

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

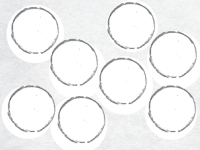
MAIN POINT: Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

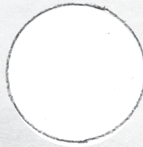
BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.

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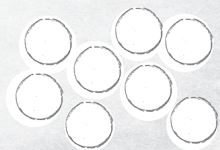
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

God's law for the people was plain. Read Deuteronomy 6:5. But God's people, and all people, have broken the law. We have loved other things more than we love God. That is sin.

Jesus' purpose for coming to earth was to save us from our sin. (Matt. 1:21) Why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He just say, "You are forgiven"? God is just and requires due payment for sin. To simply forgive sin without requiring a payment would be unjust. According to God's Word, the payment of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23) But not only is God just, He is also loving. That is why Jesus was willing to die in our place.

Jesus came to live and die to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus came to die so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus came to die to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

Jesus died on the cross to satisfy the wrath of God toward sin. Jesus' resurrection proved that God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice, and forgiveness and life are found in Him. (See 1 Cor. 15:17.) If Jesus had died but not been raised up, He would have been like military leaders who died without a throne. (Acts 5:33-37) But Jesus conquered death, just as He said He would. (John 2:19-21)

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for our resurrection. (Rom. 6:5) And Romans 8:11 says that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are not the end of the story, but the center of it. Everything that was written about Jesus in the Old Testament and spoken by the prophets was coming true. As you teach kids this Bible story, emphasize the gospel: the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done.



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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use props:** Provide various items that relate to the Easter story, such as chains, a crimson robe, a crown of thorns, nails, white cloth, and spices. Display the items as you tell the story.
- **Move with the story:** Divide the storytelling area into three areas: the garden (which will also serve as the garden tomb), the high priest's/governor's home, and Calvary. Tell the story and move to the next place accordingly.

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

Jesus came with His disciples to Gethsemane (geth SEM uh nih). He **prayed to God, “Father! If it is possible, take this suffering away from Me. But only if it is part of Your plan.”** While Jesus prayed, the disciples fell asleep. Jesus said, “Get up. It is almost time.”

Suddenly Judas arrived with a large crowd. Judas kissed Jesus so the crowd would know who Jesus was. **The crowd grabbed Jesus and arrested Him.** Peter tried to stop the men, but Jesus told Peter not to. Jesus' followers ran away, but Peter stayed nearby. Three times, people asked Peter if he was a follower of Jesus. “No! I'm not!” Peter said.

Jesus was led to the high priest. The religious leaders were trying to find a reason to kill Jesus, but they could not. **The high priest asked, “Are You the Messiah, the Son of God?” Jesus replied, “Yes, that's right.”**

The high priest said, “Ah ha! He has spoken against God. He deserves to die!” The religious leaders did not want to believe Jesus was God's Son.

When morning came, the religious leaders led Jesus to Pilate, the governor. “Are You the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked. “Yes, that's right,” Jesus replied.

“What should I do with Jesus?” Pilate asked the crowd. “Crucify Him!” they answered. Pilate did not think Jesus had done anything wrong, but he handed Jesus over and said, “Do whatever you want.” **The governor's soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus. They made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then they mocked Him, “Here is the King of the Jews!” Then they beat Him and led Him away to be killed.**

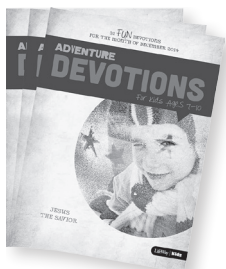
The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They put a sign above His head that said THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. **Two criminals were crucified next to Him.** Darkness covered the land. Then **Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** Jesus shouted again with a loud voice and then He **died.** Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the men guarding Jesus’ body said, “This man really was God’s Son!”

Jesus was buried in a tomb. A stone was sealed in front of the tomb so that no one could steal Jesus’ body.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene (MAG duh leen) and the other Mary went to the tomb. Suddenly there was an earthquake. An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards were so afraid that they fainted. **The angel spoke to the women, “Don’t be afraid! I know you are looking for Jesus, but He is not here. He has been resurrected, just like He said He would.”**

The women left the tomb quickly. They ran to tell the disciples the good news. Just then Jesus met them. “Good morning!” He said. The women worshiped Him. **“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told them. “Go tell My disciples to meet Me in Galilee. They will see Me there.”**

Christ Connection: The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. God was pleased with Jesus’ sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. We are forgiven only through Jesus. (Acts 4:12)



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that the women who went to the tomb thought Jesus’ story was over, but they were wrong. The angel confirmed: Jesus is not dead; He is alive! (Matt. 28:6) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

MAIN POINT: Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.

Tip: Be mindful of situations where a kid's worst day may reveal abuse or neglect. Make sure you know the reporting laws where you live and how to handle cases of suspected abuse or neglect.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, ask them if they can remember the best day of their life, so far. Can they remember the worst day of their life?

SAY • Hello, everyone! Today we will be talking about the saddest day in history as well as the happiest day in history. What do you think happened on either day? Who do you think was involved?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Resurrection Inspection” activity page. Kids should complete the activity by circling all the key words hidden in the picture: *resurrection, tomb, death, burial, Savior, Jesus, cross, Easter, and alive.*

SAY • We celebrate Easter because Jesus did something wonderful for us. He died the death we deserve and then rose again on the third day. Today we will talk about how and why that happened and learn that it was God's plan all along.

- “Resurrection Inspection” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Can you tear it?

Give kids a chance to tear a variety of materials like paper, cardboard, facial tissue, felt, denim, and so forth. End with a thick and heavy material, such as leather, that they will not be able to tear.

• variety of materials like paper, cardboard, facial tissue, felt, denim, leather, and so forth

SAY • In our Bible story today, we will hear about a curtain that tore from top to bottom. If you thought some of those materials were hard to rip, just wait until we talk about this curtain! It was really big, thick, and heavy!

OPTION 2: Earthquake drill!

Before class, research what to do in case of an earthquake, such as where to shelter, what to pack in a first aid kit, and so forth. Talk to your group about what an earthquake might be like. Then work together to run earthquake drills where you move to your church's designated emergency space. Invite kids to simulate being in an earthquake by shaking their bodies.



SAY • In our story today, we will learn about an earthquake that shook the ground! What do you think happened after the earthquake?

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

• large, empty Easter egg

[Large Group Leader enters carrying a large, empty Easter egg.]

LEADER • Hello, kids! I'm glad you came back this week.

You are just in time to hear me practice telling the story of Easter! Every year, my whole family gathers here at my grandparents' house to celebrate Easter. Each year, someone in the family tells the story of Jesus' death and resurrection. This is the first year I've been trusted to tell it. I'm so excited; I even brought this giant egg to help me tell the story. You'll never guess what's inside! But don't worry, eventually, I'll show you.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • I wonder if any of you remember our big picture question. Anyone? *[Allow responses.]* Great job! You are right. ***Who saves us from our sin?*** And what about the big picture answer? Does anyone

remember it? [*Allow responses.*] Right again! You kids have great memories! **Only Jesus saves us from our sin.** We all have sinned and deserve death. Today, we will hear what Jesus did to save us. Listen close!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Last week, we learned that **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.** Well, a lot can happen in a week. The people decided they didn't want Jesus as their King anymore. The people expected an earthly king to help them defeat the Romans so Israel could be an independent kingdom again, but that is not why Jesus came to earth. Today we will learn what Jesus came to do. Our story is called "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."

• Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–28; John 18–20. Use the Bible Storytelling Tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."

LEADER • Jesus had been traveling around telling people about God and His kingdom. He told people that their sin was even worse than they thought, and that the law could not save them because they could not obey it. The religious leaders hated Jesus for telling them they were sinful. They did not believe that He is the Son of God. They decided to kill Him.

Jesus never sinned, but the religious leaders accused Him of blasphemy. *Blasphemy* means saying disrespectful things about God. When Jesus said that He is the Son of God, they refused to believe it. Jesus

- Bibles
- "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

was telling the truth, but the religious leaders plotted to arrest Jesus.

After He was arrested, Jesus was beaten and people made fun of Him. Through it all, Jesus did not fight back. He knew God's plan was for Him to die on the cross, and He wanted to obey. Jesus knew that God's plan was the only way to pay for our sin so we could be forgiven and have eternal life.

Thankfully, Jesus' death was not the end of the story. It could not have been! You see, Jesus' death on the cross paid for our sin, but for God's plan to be completed, Jesus had to be raised from the dead to conquer death too. That is exactly what happened. On the third day after Jesus' death, God raised Jesus from the dead! **Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive.**

Christ connection

LEADER • The Bible says we deserve death because of our sin. We cannot do enough good deeds to make ourselves clean before God. That's why He sent Jesus. Jesus lived a perfect life of obedience. He always honored God.

Though He never sinned, Jesus died the death sinners like you and me deserve. Jesus' blood paid the price for our sin. God was pleased with His sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead. When we believe that Jesus' paid for our sin, we are forgiven and receive life with God forever. Now, we can share the truth of Jesus with everyone around us. ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.***

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Romans 10:9.

LEADER • Our key passage gives a clear and simple explanation of how to start a new life with Jesus. When we believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, we won't be able to keep that information secret. We will tell everyone that Jesus is our Lord! Lead kids to sing "You Will Be Saved."

- Key Passage Poster
- "You Will Be Saved" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Think about a time you have broken a rule. What is the biggest or most important rule you have ever broken? What happened? As you consider those questions, watch this video.

Show the "Unit 20, Session 2" discussion starter video. Talk about the consequences the kid in the video faced. What rule did the kid break? Ask kids how they feel when they break rules and must face consequences.

LEADER • When we break rules, we face consequences. How would you feel if someone chose to take the consequences for you or protect you from them? In a way, that's what Jesus did for us. Our sin carries very heavy consequences. We deserve death and separation from God forever because of our sin. Jesus took those consequences for us when He died on the cross. His sacrifice was perfect and enough to save us. We know that God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice because He rose again. All sin is too big for us to deal with alone. Thankfully, Jesus bought our forgiveness for us! When we trust in Him, He makes us alive in Him.

- "Unit 20, Session 2" discussion starter video

• “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow)” song

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • **Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive.** Let’s take some time to praise Him for that amazing news! God is so good to us. Sing together “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow).”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Father, we are sinners and cannot save ourselves. We confess that we need You desperately. Thank You for sending Jesus to take the punishment that we earned by sinning. Thank You that You raised Him from the dead to show that His sacrifice was enough to pay for sin. Help us to trust You more each day. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. You may provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Small Group LEADER

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Invite kids to stand in a circle. Choose a kid to start the key passage by saying the first word. The kid to her right will say the second word, and so on until the kids have recited the key passage. Then the kid who said the last word will repeat the last word, and the kid to his left will say the second to last word, and so on, until they say the key passage backward. Play multiple rounds as time allows. Then take volunteers to say the verse from memory.

SAY • Jesus died on the cross for our sins. On the third day, God did more than just “reverse” Jesus’ death, He raised Him to new life. Because of Jesus’ sacrifice and God raising Him from the dead, we can be saved like our key passage says!

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Main Point Poster
• index cards
• pen

Before class, write each question and answer on a separate index card. Give each kid either a question card or an answer card. Challenge kids with question cards to find the kids with the corresponding answer card. Once the two have paired up, instruct them to find the verses in the Bible that prove the answer is correct.

Questions:

1. Which of Jesus' disciples betrayed Him? (*Judas, Matt. 26:14-15*)
2. What did the crowd want to do to Jesus? (*crucify Him, Matt. 27:22-23*)
3. Why did the crowd want to kill Jesus? (*He claimed to be God's Son, Matt. 26:63-65*)
4. What happened when Jesus died? (*The curtain in the temple split in two from top to bottom, there was an earthquake; Matt. 27:50-51*)
5. Who rolled away the stone in front of Jesus' tomb? (*an angel of the Lord, Matt. 28:2-3*)
6. What did the angel say about Jesus? (*"He has been resurrected," Matt. 28:5-6*)
7. ***Who saves us from our sin? (Only Jesus saves us from our sin.)***

SAY • At Easter time, we remember Jesus' death and celebrate His resurrection. God's plan all along was to send Jesus to save us from sin. Jesus died even though He lived a perfect and holy life. He did not deserve any punishment, but He was punished for our sin. His death paid the penalty and His resurrection showed that God accepted His perfect sacrifice. Jesus defeated death, and sin has no more power because of Him. When we trust in Jesus, we are forgiven and made new to live with God forever.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Roll the stone

Form two teams of kids. Instruct teams to line up at one end of the room. Provide each team a playground ball. Challenge the first player on each team to roll the ball from



- playground balls
- cones (optional)

one end of the room to the other and back. When she returns to the start, the next player on her team will do the same. The first team to cycle all players through the relay race wins.

SAY • In our story today, Jesus' followers ran to the tomb to see the stone rolled away. When they went inside, Jesus was not there! The angel told them that Jesus had been resurrected from the dead. **Jesus died on the cross to save people from sin, and He is alive!**

We know that Jesus' death paid the penalty for our sin, and His resurrection showed that His sacrifice was enough. God will forgive us for our sin and welcome us into His family when we believe in Jesus. Then we will live with God forever!

OPTION 2: Cross craft

- craft sticks, 2 per kid
- glue
- twine
- craft supplies
- construction paper

Provide each kid with two craft sticks. Help them glue the sticks together to form a cross shape. Then, show them how to use twine to wrap the intersection of the two sticks, forming an *X* pattern. Allow the kids time to decorate their crosses with different crafts supplies.

Help the kids trace their cross on construction paper. Instruct them to write or draw pictures on the paper cross that represent different ways they fall short of God's glory by sinning. They can use their wooden cross to cover up the sins they wrote or drew on the paper.

SAY • Jesus took all our sin on Himself at the cross. The crosses we made cover up the sins we wrote down, but Jesus did more than cover our sin. He washed our sin away. When Jesus died on the cross and rose again, He made the way for us to be totally forgiven of sin and given brand new life with God. God sees

us as righteous when we trust in Jesus because Jesus is perfectly righteous!

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture showing how they feel when they think about Jesus' death and resurrection. Do they feel sad about any part of the story? What parts make them happy?

SAY • Thinking about the terrible things that happened to Jesus can make us feel very sad. Thankfully, the story has the happiest ending ever! Jesus did not stay dead. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day and made the way for us to be saved from sin. When we believe in Him, we are promised eternal life forever.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for all He has done for us. Ask Him to help your group trust in Jesus for salvation.

- pencils and crayons
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.