

Jesus Is Crucified

Luke 23:26-49

MEMORY VERSE

ISAIAH 53:5

“But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

As many small prizes (pencils, stickers, erasers, etc.) as the number of children in your class.

As many papers and pencils as the number of children in your class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

The Willingness Game

Have your children sit in an arrangement that has a beginning and an end (a row or series of rows will work as opposed to a circle). Pass out small prizes to all but the last child in the arrangement.

Instruct your class to pass down their prize to the next person. This should leave the first person with nothing. This first child will be either willing or unwilling to follow your instructions. If he passes on his prize, reward him by giving him another. If he does not, give the child that has ended up with nothing a prize.

Ask your children to explain how they felt to give their snacks away. Was it easy to do it willingly? Ask the child who was left without how he felt? Explain to your class that today's lesson teaches how Jesus willingly did something that no one else could do.

Jesus died for you and me.

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to learn about the most important story of the entire Bible. It is the story of Jesus' crucifixion. It is the greatest story the world has ever heard. The entire Bible is centered on this story. If we were to erase the crucifixion of Jesus from the pages of the Bible, it would cease to have any meaning at all.

Why is this such an important part of the Bible? What would the world be like if Jesus had never died on the cross? What would your life be like? Not only is this the most important story in the Bible, but it is the most important thing for us to know about. Without Jesus' death on the cross we could not be saved and spend eternity with Him. We would still be in a hopeless, sinful condition. But thankfully, Jesus did go to the cross for you and for me. Thankfully we get to enjoy the benefits of a wonderful salvation because He gave His life for us. **Jesus died for you and me.**

Today we are going to learn about what happened to Jesus the day He gave His life for you and me. We can learn about the events of the crucifixion, but we can never fully understand the suffering of the cross of Jesus Christ. The lesson today is an explanation and example of the love of God. John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world..." Now let's take a look at Luke 23:26-49.

LUKE 23:26

Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus.

Our lesson begins with the mention of a man named Simon the Cyrene. Simon had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. He had traveled over 800 miles from Africa. We see here that Simon was asked to carry the cross of Jesus. When a prisoner would be crucified (hung on a cross until dead) a part of the humility he would suffer would be to carry the cross he would be killed on. Apparently, Jesus could not carry it any farther, so they asked Simon to carry it for Him.

For Simon to carry the cross was to make himself look like a criminal. It may have been embarrassing for him to carry this cross. Maybe everyone in the crowd thought that he was a criminal. Jesus was identified with criminals even though He never sinned. Simon was carrying the cross of an innocent man. He was being identified with the Savior of the world. The lesson to learn from Simon is that being identified with Jesus' death on the cross is not humiliating. The world may not understand, or may think that we are strange, but it is through this cross that we can receive salvation. To be identified with the cross is to be identified with the Savior of the world. Jesus said, "If any man is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Glory..." (Luke 9:28).

This was a great moment for Simon to be seen with Jesus. As Christians we should never be ashamed for people to know we are believers in Jesus. Paul said, "I am not shamed of the Gospel of Christ for it is the Power of God into salvation..." (Romans 1:16). Why do you think that someone would be embarrassed to tell others they are Christians?

LUKE 23:27-31

And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him.

But Jesus, turning to them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.

"For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'

"Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'

"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"

There were a lot of people who followed Jesus to the place where He was crucified; many of them were women. Jesus always had women who supported him in His ministry. The gospels tell us about ten of Jesus' interactions with women.

Women of Jesus' Day

Ask the children if they can remember any of the significant women of Jesus' day. How did these women affect their world? How did Jesus affect their lives?

Some of the women you might discuss:

Mary, the mother of Jesus.

Mary Magdalene, delivered from seven demons (Luke 8:2).

Martha and Mary, sisters of Lazarus (John 11).

Woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8).

Woman at the well (John 4).

Woman caught in adultery (John 8).

Joanna and Susanna, supporters of the disciples (Luke 8:13).

Ask your class who the women in their lives are that have helped them. Have them write down their names and thank God for them.

Here we see that it is women that followed Jesus to the cross. Women are present when Jesus is taken down from the cross, and when Jesus is resurrected, He appeared to a woman first (Mary Magdalene, the former demonic). Jesus addressed these women as He walked toward the cross.

Jesus told the women not to weep over His death, but to prepare themselves for the destruction of their entire nation (Luke 19:41-44), because women and children would suffer the most during this time.

LUKE 23:32-35

There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.

And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.

Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." And they divided His garments and cast lots.

And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

Jesus was hung on a cross between two criminals. It is very important to remember what Jesus had gone through up to this point. Jesus had been whipped until the skin on His back looked like raw meat; soldiers punched His face until He could not be recognized, His head poked to the skull with a crown of thorns. He was spit on, laughed at and cursed. Now He was being nailed to a cross beside two thieves.

They took His clothes off of Him and pounded huge spikes in His wrists and feet. What was His response to those who had done this to Him? "Father forgive them..." (verse 34). Jesus taught us another valuable lesson. In Luke 6:27-28 Jesus taught "love your enemies, do good to them that hate you, bless them that curse you and pray for them that spitefully use you." Jesus was practicing what He taught. It is easy to love those who love you, but hard to love those who are mean to you. When we love those who are mean to us or treat us badly, we are showing Jesus' love. We can have the love of God by accepting the love of Jesus. **Jesus died for you and me.**

Do you love your enemies? Ask Jesus to give you the love of God. Have you forgiven those that have done you wrong? Ask Jesus to forgive them like He has forgiven you. God has forgiven us of all our sins; in return we are expected to forgive those who have sinned against us (Matthew 6:12 and Mark 11:25-26). **Jesus died for you and me.**

LUKE 23:35-38

And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

The question was asked of Jesus on the cross. If you are the king of the Jews, why can't you save yourself? Jesus could have come down from the cross and saved Himself, but He went up on the cross to save the world. Without Jesus' sacrifice on the cross we would be forever lost in our sin. He saved the world by giving His life as a substitute for ours.

The question should have been: "Why are you, an innocent, perfect person up there on the cross instead of us?" Jesus was not only the king of the Jews, He is the King of kings and Lord of lords (1 Timothy 6:15). They simply did not know who He was. Do you know who He is? **Jesus died for you and me.**

LUKE 23:39-43

Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."

But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

"And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."

Then he said to Jesus, "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

The two criminals are good examples of the two opinions about who Jesus is. One said He was just another man, helpless Himself, unable to stop His death like all other men. The other thief said Jesus was God, giving His life for ours. One man sees only the need to save his flesh; the other sees the need to save his soul. One sees only the kingdom here on earth; the other sees the kingdom of Heaven.

There's a T-shirt that has a likeness of Jesus hanging on the cross. The inscription reads, "Who do you say that I am?" That is the greatest question you will ever answer. To the criminal who called Him Lord, Jesus said "This day you will be with Me in Paradise." The other perished (2 Peter 3:9). Who do you say that He is? **Jesus died for you and me.**

LUKE 23:44-49

Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour.

Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.

And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, "Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" Having said this, He breathed His last.

So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, "Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned.

But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

Jesus hung on the cross for six hours, from nine a.m. until three p.m. The last three hours, there was darkness over the entire earth. When Israel was in Egypt, there were three days of darkness before the Passover. Jesus is our Passover sacrifice. The darkness of sin hovers over our lives until we freely ask Jesus to be our savior. When we accept Jesus as our savior He takes the darkness out of our lives and puts in the light of His grace and forgiveness. **Jesus died for you and me.**

When the veil in the temple was torn in two by God, He was saying to us that now we can freely come to Him. Jesus dying in our place for our sin had done away with the veil that kept us from an intimate relationship with God. Now we can come to God through Jesus. A good illustration of this is to picture a huge bottomless pit. All mankind stands on one side and God on the other side. We can see God, but have no way to get across to Him. Our sin is the bottomless pit. It separates us from God. There is nothing we can do to earn our way across the pit. We can not build our own bridge to get across. We are hopeless. Picture yourself on one side and God on the other.

Now picture Jesus lying down like a bridge across the pit of sin, stretching across from God to you. Now there is a way to get to God, through Jesus. **Jesus died for you and me.**

The cross reminds us of the bridge to God. Jesus' death on the cross was the only way we could overcome sin. By asking for forgiveness of our sins and accepting Jesus' death on the cross for our sins we are given forgiveness and salvation. **Jesus died for you and me.**

The Bridge

Have some volunteers from your class act out the bridge illustration. Appoint one child to represent God, and on the other side of a gap representing sin, have several other children. Appoint one child to be the bridge, Jesus, who makes the way for us to have relationship with God.

Jesus was not murdered on the cross. He gave His life for you and me. Jesus said in His final words on the cross, "Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." Here the Bible records that He gave up His Spirit. **Jesus died for you and me.**

Our lesson today is about love. This is the greatest love story the world has ever known. It is a story about God loving us so much that He would come and die for us. He would pay the price for our sin. Whenever we look at the symbol of the cross we remember God's great love for us. **Jesus died for you and me.**

Romans 5:8 says, "But God commended His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." John 3:16 says, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whomsoever believed in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Jesus died for you and me.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of thanksgiving for the price Jesus paid to save us from our sin. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them an opportunity to do so.