Use

The Triumphal Entry

Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40



Key Point

The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Law/Gospel

Sin brought death into the world for me and all people. **Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be my Savior and King, dying in my place and rising three days later to save me from sin and give me new life in His kingdom.**

Context

At Jesus’ Baptism, God declared Him to be the bearer of the sins of the whole world. For three years, He preached, taught, and worked miracles to show the people that the Old Testament promise of the Messiah had come true. Now, in the last week of His earthly ministry, Jesus “set His face to go to Jerusalem” on His way to the cross (Luke 9:51).

Jesus entered Jerusalem from a small town near the Mount of Olives called Bethphage. It was a town near Bethany, where Mary, Martha, and Lazarus lived.

Commentary

Jesus chose to enter the city on a donkey, displaying the humble nature of His incarnation. He did not come into this world to sit on an earthly throne and rule over an earthly kingdom. He did not ride into King David’s city to restore King David’s earthly kingdom. If He wanted to do this, He would have ridden on a warhorse, leading an army of soldiers to fight the Romans, who occupied not only Jerusalem but all of the land of Israel. Jesus’ kingdom is not of this world.

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Painting by Don Kueker © CPH

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

New Testament 4

Arch® Book Connections

Children love the rhyming patterns found in Concordia Publishing House's beloved Arch Book series. Arch Books also offer lots of options for expanding and enriching your Cross Explorations lessons:

Read the Arch Book as a sort of "readers theater." Have students take turns reading stanzas, pages, or even the whole book. This would make a great Opening activity or lesson review.

Make a "book trailer"—sort of like a movie trailer—of the Arch Book with a narration that "plugs" the book. For example: He was small—his adversary, a giant! He had only five smooth stones, while his enemy had a spear as long as a weaver's beam. Thrill to the challenge! "Ha, ha, ha! Come out and fight, pip-squeak!" Tremble with fear! "King Saul, what shall we do?!" Read it for yourself and find out who comes out victorious! Available now at your Sunday School library! The story of David and . . . (bum, bum, baaa!) Goliath!

Do a dramatic presentation of an Arch Book, and share it with another class. If the upper grade students do one story as a drama or trailer, make sure the lower grade students see the final results. Let the younger children perform for the upper grades as well.

Have students create their own rhyming book with illustrations. Take digital pictures of the illustrations, and make them into a PowerPoint slide "book." These could be performed in a chapel service or the Opening in Sunday School.

If your church provides "Worship Bags" to help keep young children focused during the worship service, consider inserting the Arch Books for the quarter in those bags. With each new quarter, change out the Arch Books to include the applicable stories.

The Arch Books that correspond to the lessons for this quarter:

Lesson 1: *Zacchaeus* 591599

Lesson 2: *Jesus Enters Jerusalem* 591585

Lesson 3: *The Widow's Offering* 592214

Lesson 4: *The Very First Lord's Supper* 591501

Lesson 5: *The Night Peter Cried* 592284

Lesson 6: *The Week That Led to Easter* 591541

Barabbas Goes Free 591551

Good Friday 591582

The Day Jesus Died 591516

The Centurion at the Cross 592205

Lesson 7: *The Easter Gift* 592213

The Easter Surprise 592275

The Easter Victory 591602

He's Risen, He's Alive! 591552

The Resurrection 592231

Lesson 8: *John's Easter Story* 592248

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

New Testament 4

Weekly Bulletin Notes

Help parents and others stay connected to your Sunday School with these weekly bulletin summaries of the Bible lesson for the week. An electronic version for placement in your church bulletin is also available online: www.cph.org/sundayschool.

Lesson 1

The children learned about “Jesus and Zacchaeus” in Luke 19:1–10. When Jesus went to Zacchaeus’s house, He demonstrated that God blesses and fills our hungry souls with His gifts. Consider discussing, *“How did Jesus show His care for Zacchaeus? How does He show His care for us?”*

Lesson 2

This week in Sunday School, we studied “The Triumphal Entry.” Jesus’ victorious entry into Jerusalem begins the week that ends with His crucifixion and death. As a family, talk about *“How did the people welcome Jesus to Jerusalem? How can we praise and honor God today?”*

Lesson 3

“The Widow’s Offering” serves as the focus of the Sunday School lesson for today. Just as the widow gave all she had to God, trusting Him to provide and care for her, so Jesus gave His all for us, who fail to trust in God for all things. Consider discussing, *“How was the widow’s offering different from the others? How has God given us His greatest treasure?”*

Lesson 4

The children learned about “The Lord’s Supper” (Luke 22:1–23) in Sunday School today. In your family discussion, ask, *“What benefits and blessings do we receive in the Lord’s Supper?”*

Lesson 5

Today, the Sunday School lesson studies “Peter Denies Jesus.” Though we, like Peter, deny Jesus and His gifts, Jesus cannot deny us, because we are part of Him, baptized members of His own Body. Instead, He forgives us and welcomes us back. Consider asking, *“How does Peter’s denial affect him? In what ways does God forgive us and welcome us back?”*

Lesson 6

The Sunday School lesson covers Matthew’s account of “The Passion of Christ” as He ventured to the cross for you and me. The Father, the perfect, righteous judge of the universe, forsook Jesus on the cross so that the perfect, righteous sacrifice, Jesus Christ, could be punished for the sins of the whole world. Discuss with your children: *“Why was it necessary for Jesus to die? What benefit do we gain from the death and resurrection of Jesus?”*

Lesson 7

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! Today in Sunday School, your children are joining in the celebration of “The Resurrection of Jesus” as they study the account of Easter morning from Matthew 28:1–10. Consider asking, *“Why is the bodily resurrection of Jesus important? How is each Sunday a celebration of Easter?”*

Lesson 8

On the first Easter, Mary Magdalene and Jesus’ disciples discover “The Empty Tomb” (John 20:1–18). In Sunday School today, the children learned how Jesus comes to us in His Word so that the Spirit gives us faith to believe in Christ’s resurrection and comforts us when we mourn the death of loved ones. You might discuss, *“How did Jesus’ followers react when they discovered the empty tomb? How can we share the message of the resurrection?”*

Lesson 1: Jesus and Zacchaeus

Text: Luke 19:1–10

Date Used: _____

Key Point: Like Zacchaeus, we are among the lost whom the Son of Man came to seek and to save.

Jesus asks us to forgive those who sin against us, as He forgives us, unconditionally.

Law/Gospel: I sin when I ignore my own sinfulness and focus on the sinfulness of others, rejecting them because of it. **Christ's blood covers not only my sins but also the sins of every sinner, no strings attached.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Jesus, I Believe in You,” Track 1; “Child of God,” Track 2; “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus,” Track 4.

Bible Challenge Question: What was Zacchaeus’s job? **Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector in Jericho.**

Notes: _____

To bring:

Explore

Approximate time: _____

Level 1 (Grades 1–3)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Level 2 (Grades 4–6)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Adult Bible Study

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

Music: 1 John 1:8-9 (Track 1)

Make Me like You (Track 12)

Go, My Children, with My Blessing (Track 4)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Skit:** Jesus and Zacchaeus

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Treasure Tree

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** Wee Little Gingerbread Men

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** Showers of Blessings

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Lesson 2: The Triumphal Entry

Text: Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Date Used: _____

Key Point: The multitudes called out “Hosanna!”—Save us!—to their King. We, too, cry out “Hosanna!” to Jesus, our King, who entered Jerusalem to save us and all people by triumphing over sin.

Law/Gospel: Sin brought death into the world for me and all people. **Jesus, the perfect Son of God, came to be my Savior and King, dying in my place and rising three days later to save me from sin and give me new life in His kingdom.**

To bring:

Engage

Approximate time: _____

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Suggested Songs: “Oh, How I Love Jesus,” Track 5; “Jesus, I Believe in You,” Track 1; “Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus,” Track 4.

Bible Challenge Question: What does *hosanna* mean? *Hosanna* means “help” or “save, I pray.”

Notes: _____

To bring:

Explore

Approximate time: _____

Level 1 (Grades 1–3)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Level 2 (Grades 4–6)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

Adult Bible Study

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes: _____

To bring:

Express Options (Choose 2 or more!)

Approximate
times:

Slot 1:

Slot 2:

Slot 3*:

Slot 4*:

Slot 5*:

Slot 6*:

Music: Hosanna (Track 8)

John 1:29 (Track 10)

When I Behold Jesus Christ (Track 24)

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Skit:** The Triumphal Entry

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Craft:** Palms for Paradise

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Food Activity:** Veggie Palm Path

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

☐ **Group Activity:** The Lowly Donkey Carries the Cross

Location: _____

Leader(s): _____

Notes:

*If applicable

Pronunciation Guide—New Testament 4

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

Lesson 1: Jesus and Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1–10

Abraham	AY bruh ham
Jericho	JEHR ih coe
Zacchaeus	zack KEY us

Lesson 2: The Triumphal Entry, Mark 11:1–10; Luke 19:28–40

Bethphage	beth FAY jeh
Olivet	AH lih vet
Pharisees	FARE uh sees

Lesson 3: The Widow's Offering, Mark 12:41–44

No new names from previous lessons

Lesson 4: The Lord's Supper, Luke 22:1–23

Iscaiot	iss KARE ee uht
Unleavened Bread	uhn LEV uhnd bred

Lesson 5: Peter Denies Jesus, Mark 14:26–72

Abba	AB uh
Galilean	gal uh LEE un
Galilee	GAL ih lee
Nazarene	nazz uh REEN
Rabbi	RAB eye

Lesson 6: The Passion of Christ, Matthew 27:11–66

Arimathea	air ih mah THEE ah
Barabbas	buh RAB bas
Cyrene	sigh REE neh
Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani	EE lie, EE lie, LUH mah suh BOCK thuh NEE
Golgotha	GOL gah thuh

Bible Words

New Testament 4: Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

Lesson 1 Jesus and Zacchaeus

[Jesus] came to seek and save the lost. Luke 19:10

Lesson 2 The Triumphal Entry

He [Jesus] answered, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out.” Luke 19:40

Lesson 3 The Widow’s Offering

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Deuteronomy 6:5

Lesson 4 The Lord’s Supper

Jesus took bread . . . and He took a cup. Matthew 26:26–27

Lesson 5 Peter Denies Jesus

If we are faithless, [Jesus] remains faithful—for He cannot deny Himself. 2 Timothy 2:13

Lesson 6 The Passion of Christ

Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! John 1:29

Lesson 7 The Resurrection of Jesus

[God] has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Peter 1:3

Lesson 8 The Empty Tomb

[The angel said,] “He is not here, for He has risen, as He said.” Matthew 28:6

Lesson 9 Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road

The Lord has risen indeed! Luke 24:34

Lesson 10 Jesus Appears to Thomas

[Jesus said,] “Peace be with you.” John 20:26

Lesson 11 Jesus Appears in Galilee

The LORD is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations. Psalm 100:5

Lesson 12 Jesus Ascends into Heaven

Rejoice that your names are written in heaven. Luke 10:20

Lesson 13 John’s Vision of Heaven

Behold, I am making all things new. Revelation 21:5

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Faith Words

New Testament 4: Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

Lesson 1 Jesus and Zacchaeus

Forgive: to no longer hold sin against someone.

Lesson 2 The Triumphal Entry

Messiah: the “anointed one.” God promised to send Christ, our King, to save us.

Lesson 3 The Widow’s Offering

Offering: to give something to someone else.

Lesson 4 The Lord’s Supper

Lord’s Supper: another name for Holy Communion. Jesus feeds His people with His own body and blood in the bread and wine for the forgiveness of their sin.

Lesson 5 Peter Denies Jesus

Deny: to refuse to admit something.

Lesson 6 The Passion of Christ

Passion: to suffer. Refers to Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross.

Lesson 7 The Resurrection of Jesus

Risen: to be resurrected, to become alive after death.

Lesson 8 The Empty Tomb

Eternal life: to have everlasting life, life without end.

Lesson 9 Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road

God’s Word: The Bible is God’s inspired Word. The Bible includes many books by many authors, but they are all about God and His plan for humankind.

Lesson 10 Jesus Appears to Thomas

Peace: the calm and quiet only God can give. Keeps our hearts and minds from worrying.

Lesson 11 Jesus Appears in Galilee

Reinstates: to get back a job or special place that you lost.

Lesson 12 Jesus Ascends into Heaven

Ascends: to go or move upward. Jesus ascends into heaven.

Lesson 13 John’s Vision of Heaven

Heaven: the place where those who believe in their Savior, Jesus, will spend eternity in the presence of God Himself.

New Testament 4

Jesus Dies and Rises to Save Us

Lesson	Title	Date of Use
1	Jesus and Zacchaeus	_____
2	The Triumphal Entry	_____
3	The Widow's Offering	_____
4	The Lord's Supper	_____
5	Peter Denies Jesus	_____
6	The Passion of Christ	_____
7	The Resurrection of Jesus	_____
8	The Empty Tomb	_____
9	Jesus Appears on the Emmaus Road	_____
10	Jesus Appears to Thomas	_____
11	Jesus Appears in Galilee	_____
12	Jesus Ascends into Heaven	_____
13	John's Vision of Heaven	_____