

Jesus Rejected in Nazareth

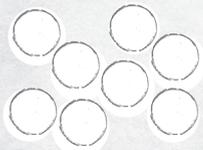
BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 4:14-30

MAIN POINT: Jesus explained that the Scriptures tell about Him.

KEY PASSAGE: John 14:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah.

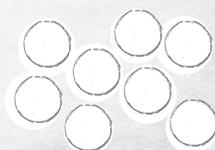
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His ministry. After John baptized Jesus in the Jordan River, Jesus was tempted in the desert. Jesus traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover. Then, He headed north to Galilee. He went through the region of Samaria, stopping at Jacob's well to talk to a Samaritan woman.

Jesus began teaching in the synagogues. He went to the town of Nazareth. Nazareth was a small village in the hills between the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean Sea. This was where Jesus grew up.

On the Sabbath day, Jesus went into the synagogue. He read

aloud the words of the prophet Isaiah. (See Isa. 61:1-2.) Jesus sat down. Everyone's eyes were on Him as He explained, "Today as you listen, this Scripture has been fulfilled." What was Jesus saying? Jesus was saying, It's Me. The words Jesus read were coming true. Some of the people might have remembered Jesus from His youth. They asked, "Isn't this Joseph's son?"

Jesus knew their thoughts; Jesus had performed miracles in Capernaum, and the people wanted Jesus to do miracles in His hometown too. Jesus reminded them of two Old Testament accounts. Many widows lived in Israel when the prophet Elijah was there, but God sent Elijah to help a widow in another country. And Elisha likely encountered Israelites who had leprosy, but he healed Naaman the Syrian.

Jesus wanted the people to understand that His miracles were an act of grace—a gift. No one deserves God's grace, so God may show grace to whomever He pleases—even Gentiles. The people were angry. They drove Jesus away, intending to kill Him, but Jesus escaped through the crowd.

As you teach, explain that Jesus came to give sight to the blind and to set the captives free. He came preaching good news to all the people groups. Finally, the Messiah had come! Jesus was God's plan to save sinners.



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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

Jesus Rejected in Nazareth

Luke 4:14-30

- **Use a scroll:** Write the Bible story script or bullet points on a piece of paper and roll it up like a scroll to use as you tell the story.
- **Go with the crowd:** Invite kids to cheer and clap in amazement when you mention the crowd was amazed. Invite kids to scowl and boo when the crowd becomes angry. Invite kids to sigh with relief as Jesus escapes the crowd.

Jesus went to His hometown, Nazareth. On the Sabbath day, Jesus went to the synagogue like He usually did.

The Sabbath day was a holy day of rest. On that day, the Jews gathered in the synagogue to worship God. The synagogue was a special building where Jews met together to pray, worship, and learn about the Scriptures.

Jesus stood up to read Scripture. He unrolled the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and read: “The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has chosen Me to tell good news to the poor. He has sent Me to tell the captives that they are free, to tell the blind that they can see, to free people who have been treated badly, and to announce that the Lord’s favor is on us.” Then Jesus rolled up the scroll. He gave it back to the attendant and sat down.

Everyone who was in the synagogue stared at Jesus. **Jesus said, “Today as you listened to Me reading these words, they came true.”**

The people said good things about Jesus, and they were amazed at Him. But some of the people in Nazareth had known Jesus from His youth. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

Jesus was far from ordinary. Even though Joseph raised Jesus as his own son, Jesus’ true Father is God.

Then Jesus said to them, “You will probably say this old proverb: ‘Doctor, heal yourself.’ You’ve heard about the miracles I performed in Capernaum, and you want Me to do them here in My hometown too.”

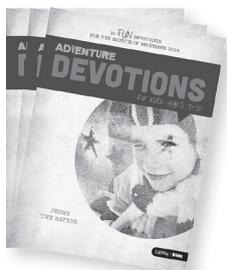
Jesus also said, “No prophet is accepted in his

hometown.” Jesus reminded the people of the prophets **Elijah and Elisha**. When there was a terrible famine in **Israel** and no rain fell there for three and a half years, plenty of widows in the country needed help. But Elijah did not help the widows in Israel. Instead, **God sent Elijah to help a widow in another land**.

And when Elisha was a prophet, many people in Israel had leprosy. They wanted to be healed, **but Elisha did not heal them**. Instead, **he healed a man named Naaman** (NAY muhn), and Naaman was **from Syria**—a country that hated God’s people.

The people listening to Jesus in the synagogue became angry. They forced Jesus out of town. They wanted to throw Him off a cliff, but Jesus walked right through the crowd and went on His way.

Christ Connection: Hundreds of years before Jesus was born, the prophet Isaiah wrote about God’s plan to send a Messiah. He would bring good news and redeem people who were broken and hurting. Jesus read Isaiah’s words and told everyone who was listening that He is the promised Messiah.



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

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that Jesus read the scroll as usual (Luke 4:16), and Jesus told the people that they had witnessed the prophecy’s fulfillment. (Luke 4:21) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus Rejected in Nazareth

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 4:14-30

MAIN POINT: Jesus explained that the Scriptures tell about Him.

KEY PASSAGE: John 14:6

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah.

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 to describe their favorite thing about their hometown.

SAY • As people grow up, many move away from the city where they were raised. Adults often remember the place they spent their childhood very fondly. How will you remember the place you spend your childhood? Today we will hear a story about Jesus going back to His hometown. What do you think will happen there?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “Face Off” activity page.

Instruct kids to draw features onto each face to show the different emotions labeling them.

SAY • In our story today, we will hear about people who were happy, amazed, confused, and angry. We will learn what happened to cause these emotions, and whom they were directed at. I’ll give you a clue: it has to do with Jesus in His hometown of Nazareth.

- “Face Off” activity page,
1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Talent show express

Gather the kids together and ask for volunteers to show off any special talents they have. Provide hula hoops, juggling balls, or other items that kids may know how to use.

Encourage kids who participate and make sure to set a clear expectations for appropriate talents. Discourage negative reactions or booing if any kids think a talent of another is unimpressive.

SAY • All of us have different talents. We can practice to learn new talents too. In our story today, we will hear about people who wanted to see Jesus do miracles, as if Jesus were a performer in a talent show. But Jesus' miracles were not just a talent to show off, they were an amazing show of God's love and grace to people. We'll learn what happened soon.

- hula hoops (optional)
- juggling balls (optional)
- other items

OPTION 2: Pass the face

Instruct the kids to sit in a circle. Choose a kid to start the game by making his best amazed face. The kid to his left should make a similar face, changing it just slightly, and the kid to her left will change it a little more. When the face is passed around the whole circle, see what emotion it has changed into.

SAY • We can't always control our emotions, and our faces often show how we feel. In our story we will learn about how Jesus' hometown reacted when He told them who He is. How do you think you would react?



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 Group Leader enters wearing festive clothing and a brightly colored traffic vest.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! Welcome back! I'm glad you are here. I've been trying to keep the street festival running smoothly. We have had lots of people come by the booth to ask questions about Jesus. For the most part, it's gone very well. We've used the Bible to show people what Jesus said about Himself. About 30 people have said they would be interested to learn more, and 6 people put their faith in Jesus to be saved!

Sadly, a lot of people don't believe our message. A few have even gotten angry at us for telling them what the Bible says about Jesus. We can't control how people react to the truth, so we've been praying for God to change their hearts. It feels discouraging sometimes, but I try to remember that even Jesus had

people react negatively to the truth. In fact, that's what our story is about today.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Jesus used Scripture to explain who He is.

Jesus also told people what the Scripture meant.

Remember our big picture question? *Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah.* Let's figure out how Jesus revealed His identity in our story.

• Big Picture Question
Poster

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • Jesus had been traveling back to Galilee from

Judea. Last week we learned about the Samaritan woman He spoke with when He took a rest on His journey. This week, He had arrived in Nazareth,

where He grew up. Our story is called "Jesus Rejected in Nazareth." Oh no! Rejected? That doesn't

sound good. Let's listen to find out what happened.

• Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 4:14-30. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Rejected in Nazareth."

LEADER • Most people know Jesus was born in Bethlehem, but did you know that Mary and Joseph took Him to Nazareth while He was still young? He grew up there.

When He returned from some of His traveling, He went to read Scripture in the synagogue. He read from the prophet Isaiah and then explained to the people that Isaiah had been writing about Jesus!

Jesus explained that the Scriptures tell about

• Bibles
• "Jesus Rejected in Nazareth" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster

Him. The whole Old Testament was the first part of God's rescue plan, just like we have learned in past weeks and months. Jesus was finally there, and He explained to the people that His job was to set free people trapped by sin.

The people were amazed at first; many of them recognized Jesus. He didn't seem that special to them growing up, so what made Him so special now? They wanted to see His miraculous powers! Maybe then they would believe in Him.

But Jesus knew that miracles weren't just a talent to show off. He refused to do miracles for them, and they grew angry when He reminded them of Elijah and Elisha, who helped Gentiles, not just Jews. Jesus was telling them that God's power and love are for the whole world, not just God's chosen people. The Jews were supposed to be a blessing to everyone, but many times they cared only for themselves.

This made the people mad. The people decided to throw Jesus off a cliff, they were so angry. But it was not yet Jesus' time to die, so He was able to walk away right through the crowd.

Christ connection

LEADER • Eventually, people who hated Jesus' message would put Him to death. When the time was right according to God's plan, Jesus was arrested and killed for telling the truth about His identity as God's Son. He told people they were sinners who could not live righteously, but they did not like hearing that. The religious leaders wanted to believe that they were doing well on their own. They thought they could

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.

obey the law well enough to earn God's favor. We think the same thing, sometimes.

But Jesus died because we cannot earn God's favor. We are dead in sin, unable to save ourselves. Jesus lived a perfect life and died on the cross to pay for our sin. When we believe in Him, He forgives us, raises us to life spiritually, and gives us the Holy Spirit to live in us and guide us to live for God. We know that we can live forever with God because He sees Jesus' righteousness when He looks at us. Our sin is forgiven and washed away when we believe in Jesus.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 14:6. Take volunteers to say the verse from memory. Then sing "I Am the Way."

- Key Passage Poster
- "I Am the Way" song

LEADER • How many ways are there to God? Just one. That way is Jesus. He told His disciples that a few hours before He was arrested. We know that Jesus is the only source of forgiveness from sin and eternal life. Many people don't like that message though.

One popular teaching says that if you do more good things than bad things, you will get to heaven. Some people will even tell you that there is no heaven at all. Those ideas are not true. The Bible tells us that we all fall short of God's perfect standards, and we all need Jesus as our savior.

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Did it surprise you to learn that Jesus was rejected in His hometown? Have you ever been

- "Unit 21, Session 4" discussion starter video

rejected by people who are close to you? How did that make you feel? Let's watch this video as we think about those questions.

Show the "Unit 21, Session 4" discussion starter video. Discuss with your group how rejection feels and why it hurts. Ask them when it is worth being rejected.

LEADER • In our broken world, some people just won't get along well. People will reject us for different reasons at different times. Some people will reject you if you follow Jesus, just as people rejected Jesus Himself.

God doesn't want us to give up though! If people reject you because you love Jesus, you can still pray for them. God can change anyone's heart. Because Jesus was rejected by people and sent to the cross to die, we can be accepted by God!

Sing (4 minutes)

• "God Is Here" song

LEADER • Let's sing a worship song to thank Jesus for bearing our sin and being rejected so that we could be accepted by God.

Sing together "God Is Here."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • God, You are good and merciful. Thank You for revealing Yourself to us through Scripture. Help us to love You and trust in Your Son to save us from sin. Help us have courage to tell people about You no matter how they react.

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
- "I Am the Way" song

Form three or four groups and assign a phrase from the key passage to each group. Instruct groups to come up with motions for their phrase. Then gather all groups together to teach the motions to everyone. Say the key passage together using the motions. Invite volunteers to say the verse from memory. You may sing "I Am the Way."

SAY • Our key passage is an important reminder that only Jesus can save us from sin and give us life with God forever. People rejected Jesus when He was on earth, and many still reject Him today. We can pray for God to change the hearts of those who reject Him, so that they can accept Jesus and be saved.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster

Form two teams of kids. Read the following statements one at a time, alternating between teams. Teams must either accept the statement as true or reject it as false. If false, teams can earn a bonus half point by explaining why it is false or changing it to be true.

Statements:

1. The Book of Luke is in the Old Testament. (*Reject;*

the Book of Luke is in the New Testament)

2. Jesus was from Nazareth. (*Accept, Luke 4:16*)
3. Jesus read from the prophet Isaiah. (*Accept, Luke 4:17*)
4. Jesus said Isaiah's prophecies would never come true. (*Reject; Jesus said He made them come true, Luke 4:21*)
5. Jesus said prophets are only accepted in their hometown. (*Reject; Jesus said no prophet is accepted in his hometown; Luke 4:24*)
6. The people wanted to throw Jesus off a cliff, but He fought His way out of the crowd. (*Reject; Jesus passed right through the crowd; Luke 4:29-30*)

SAY • Good job spotting lies and rejecting them! Jesus was rejected in His hometown even though He told the truth. **Jesus explained that the Scriptures tell about Him.** The people were confused because they remembered Him as a boy living in Nazareth. ***Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah,*** but the people weren't sure He was telling the truth.

When Jesus explained that God's people had been rejecting God's prophets even back in the time of Elijah and Elisha, they grew angry and wanted to kill Him. Jesus passed through the crowd unharmed. Later, Jesus was arrested and killed by people who did not believe He was telling the truth. His death and resurrection made the way for us to be forgiven and live with God forever!

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Miracles or conversations?

Talk to your group about amazing things they'd like to see Jesus do. Then gather suggestions about topics they'd like

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



- white board or chalkboard
- markers or chalk

to talk to Jesus about. List responses on a white board or chalkboard. Discuss whether they think Jesus would rather perform miracles to entertain and amaze people or have conversations to get to know them.

SAY • Jesus performed miracles as a way to show His power and God’s love and mercy toward people. In Nazareth, the people seemed more interested in seeing some kind of cool street performance or trick than actually getting to know the Son of God.

The Bible seems to indicate that Jesus would rather speak to people and teach them about God than perform miracles to amaze them. People still make the mistake of wanting to see Jesus do something miraculous without wanting to have a relationship with Him. Asking Jesus to do amazing things in our lives is OK, but it’s important to remember that knowing Jesus is much more important than just seeing His work.

OPTION 2: Believe it or not

Read the following statements and ask kids to respond by raising their hand if they believe it or shaking their head if they don’t. Talk to them about what makes something easy or hard to believe. Would kids change their mind if they saw evidence with their own eyes? What if a trusted friend told them they saw something?

Statements:

- A giant, ape-like creature known as “Bigfoot” hides in the forests of North America.
- A long-necked, aquatic dinosaur called the Loch Ness Monster is still living in a lake in Scotland.
- Pluto used to be considered a ninth planet in the

solar system, but astronomers decided it was too small and re-classified it as a dwarf planet.

- In the southern hemisphere (or southern half) of Earth, seasons are opposite; summer is in January, winter in July, and so forth.
- Jesus is the Son of God. He died on the cross and rose again to rescue us from sin.

SAY • Jesus explained that the Scriptures tell about Him.

Believing something can be hard if you haven't seen it or heard it from a trustworthy person. The Bible is our perfectly trustworthy source that tells us about Jesus. *Who did Jesus say He is? Jesus said He is the Messiah.*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal. Ask the kids to write about or draw someone they know who doesn't believe Jesus is the Son of God. Encourage them to pray for that person and seek opportunities to talk with him or her about Jesus.

SAY • The Bible makes it clear that only people who trust Jesus is the Son of God and believe that He died for sin and rose again to conquer death will be saved.

That's why God wants us to tell others about Him!

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, asking God to help your group accept Jesus and believe in Him.

- 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.