



LESSON 3 **THE CRUCIFIXION**

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus is crucified on a cross to defeat sin and fix the relationship between people and God. His sacrifice demonstrates His amazing love for us!

WORD OF WONDER: Jesus makes us new. —from 2 Corinthians 5:17

CURIOSITY 15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

Hands-on activities to spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God

- Welcome Question: How would you fill in the blank? I love _____ so much!
- Curiosity Questions
- Curiosity Activity: Love in Action
- Declaring God's Wonder



BELIEF 25–35 minutes • Large Group

An interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder

- Prayer of Invitation and Worship
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Word of Wonder: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

FAITH 15 minutes • Small Group

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own

- Discussion Questions
- Craft: Cross Collage
- Game: Find the Heart

IDENTITY 10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids that they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder

- Responding in Worship: Rock Art Remembering
- Blessing Your Kids
- Closing Game: Jesus Loves Me Freeze Dance

Wonder@Home[™]

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Have you ever been wrongfully accused? Perhaps someone spread false gossip about you, or maybe someone took something you said out of context.

When living in a fallen world of nearly eight billion imperfect humans, we're bound to face difficult things and difficult people. It's easy to develop a jaded view of humanity. And no one understands the imperfection of humans better than God, yet still He loves us.

Take some time to read Matthew 27:32–56.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus chose to die such an excruciating death? He had every right to show His power and put humans in their rightful place. Yet He chose to submit himself, facing the humiliation of being put on trial. Even the earthly authorities couldn't find anything illegal or evil about Him. He was innocent, yet His love for us is so great that He chose to die on the cross. Jesus showed His love by dying for us.

Does knowing what Jesus did for us give you the strength to face the evil in the world? Take some time to dwell in God's wonderful love. May it inspire you to show grace to those who might not deserve it but need it.

—Catherine Hwang-Jin

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The climax (and turning point) of God's big story is the death and resurrection of Jesus, God's Son. Jesus became nothing and took on the nature of a servant, humbling Himself to death on a cross (Philippians 2:6–8).

WHAT?

Crucifixion was a horrible and painful process—a form of slow torture as the recipient suffocated to death. Jesus willingly went to the cross, submitting Himself to “the joy set before Him” as He endured the cross, so we could be restored to right relationship with God (Hebrews 12:2 NIV).

WHERE?

The crucifixion of Jesus took place outside the city gates of Jerusalem on a hill called Golgotha. Jesus would have been exposed up on that hill as He suffered. Jews from all over would have been in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

WHEN?

It is no coincidence that Jesus died at Passover—the time when all of God's people remembered God's salvation in the Exodus. Jesus died as a sacrificial lamb, ushering in a new and better exodus event: freedom from our slavery to sin and death.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

Jesus died to fix the relationship between God and people, making the way for us to be with God. Jesus fulfills the promise God made after the first sin in Genesis 3, reversing the curse of sin. Jesus is the only One who can defeat sin and death!

Large Group or Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Series Bumper and Countdown Videos

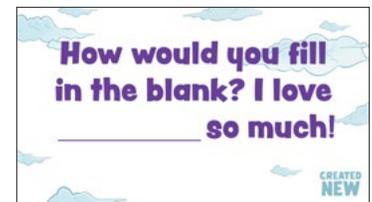
Choose between the [Created New Series Bumper Video](#) and [Countdown Videos](#) to introduce the kids to the series.

Welcome Question

SUPPLIES: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Crucifixion Welcome Question Slide

Before kids arrive, display The Crucifixion Welcome Question Slide or write the following question on a whiteboard: “How would you fill in the blank? I love _____ so much!” Set out paper and coloring utensils.



As kids arrive ...

Welcome kids by name, if possible, and invite them to answer the Welcome Question on the board. Consider inviting kids who would like to draw pictures of things or people they love to draw on the whiteboard or on paper. Encourage everyone to share their answers with two or three others. For younger kids, read the question aloud and give them a few ideas of your own to help them get started.

At your start time ...

Welcome the whole group and let them know you're happy they're here! Ask if anyone would like to share their answer to the question: **How would you fill in the blank? I love _____ so much!** Instead of asking kids to raise their hands to volunteer, consider telling them to look at you and make a funny face if they want to share!

It's so good to hear all the things and people you love so much! If we asked Jesus to answer our Welcome Question, how do you think He'd answer? Listen to kids' answers. Those are great ideas! I think Jesus would write each of our names in the blank because He loves each of us so much! Today we're going to hear about what Jesus was willing to do all because He loves us. But first, it's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

Ask the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious ...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one.

I’m curious ...

- **What do you think the word love means?**
- **What do you think the word relationship means? Who are some people you have relationships with?**

Leader Tip: Consider introducing this definition for love: Love is not just a feeling but selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Love is who God is. As Jesus followers, we can be filled with God’s love so that Christlike love becomes what describes us best!

Curiosity Activity: Love in Action

We’re going to play a fun guessing game. We’re going to act out some things, and you can guess what the actors are acting out.

Invite one or two kids to act out the Love in Action scenarios in the list below. Encourage the other kids to guess what’s happening in each scenario that’s being acted out. The goal is for the kids to see situations with people showing love in action.

Whisper the scenarios to one or two kids and help them act out each scenario while the other kids guess.

Use the following scenarios:

- Helping a hurt friend
- Hugs or high fives
- Giving a gift
- Reading a book to someone
- Playing with someone
- Cooking a meal for someone
- Tucking in a child at night
- Taking care of someone who is sick
- Praying with someone

Wow! You did great guessing what we were doing! Now let’s think about all those things you guessed. What did those actions show? Allow the kids an opportunity to guess. You may have to remind them of the scenarios as they are guessing. **Love! That’s it! All those things that we were doing are ways we show love to someone. Today we’re going to hear about a very special way Jesus showed love to us.**

Declaring God's Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Declaration [Video](#) or Slide (optional)

Show the Declaration [Video](#) or Slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

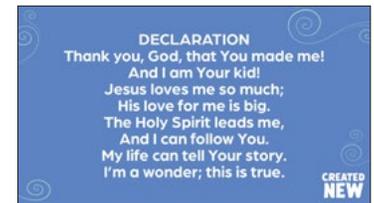
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for loving us with a big, unchanging, everlasting love! Help us to hear the truth of Your Word today with our ears and with our hearts. Thank You most of all for Jesus, who loves us so much He was willing to die for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: songs from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Let's praise God together and thank Him for His never-ending love. Play songs from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (optional)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible.

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found in the book of Matthew.

Read the God's Big Story Script provided or read Matthew 27:32–56 from the Bible. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give the kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: play dough, small cross, paper heart

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: God's Big Story Video ([Early Childhood](#) or [Elementary](#))

Parts of our story today might be sad. Can you show me your sad face? Demonstrate a sad face. **But other parts will be happy. Can you show me your happy face?** Demonstrate a happy face. **As we hear about how Jesus showed His love for us, you can make a sad face when the story makes you sad and a happy face when the story makes you happy.**

Make It Inclusive: This is a very heavy story and may be a lot for preschoolers to handle. Use care in how you share the story to sensitive or emotionally fragile kids, while still telling the truth of what Jesus did. For some kids who are highly emotional, a leader may need to be available to explain or answer questions.

God's plan to fix the relationship with His people started long ago. It was time for it to happen! God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus taught people about God. He helped people. He healed sick people. It was time for Jesus to save people from sin. Sin is anything wrong we think, say, and do. Jesus came to fix everything that sin messed up. But the sad part is: Jesus had to die to do that. Jesus knew it was almost time for Him to die. He prayed in a garden and asked God for help.

Does that make you happy or sad? Can you use the play dough to make a sad or happy face? Invite a kid to come up and shape the dough while you talk. It's OK if the kids aren't sure how to respond or feel at this point.

Jesus knew He was going to die because people do so many wrong and bad things. These wrong things—called sin—keep us apart from God. Is that sad or happy? Pause for responses. **It's OK if the kids aren't sure how to respond or feel. Can one of you shape the dough into a sad or happy face?** Invite another kid to come up and shape the dough while you talk.

One of Jesus' followers was named Judas. But Judas was not faithful to Jesus. Judas worked with some leaders who wanted to stop Jesus. Judas took them to where Jesus was in the garden. The leaders arrested Jesus. But Jesus never did anything wrong. He did not deserve to be arrested or punished. The leaders took Jesus to a judge. The judge said Jesus did not do anything wrong. But the leaders asked the judge to punish Jesus anyway. Jesus was sent to die on a cross. Can someone come hold up the cross? Invite a kid to come up and hold up the small cross.

It was a sad way to die. It hurt Jesus. Some people beat Him up. People made fun of Him. They put Jesus on a cross, and He died there. He had power to save Himself, but He did not save Himself. He chose to die so we can be saved. He did not even sin! Jesus died to beat sin.

Show me with your face about how that makes you feel. You can feel sad Jesus died or happy He loves you so much that He rescues you from sin. Whatever you feel is OK! Allow kids time to show their expression and be willing to talk about it if needed.

When Jesus died, it was the middle of the day. But it got very dark. The earth shook. The curtain in the temple (where people worshiped God) tore right in the middle. But this was not the end of the story. Jesus died, but three days later, He would live again!

Can someone come up and hold up the heart? Invite a kid to come up and hold up the paper heart. It can feel sad, but Jesus' love for us is something to smile and be happy about! Jesus chose to die because it was the only way to beat sin once and for all. Since Jesus died for our sins, we can be forgiven. We can be close with God forever. And He didn't stay dead—the best part of the story is coming next week! We can thank God because Jesus showed His love by dying for us!

GOD'S BIG STORY VIDEO (EARLY CHILDHOOD OR ELEMENTARY)



Connecting the Wonder Truth

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Crucifixion Truth Slide

Display the Crucifixion Wonder Truth Slide.

Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE BY DYING FOR US. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



Jesus died to fix the relationship between God and people, making the way for us to be with God. Jesus fulfills the promise God made after the first sin in Genesis 3, reversing the curse of sin. Jesus is the only One who can defeat sin and death!

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Created New Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#) (optional)

WORD OF WONDER

Jesus makes us new.

—from 2 Corinthians 5:17

Display the Word of Wonder Slide or [Video](#), if using. **Our Word of Wonder for the Created New series is from 2 Corinthians 5:17. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.**

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **JESUS**—Point fingers from left hand into right palm, then right hand into left palm (sign language for “Jesus”).
- **MAKES US**—Both hands over your heart.
- **NEW.**—Bring both arms out in front of you and down to your sides.
- **FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.



We're learning about how Jesus makes us new. When we trust Jesus and follow Him, He makes us new! That means the old part of us that is full of sin and bad choices changes because of Jesus. We have new hearts that are filled with love and His Spirit! Let's play a game to help us remember what Jesus has done for us!

Let's sit in a circle and play a game of Popcorn. One person will pop up and say the first word: Jesus.

Then the person beside that person will pop up and say the next word in the verse: makes. The next person will say the third word: us. The next person will say the last word: new. Then we'll start over! Make sure to pop up like a popcorn kernel popping.

We'll keep going through our verse with each person in the circle saying the next word in our verse.

Repeat the verse as many times as you'd like. To add a little extra challenge and fun, have them do the motions as they say the word.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What did Jesus do for us so we can become new?** (*died on the cross*)
- **What part of us do you think Jesus makes new?** (*our heart; the sinful part*)

Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: paper hearts in various colors (at least 1 per kid)

Ahead of time, prepare at least one paper heart for each kid in various colors.

Gather the kids to sit in a circle with the paper hearts in the middle. **In today's God's big story, we learned that Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. We're going to do an activity to think about how much Jesus loves us. When I say, "Go," everyone will pick up a heart, then I'll call out a color. If you're holding the heart that's the color I say, you'll answer a question.** Say, "Go," and invite all of the kids to pick up a heart, then choose a color. If multiple kids have that color, they can all answer the question (or you can just choose one kid to answer each question).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What did Jesus do first when He was in the garden after the meal with His disciples?** (He prayed.)
- **What happened to Jesus in the garden after He prayed?** (He was arrested.)
- **Had Jesus done anything wrong?** (no)
- **What happened to Jesus, even though He hadn't done anything wrong?** (He died on a cross.)
- **Why do you think Jesus was willing to die even though He didn't deserve it?** (If kids need help, offer ideas such as: Because He loves us; so we can be saved.)
- **How can you thank Jesus for His love and for dying on the cross?** (If kids need help, offer ideas such as: praying and telling Him we love Him; telling God, "Thank You.")
- **How do you feel knowing Jesus loves you so much He chose to die to rescue and forgive you?**

Jesus chose to die on the cross because He loves us and knew that's what it would take for us to be able to know God as a friend and be in His family. Let's take a moment to pray to God and thank Jesus for being willing to die for our sins.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for loving us and sending Jesus for us. God hears all our prayers!

Craft: Cross Collage

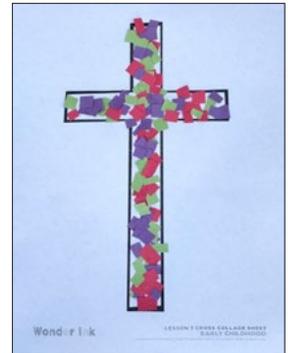
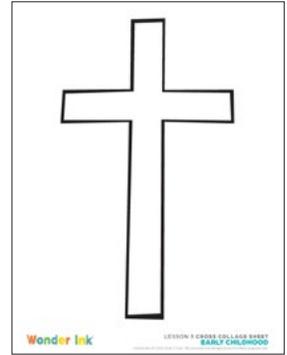
SUPPLIES: heart-shaped stickers or confetti, glue (optional) coloring utensils (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Cross Collage Sheet (1 per kid)

Before the kids arrive, make one copy per kid of the Cross Collage Sheet. Set out heart-shaped stickers or confetti. You may need some glue as well if not using items that are self-adhesive.

In our story today, we learned about how Jesus died on the cross. Why do you think He did that? Allow the kids to answer. Jesus showed His love for us by dying on the cross. What do hearts make us think of? Allow kids to answer. Yes, love!

We're going to make a cross collage to help us remember that Jesus showed His love on the cross by placing hearts all over our crosses. Encourage the kids to put heart-shaped stickers or confetti on their crosses, then set them aside to dry. You can also let the kids color their pictures with coloring utensils. **You can take your pictures home to remind you of the amazing love Jesus showed when He died so we can be forgiven!**



Game: Find the Heart

SUPPLIES: paper, scissors (prep only)

Ahead of time, prepare one paper heart.

What did Jesus do in today's story to show His love for us? Allow the kids to respond. That's right—He died on the cross so we can be saved and forgiven for our sins. That was one big way to show how much He loves us! Let's remember His love by looking for the heart. I'll give it to one person, and you'll all pass it around the room while you all walk around. When I say, "Freeze," everyone will sit down on the ground. The person with the heart will quickly sit on the heart before anyone sees, then we'll try to guess who is sitting on the heart.

Give the paper heart to one kid. Then tell all the kids to walk around the room and pass the heart from kid-to-kid without others noticing. Periodically call out, "Freeze" and encourage all the kids to sit down immediately. The one with the paper heart should discreetly sit on the heart. Then ask the kids to guess who has hidden the heart. When they find it, the kids can shout, "Jesus showed His love by dying for us!" Play several rounds.

LESSON 3 EARLY ELEMENTARY

Large Group or Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Responding in Worship: Rock Art Remembering

SUPPLIES: small rocks (1 per kid), paint pens/markers (1 per 2–3 kids), paintbrushes (1 per kid), red acrylic paint, wet wipes, disposable tablecloths (optional), hair dryer (optional), clear acrylic gloss (optional)

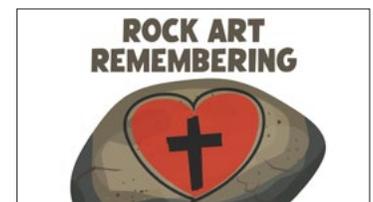
Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Rock Art Remembering Slide, “At the Cross (Love Ran Red)/The Cross Has the Final Word” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, set up art stations where kids can paint their rocks. Consider covering tables with disposable tablecloths and set out small rocks (one per kid) and painting supplies. If possible, create a sample rock ahead of time.



Leader Tip: If you have a lot of younger kids or limited time for this activity, use a paint pen/marker to draw a heart on each of the rocks ahead of time. Kids will then use red paint to stamp their fingerprints inside their hearts and draw their own crosses over the hearts.

Display the Rock Art Remembering Slide and gather the kids. **Today we heard about how Jesus showed His love for us by dying on the cross. Let's create some rock art to help us remember that Jesus loves us so much that He sacrificed His own life so that we can be with God forever!** Invite kids to find a place at an art station and give a rock to each kid. Walk them through the process of creating their own rock art by explaining the following steps. If you created a sample ahead of time, show it to the kids.



1. With a paint pen/marker, draw a heart on the rock. (Skip this step if hearts were drawn on the rocks ahead of time.)
2. Use a paintbrush to paint red onto one of your fingers.
3. Use your painted finger like a stamp and stamp red inside the heart. Use a wet wipe to wipe finger clean.

4. Let the rock dry for several minutes. (If a hair dryer is available, have a leader hold the hair dryer as kids take turns setting their rocks under the hair dryer for several seconds. The paint should dry quickly! Just be sure the hot air is aimed at rocks only—not at people or their fingers!)
5. Once the heart is dry, use a paint pen/marker to draw a cross on top of the heart.
6. If you have clear acrylic gloss, have an adult leader spray kids' finished rocks to seal them. (Do this somewhere away from the kids, such as outside or in another room.) The seal will weatherproof the rocks so that kids can set them outside.

Play music, such as “At the Cross (Love Ran Red)/The Cross Has the Final Word,” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids paint their rocks. As kids create, invite them to think of ways Jesus has shown His love to them. Encourage them to share their thoughts with the kids near them.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids who have sensory sensitivities don't like painting on their fingers. As an alternative, invite them to create the heart using paint and a paintbrush, a paint pen, or a dot marker. Dot markers are good to have available for kids who have difficulty grasping thinner utensils.

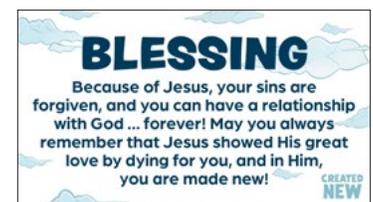
When all the kids have finished, gather everyone and invite them to hold their painted rocks in front of them. **As you go home today, I encourage you to put your rocks somewhere that you'll see often, such as next to your bed or on the ground outside your front door** (if the rocks are sealed). **When you see the heart on your rock, remember that Jesus loves you! And when you see the cross, remember that Jesus showed His love for you by dying on the cross. Let's say our Wonder Truth together now: Jesus showed His love by dying for us!** Repeat the Wonder Truth several times together, getting louder each time.

Blessing Your Kids

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Crucifixion Blessing Slide

Close your time together by blessing the kids in your group. Display the Crucifixion Blessing Slide. Invite kids to hold their hands open in front of them with palms up as a physical sign that they're ready to receive a blessing from God.

Blessing: Because of Jesus, your sins are forgiven, and you can have a relationship with God ... forever! May you always remember that Jesus showed His great love by dying for you, and in Him, you are made new!



Closing Game: Jesus Loves Me Freeze Dance

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: “Jesus Loves Me” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Play the song “Jesus Loves Me” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#). Invite the kids to dance as the music plays. Pause the music sporadically throughout the song. When the music stops, each kid must freeze immediately and hold that pose until the music begins again. Play the game as long as the kids are engaged.

Remember, Jesus showed how much He loves us by dying on the cross. This isn't the end of the story though! We'll hear the best part in our next lesson!

Leader Tip: You can play the game so that kids are out if they move while the music is paused. If this upsets some kids, the game can be played without removing kids from the game.