

JESUS' SACRIFICE

Bible Basis: Matthew 26:26–28, 33–35; 27:46–49; Luke 22:51, 55–62; 23:32–41; John 13:21–24, 25–30; 14:1–15; 18:4–10; 19:30

Bible Verse: “[Jesus said,] ‘Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me also.’”
—John 14:1, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. I accept his love.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 26: “Jesus’ Sacrifice”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Stuff you need: a rose with thorns

Allow children to sit on the floor in front of you. Show them a rose. Say, “**What makes this rose beautiful?**” Let children answer. When they answer, give them a rose petal. Give one petal to each child.

Ask:

- **Why do people like roses?** (*They are pretty; they smell good.*)
- **Why wouldn’t someone like roses?** (*They are prickly; they make people sneeze.*)

Say, “**Roses are pretty and soft, and they smell nice. Many people like roses. But roses also have thorns that can prick you. So some people don’t like roses. Sometimes people compare Jesus to a rose. He was very loving and kind. He did miracles, and he was a great teacher. But some people did not like Jesus. They didn’t like some of the things he said. They thought he was trying to take over as the ruler. Today’s Bible story is about some of those people.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff you need: whiteboard, chalkboard, or butcher paper, marker

First, read aloud Chapter 26, “Jesus’ Sacrifice,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Say, “**Jesus came to Earth to help people. He wanted everyone to know about God’s love. Near the end of Jesus’ life, he had a special dinner with his disciples.**”

Have children sit in a circle and pretend to give them food to eat. Ask the whole group to freeze like they are statues.

Say, **“Jesus had a meal with his followers. He told them that some mean people were going to arrest him. He gave them bread and wine.”** Have children pretend to eat the bread and wine.

Say, **“Then Jesus and his disciples went to a garden to pray.”** Have children stand up and lead them in a circle around the room as if you are all walking to the garden. Return to your storytelling area and have the children sit down again.

Say, **“Here we are at the garden. It is very late and dark outside. Jesus prayed very hard to God. While Jesus prayed, it got even later. His disciples fell asleep.”** Have children pretend to fall asleep.

Say, **“Some people did not like Jesus. They were worried he was trying to become king. They were worried Jesus was trying to take over their country. But he wasn’t doing that. He was telling people about God’s love. Well, on this particular night, these mean people went to arrest Jesus for trying to become king. Roman soldiers came to the garden to arrest Jesus. The disciples woke up and tried to defend Jesus.”** Have the children act like they are waking up.

Say, **“But Jesus went with the soldiers.”** Have children sit down to listen to the end of the story.

Say, **“The disciples loved Jesus, but they were scared for their own lives. One disciple, Peter, even told people he didn’t know Jesus. That night, the Romans decided that Jesus had to die. They hung him on a cross.”** Draw a large cross on your whiteboard. **“Two other men also died on crosses that day.”** Draw a smaller cross on each side of your main cross.

One of the men on the cross next to Jesus said, “If you are God, save yourself and us.”

The other thief said, “Leave him alone. He’s done nothing wrong. Jesus, you are God. Please remember me when you go into your kingdom.”

“I will,” Jesus said.

Then Jesus said, “It is finished.” He had done what he needed to do, so he died. Jesus died for our sins so we can be with him forever.

John 3:16 says, “God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life” (NIV). This verse means that God sent Jesus to Earth for a very special reason. When Jesus died, he paid for our sins. But, Jesus’ death is not the end of the story! You need to come back next week to hear the end of the story!

After the Bible story, ask:

- **What did Jesus and his disciples do at the beginning of the story?** (*had a special dinner*)
- **Then where did they go?** (*to a garden*)
- **What did Jesus do at the garden?** (*pray*)
- **What did the disciples do?** (*sleep*)

- **What did the Roman soldiers do?** (*arrest Jesus*)
- **What did the Romans decide they had to do with Jesus?** (*hung Jesus on a cross to die*)
- **Is that the end of the story?** (*No, we will hear the end next week.*)

Say, **"Make sure you come back next week. We will hear the rest of the story, and it is a good one! It has a very, very happy ending! Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. I can accept his love."** Have children repeat the Bible Point with you.

Pray with your children that they will understand how much God loves them and wants to be with them in heaven someday.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: JOHN 3:16

Teach children the following motions to help them memorize the first half of John 3:16. Practice until they can do it by themselves.

God (*Point up.*)

Loved the world so much (*Hug yourself.*)

That he gave (*Act like you are giving someone a present.*)

His one and only Son. (*Hold up one finger.*)

Close by saying, **"What Jesus did was not easy. He died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday."**

OPTION 2: CROSS DOORKNOB HANGERS

Stuff you need: craft foam doorknob hangers, wooden craft sticks, glue, markers, shirt boxes or edged cookie sheets or baking pans, glitter in sprinkle containers

Write "John 3:16" across the bottom of each doorknob hanger. Have children glue the wooden craft sticks in the shape of a cross on their doorknob hanger. Reposition the sticks if necessary. Lay the hangers down inside a box or pan, next to each other. Squirt a strip of glue across each wooden craft stick and allow the child to sprinkle glitter onto the glue. Shake off excess and set out to dry.

OPTION 3: JESUS' SACRIFICE

Stuff you need: Jesus' Sacrifice Matching Game Activity Sheet, white card stock, scissors, crayons

Preparation: Photocopy the activity sheet onto white card stock.

Give an activity sheet to each child. Have the children color the cards. As they color, tell them that the bread and wine can remind them that Jesus and his disciples had bread and wine at their special

dinner. Tell them that the moon and praying hands can remind them that it was night in the garden when Jesus prayed. Then help them cut out the cards, lay them out on the table, and turn them over. Have them flip over two at a time to find the matching objects. When they find a match, they put the cards aside and continue the game until all the matches are found. Allow the children to play separately, or a leader can use one set to play the game with a small group of children.

OPTIONS 4: MY SAVIOR

Stuff you need: My Savior Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Read the words that are on the page together while the children color the page.

OPTION 5: PRAYING IN THE GARDEN

Stuff you need: sturdy plastic or Styrofoam cups, potting soil, water in watering can, annual flowering plants, address labels, large bins or plastic drop cloths

Preparation: Print address labels that say, "Jesus went to the garden to pray. I can remember to pray too!"

Have the children help you plant the flowers in the cups, using the potting soil. Do your planting over a drop cloth or large bin to minimize the mess. Allow them to lightly water their flowers. Give each child a label to stick on his or her flower cup.

Say, "**Jesus went to the garden to pray before he was arrested. What types of things are in a garden?** (plants, flowers, trees) **Let your plant remind you of Jesus praying in the garden.**"

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 26*. Say, "**The front of this card will remind you that Jesus died for our sins so we can live with him in heaven someday. Show your parents the back and tell them that God loves us very much.**" Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.