



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 1 Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 21; Mark 11;
Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT:

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem
as their King.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus
saves us from sin.

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(10–15 MINUTES)
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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

The Sunday before Easter is Palm Sunday—the day Jesus entered Jerusalem as the King of kings the week of Passover. Many of God’s people traveled to Jerusalem for Passover. Jesus and His disciples traveled to Jerusalem as well. Near Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples ahead into a village.

Jesus told them, “You will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’” Jesus would fulfill Zechariah’s prophecy: “Look, your King is coming to you ... humble and riding on a donkey” (Zech. 9:9).

Jesus made a spectacular entrance into the city. He rode a donkey, and people laid branches and their robes on the ground in front of Him. The people welcoming Jesus into Jerusalem believed He was the promised Messiah, but they expected Him to overthrow Roman oppression and set up an earthly throne. Jesus sent a different message.

The next day, Jesus entered the temple and turned over the tables of the money changers and those selling doves. Jesus referred to Isaiah 56:7, declaring that His kingship would not just be over the Jews but over all people. In the temple, Jesus healed the blind and the lame. Jesus’ actions declared, “I am not just your King; I am also your God.” (See Isa. 35:4-6.)

Finally, the priests and the scribes heard the children in the temple worshipping Jesus as their King. “Do You hear what these children are saying?” they asked. Jesus replied, quoting Psalm 8:2. Jesus gladly received their praise because He was worthy of their praise. Jesus is the Son of God who came to overthrow sin and set up an eternal throne.

As you prepare for and celebrate Easter, help kids connect the dots between God’s promises of a Messiah and Jesus’ coming. Help them understand why Jesus came: to save the world from sin!

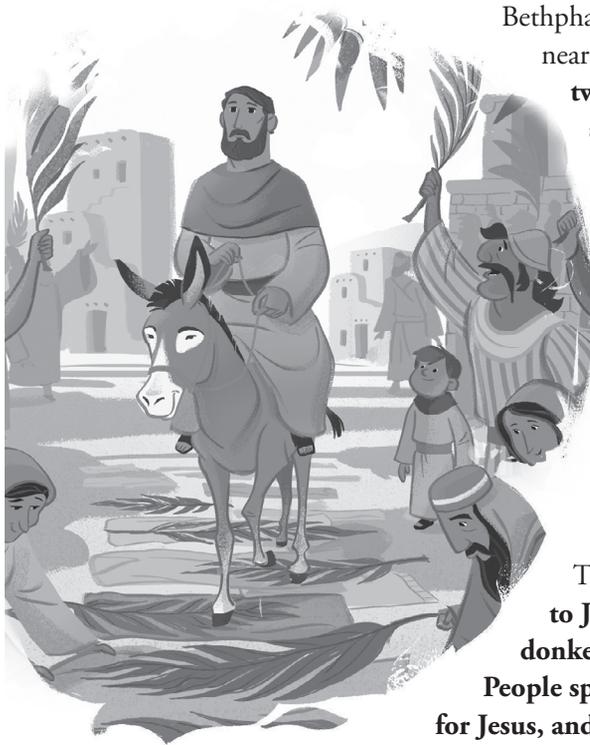
The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Triumphal Entry

Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

It was time to celebrate Passover, a special time to remember how God had freed His people from slavery in Egypt. **Many Jews had traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate** God's amazing rescue.

Jesus and His disciples were among the people who traveled to Jerusalem. When they neared Bethphage (BETH fayj) and Bethany near the Mount of Olives, **Jesus sent two of His disciples ahead into a village.** "As soon as you enter the village," Jesus told them, "you will find a young donkey tied there. No one has ever sat on it. Untie it and bring it here. If anyone says to you 'Why are you doing this?' say, 'The Lord needs it.'"



The disciples did as Jesus asked. As they untied the donkey, its owners asked why. "The Lord needs it," they said.

Then **they brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes onto the donkey, and helped Jesus get onto it.** People spread their robes along the road for Jesus, and others spread palm branches cut from the fields.

The whole crowd praised God with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen. "Hosanna!" they said. "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

The word *hosanna* means “save now.” The people welcomed Jesus as their promised King. They hoped He would save them from the Romans.

Some religious leaders asked Jesus to tell His disciples to be quiet. Jesus answered, “If they did not praise Me, the rocks would praise Me!”

While Jesus was in the temple complex, people who were blind and people who were lame came to Him. Jesus healed them. The blind and lame would not have been allowed to worship in the temple.

Other religious leaders saw Jesus’ miracles and heard the children saying, “Hosanna to the Son of David!” They were very angry and asked Jesus, “Do You hear what these children are saying?” They were saying Jesus is a king.

“Yes,” Jesus told them. The writer of the Psalms had said, “You have prepared praise from the mouths of children and nursing infants.”

Jesus left them and went to the town of Bethany to spend the night.

Christ Connection: During Jesus’ triumphal entry, the people welcomed Him as King. Jesus was the Messiah spoken about by the prophet Zechariah: “Look, your King is coming to you; He is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). One day, Jesus will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything. (Revelation 19:11)

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Animate the art:** Choose a volunteer to hold the Bible story picture and walk it slowly across the room as you tell the story.
- **Call for response:** When you talk about the crowd praising God, call for kids to shout together, “Hosanna!”

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

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. Prompt each kid to think about the last time someone came to his or her house. Did kids do anything to make that person feel welcome?

SAY • Today's Bible story is about how people welcomed Jesus when He entered Jerusalem about a week before He died on the cross.

Activity page (5 minutes)

• "The Lord Needs It" activity page, 1 per kid
• pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "The Lord Needs It" on the activity page. Kids should connect the dots to discover what Jesus told His disciples to bring Him.

SAY • Jesus was outside of Jerusalem when He told His disciples to bring Him a colt, or young donkey. What an unusual way for Jesus to enter Jerusalem! Let's find out more.

**LOW
PREP**

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Moo, baa, hee-haw

Instruct kids to move to form a circle. Explain that one

player will begin by making one of three animal noises. He may *moo* like a cow, *baa* like a sheep, or *hee-haw* like a donkey. The rest of the players will react accordingly:

- *Moo*: Players to the immediate right and left will stand and jump in place four times.
- *Baa*: Players not immediately next to the “sheep” will clap their hands four times.
- *Hee-haw*: All players will stand, raise their hands, and shout “Hosanna!”

Play then passes clockwise around the circle with each player taking a turn making an animal noise.

SAY • The word *hosanna* means “save now.” Today we will learn why people shouted “Hosanna!” when Jesus came to town.

OPTION 2: Word baseball

Form two teams of kids. On a chalkboard or dry erase board, draw seven blanks (for the word *hosanna*). Invite the first team to guess a letter.

- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or marker

If the letter is in the word, write it in its blank and give the team another guess. If the letter is not in the word, draw an *X* on the left side of the board to indicate a strike. Play passes to the second team. Teams are out if they earn three strikes. For each word a team guesses, award a point.

Play additional rounds with related words. The team to score the most points wins. (Suggested words: *Jesus*, *triumphal*, *Jerusalem*, *donkey*)

SAY • Have you heard all of these words before? Listen carefully to our Bible story today to see what these words have to do with Jesus.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Triumphal Entry

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

· room decorations

Suggested Theme Decorating Ideas: Decorate for Easter. Place Easter lilies or palm branches around the stage and incorporate bright spring colors into the other decorations. Display a cross or crown of thorns.

· countdown video

Countdown

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

· leader attire
· Bible
· stool

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters slowly, walking with feet far apart as if having recently ridden a horse. He or she settles onto a stool with Bible in hand.]

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

LEADER • Oomph! Hey there, everyone! You'll have to excuse me. Yesterday I spent a few hours riding a horse up part of a mountain. As the snow begins to melt in the spring, flowers start to bloom on the mountain, and they are beautiful! I just hadn't ridden a horse in awhile. What strong, majestic creatures—but they sure aren't the most comfortable! Have any of you ever ridden a horse? *[Pause while kids respond.]* I see. Have any of you ever ridden a donkey? *[Allow responses. Then hold up a Bible.]*

I've never ridden a donkey, but did you know Jesus did? I think it's about time to hear our Bible story.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • First, let's hear our big picture question: *Who saves us from our sin?* Do any of you know the answer? [*Pause for kids to respond.*] Jesus—exactly! Say our big picture question and answer with me: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review. · Giant Timeline

LEADER • Let's take a look at our timeline to see where we are. Remember, all the smaller stories in the Bible fit together to tell one big story—the story of how people turned away from God and how He brought us back to Himself by sending His Son, Jesus, to save us from sin.

Today we are going back to hear the story of “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry” because we are celebrating Easter. This Bible story is about what happened when Jesus entered Jerusalem, about a week before His death and resurrection. We remember this event now on Palm Sunday. Listen closely.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 19. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry.”

LEADER • When Jesus entered the city, were the people happy to see Him? Yes! Can you imagine that parade

- Bibles
- “Jesus’ Triumphal Entry” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

of people? The Jews were so happy to see Jesus.

People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

Did you hear what the people shouted when Jesus entered the city? They shouted, “Hosanna!” The word *hosanna* means “save now!” The Jews expected Jesus to be their earthly king and free them from the Romans, who were ruling over them. Jesus had come to save the people, but His kingdom is not an earthly kingdom like the people imagined. Notice that Jesus did not come to save His people by bringing a big army with lots of horses and weapons. Jesus came for a much greater purpose: to save people from sin!

Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey. A donkey! That doesn’t seem to me like the type of animal a victorious king would ride. Why do you think Jesus did that? The main reason is that Jesus was fulfilling a prophecy from the Book of Zechariah in the Old Testament. [*Open your Bible and read Zechariah 9:9 aloud.*] The people saw Jesus on a donkey and knew that He was showing them that He was the promised King! The other reason Jesus rode a donkey instead of some big, brave warhorse is that Jesus wasn’t coming to be the kind of king the people expected. He came humbly, not to save them from their Roman enemies but for a much greater purpose: to save people from sin.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 97 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • *Only Jesus saves us from sin.* That’s the answer to our big picture question! *Who saves us from sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Just one week after the people gladly welcomed

Jesus, they would mock Him and kill Him on a cross. Jesus the King gave up everything—even His own life—so that everyone who trusts in Him can have forgiveness and eternal life. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. One day, He will return to earth on a white horse as King over everything.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why the people of Jerusalem killed Jesus. Guide them to discuss how we can welcome Jesus into our lives today.

• “Easter, Session 1” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Atlanta is the capital of the state of Georgia. It is also a city located in the middle of the “Bible Belt,” an area of the United States historically known for its many churches and churchgoers. But today, many people do not go to church or know Jesus. This is a surprising fact. Let’s play a game to learn more things about Atlanta.

• “Finish the Facts” printable

Read the sentences on the “Finish the Facts” page, leaving the underlined parts unsaid.

If a kid can complete the sentence, she must run to the front of the room. The first kid to the front of the room gets to finish the fact.

LEADER • Many people in Atlanta do not believe the gospel, but missionaries in the city are telling people that Jesus saves people from sin. Let’s pray for the people living in and around the city of Atlanta.

Lead in a brief time of prayer.

• Key Passage Poster

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

LEADER • A week after **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**, they killed Him on a cross. On the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. Our key passage says that if we believe this is true, God saves us from sin. Jesus will never die again. Death has no power over Him. The greatest power sin has is death. When Jesus rose from the dead, He proved that He conquered the power of sin.

Lead boys and girls to say Romans 10:9 again.

Sing (4 minutes)

• Bible
• worship song of your choice

Open your Bible and read aloud John 14:1-2.

LEADER • Jesus welcomes us as part of God's family. Will you sing with me?

Sing together a worship song of your choice

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, hosanna! Only You can save. Thank You for coming into the world to rescue us from sin and death. You love us so much. Help us to live in a way that brings glory to You. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

STORY POINT: People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- sticky notes
- marker

Write the key passage in words or phrases on separate sticky notes. Prepare one per kid. Display the key passage poster. Lead the kids to read the key passage together two or three times. Then remove or cover the poster.

Distribute the sticky notes in random order and instruct kids to stick the notes to their foreheads. Challenge kids to arrange themselves in order without talking. When kids finish, prompt each kid to read her sticky note so kids say the key passage collectively.

SAY • Great job! Let's work on memorizing our key passage over the next week. Then next time, I'll see who can say it from memory.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Provide Bibles and instruct kids to open to the New Testament. Ask them to name the first four books of the New Testament. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*)

Remind kids that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Everything in the Bible is true. God gave us the Gospels so we can know about Jesus, and today's Bible story is found in all four Gospels.

SAY • We saw in our Bible story today that **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.** [*Point to Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] They celebrated Him! But Jesus was not the type of king the people expected. They hoped for a king who would overthrow the Romans.

Later that week, Jesus was arrested and killed. But we know the whole story—Jesus did not stay dead! We will hear more about what happened next time.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why is it important that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey? *Lead kids to conclude that Jesus' fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies was evidence that Jesus is God's Son, the promised Messiah. Discuss how Jesus' entry on a donkey showed His humility. He didn't enter the city on a warhorse, like people might expect a victorious king to do.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Matt. 5:17.)

2. Have you learned anything about Jesus that surprises you? *Guide kids to identify attributes of Jesus that they did not expect from a king. Help them consider the ways in which the kingdom of God is "upside down" from kingdoms of the world.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 18:36.)

3. What do you think it will be like when King Jesus returns? *Invite kids to share their ideas.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 65:17-19.)

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Prayers for Atlanta

Invite kids to sit in a circle on the floor. Remind them that they have learned some facts about Atlanta,

LOW PREP

- "Atlanta Prayer Card" printable, 1 per kid
- popcorn (optional)

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

Option: At the end of this activity, provide popcorn as a treat.

•small foam or rubber balls

Georgia—like Atlanta is a popular place to make movies. Ask kids to fill in this fact: Where there is a movie, there is _____ ! (*popcorn*)

Share the “Atlanta Prayer Card” and read the prayer requests aloud. Invite kids to join in “popcorn prayers.” Explain that you will begin by saying a one-sentence prayer; then you will say, “popcorn” and the name of the kid who will pray next. That kid will voice a one-sentence prayer, say “popcorn,” and name the next kid who will pray. Continue until everyone has prayed.

SAY • Many people in Atlanta do not believe the gospel, but missionaries in the city are telling people that Jesus saves people from sin. We can help people in Atlanta hear this good news by praying for the people and missionaries there.

Give each kid an Atlanta prayer card to take home so they can pray with their families for the people of Atlanta.

OPTION 2: Empty hands ball toss

Instruct kids to stand in a circle. Lead the kids in playing several rounds of tossing games.

- Round 1: Give one player a ball and instruct him to pass it to his left. Kids should pass the ball around the circle as quickly as they can.
- Round 2: Give one player two balls. She should pass one to her left and the other to her right. Challenge kids to race and see which ball returns to the original player first.
- Round 3: Instruct kids to hold their hands flat and pass the ball around the circle without cupping their hands or using their fingers to hold the ball.
- Round 4: Give one player a ball and direct him to

toss the ball to any other player. Kids can continue passing the ball across the circle. Then add a second ball. Kids must pay attention and be ready to catch the ball. Add a third or fourth ball depending on the size of your group.

SAY • You have to have empty hands to catch a ball. That reminds me of what we need to welcome Jesus into our lives: nothing but empty hands of faith! We heard in our Bible story today how **people welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King**. We can welcome Jesus into our lives as King by turning away from our sin and turning to Him.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

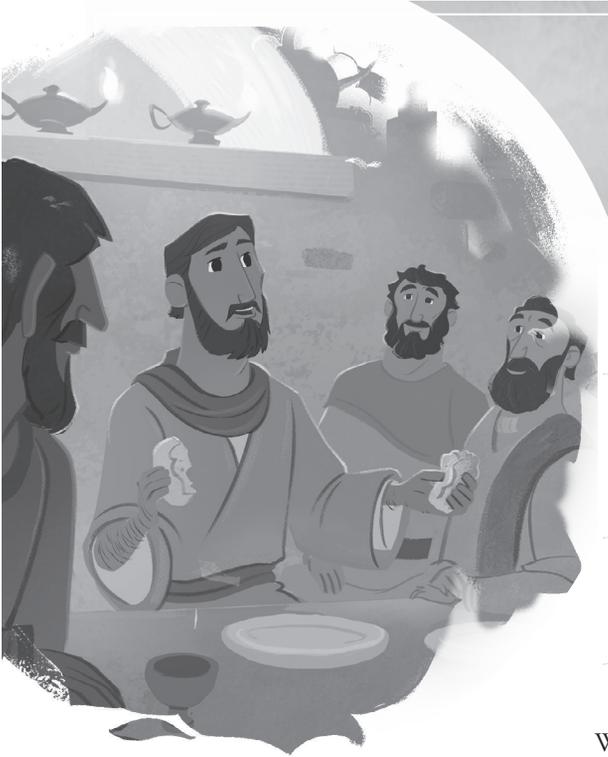
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to soften kids' hearts so they would welcome Him into their hearts and their lives.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Who Said It?" on the activity page. Kids should follow the maze to discover who said what in today's Bible story.

· pencils
· Journal Page
· "Who Said It?" activity 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.



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 2 The Last Supper

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26; John 13

STORY POINT:

Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

INTRODUCE THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 106



TEACH THE STORY

(25–30 MINUTES)

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APPLY THE STORY

(25–30 MINUTES)

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LEADER Bible Study

Jesus knew it was time for Him to die. He sat down with His disciples for the Passover meal and did something very unusual. Jesus washed His disciples' feet. This humble act was usually reserved for a servant. The footwashing symbolized a spiritual cleansing. The disciples were already positionally "clean" before God (see John 13:10) but even redeemed people still sin and need daily cleansing. (See 1 John 1:9.) In this, Jesus also set forth an example of love and humility for His disciples to mirror in their own actions toward one another. (John 13:15)

2

As they ate the Passover meal, Jesus broke bread and gave it to His disciples. He shared the cup with them too, explaining that the bread and cup represented His body and blood. Jesus established a new covenant.

In the Old Testament, God made a covenant, or promise, with His people. He gave them commandments to follow so they could live in right relationship with Him. But God's people broke the covenant. They didn't obey God, and they didn't love Him. By dying on the cross, Jesus brought forgiveness and made the way for people to know and love God again.

Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover, a time when God's people remembered how God had rescued His people from the Egyptians—passing over the houses marked with the blood of a lamb. Jesus instituted a new memorial, to Himself—the Lamb of God whose blood would bring salvation to the world.

Believers take the Lord's Supper to remember what Jesus did for us in His death and resurrection. We remember God's faithfulness, and we look forward to the day He will return.

Not all the kids you teach will be ready to take the Lord's Supper at church. Gently explain that the Lord's Supper, like baptism, is an ordinance of the church and is a celebration for those who have repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus for salvation.

The BIBLE Story

The Last Supper

Matthew 26; John 13

Jesus' disciples went into the city to prepare the Passover meal. When the meal was ready, Jesus and His disciples reclined at the table. Jesus knew His time on earth was almost over and He would soon return to the Father in heaven.

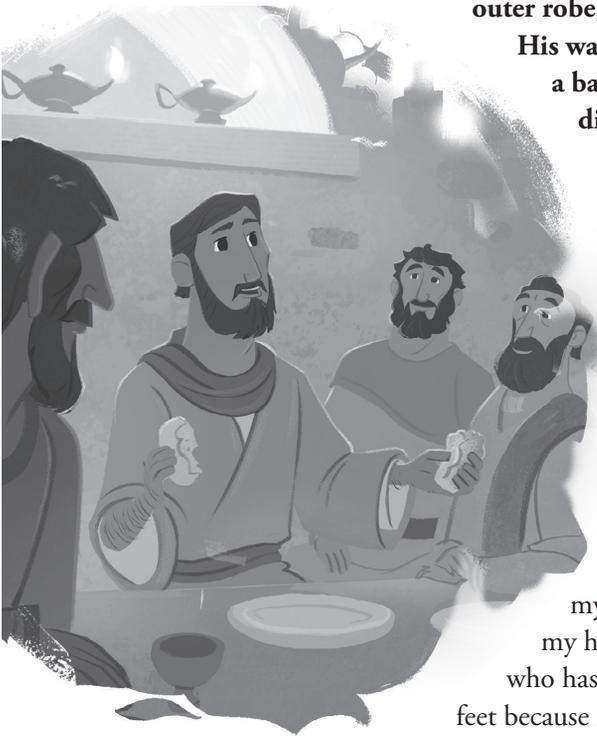
Jesus got up from the table, laid aside His outer robe, and wrapped a towel around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began washing His disciples' feet. In Bible times, a

servant would wash someone's feet when he entered a house. Jesus—the King of kings—was doing what a servant would do! **Peter did not want Jesus to wash his feet. "You will never wash my feet—ever!" Peter said.**

Jesus replied, "If I don't wash you, you have no part with Me."

Peter said, "Lord, not only my feet, but also my hands and my head." Jesus told Peter that one who has bathed only needs to wash his feet because he is already clean. Jesus wasn't talking about physical cleanliness. He was talking

about someone who has been forgiven of his sins by repenting and trusting in Jesus. A Christian should repent when he sins, but he only needs to receive salvation once.



When Jesus had washed His disciples' feet and put on His robe, He reclined at the table and said, "Do you understand what I have done? You call Me Teacher and Lord. I have given you an example to follow. You should wash one another's feet." Jesus was telling the disciples to serve one another.

While they were eating, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples. Jesus said, "Take and eat it; this is My body." Then He took a cup and gave thanks. He gave it to His disciples and said, "All of you drink from it; this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the forgiveness of sins."

After the supper, Jesus and His disciples sang psalms and went to the Mount of Olives.

Christ Connection: At the Passover, Jesus shared His last meal with the disciples before His death and resurrection. Jesus said that His death would establish a new covenant. God's people had broken the old covenant, and God promised to make a new covenant to forgive sins. God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Display props:** Display foot-washing supplies (pitcher, bowl, towel) and communion elements (bread and cup).
- **Act it out:** Move around as you tell the story, mirroring Jesus' actions. Recline and then kneel. Sit and motion as if breaking bread and lifting a cup.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Last Supper

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26; John 13

STORY POINT: Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

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. Prompt kids to talk about their favorite things to eat for supper. What would they want to eat if they were going to have a special meal with their closest friends?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "The Lord's Supper" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "The Lord's Supper" on the activity page. Kids should use the code to reveal two important parts of the Lord's Supper. (*bread, cup*) Each box relates to the corresponding letter's position in the grid.

SAY • In the Bible story we will hear today, Jesus ate a special meal with His disciples. The meal was usually to remember the Passover, but Jesus used the bread and the cup to talk about something even greater.

Session starter (10 minutes)

- play dough

OPTION 1: Play dough meal

Provide a lump of play dough for each kid. Invite kids to work together to sculpt items for a dinner. Kids may form

cups, plates, flatware, and various foods. As kids work, ask them to describe what they are creating.

SAY • Do you ever have a special meal to celebrate a holiday or event? What kinds of foods are served at that meal? Today we are going to hear about a meal Jesus ate with His disciples. We will also learn why believers still celebrate that meal today when we share the Lord's Supper.

OPTION 2: Would you?

Tell kids you will read a list of tasks. If a kid would like to do a task, she should stand up. Read the tasks one at a time. Between tasks, instruct all kids to be seated.

1. Scrub the bathroom.
2. Wash smelly clothes.
3. Serve food at a busy restaurant.
4. Repaint a house.
5. Clean your room.
6. Take out the trash.
7. Do the dishes for your grandma.
8. Walk the dog.
9. Wash other people's dirty feet.

SAY • Most of those tasks do not sound very fun! How about that last one—wash other people's dirty feet? I'm not sure I would want to wash anyone's feet. I'm not sure I would even let someone else wash my feet! But in the Bible story we will hear today, Jesus washed His disciples' feet. Let's find out more.

Transition to teach the story

**LOW
PREP**

TEACH the Story



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STORY POINT: Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· box of tissues
· Bible

[Leader enters wearing a solid-colored T-shirt and cap. Leader carries a Bible and a box of tissues, dabbing at his or her eyes.]

LEADER • Hi, everyone. *[Sniffle.]* Oh, goodbyes are so hard!

My favorite neighbor is moving away. It's not even moving day yet, and I am weepy just thinking about it. But you know what they say: "It's not goodbye, it's see you later," and "When one thing ends, another begins." Boy, that is so true.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

[Hold up your Bible.] That is exactly what Jesus' friends experienced in today's Bible story. Toward the end of Jesus' life on earth, Jesus knew He wasn't going to be with His disciples much longer. Today we will hear how Jesus got His disciples ready for His departure.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Our Bible story today is going to tell us about the

very first Lord's Supper. Let's review our big picture question and answer: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • Last time, we heard a story about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King. Today's Bible story is called "The Last Supper." As you might guess, this is about Jesus' last supper before His death—but He wasn't going to stay dead. Listen to this.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26; John 13. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "The Last Supper."

· Bibles
· "The Last Supper" video
· Big Picture Question Poster
· Bible Story Picture Poster
· Story Point Poster

LEADER • Jesus is God's Son. He knew that it was God's plan for Him to die on the cross to rescue people from sin. Jesus also knew that when He suffered and died, He wasn't going to stay dead. During the Passover meal, Jesus knelt down and began washing His disciples' feet.

How did Peter react? He didn't think it was right for Jesus to wash his feet. Usually only servants washed people's feet. But Jesus washed His disciples' feet to show them how to love and serve each other with humility.

Then **Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.** At this meal, Jesus established a new covenant.

The Last Supper is the Passover meal Jesus shared with His disciples before His crucifixion. Passover was designed to be a yearly reminder to God's people of how He had delivered them from slavery in Egypt.

As Jesus and His disciples participated in this meal, Jesus took two familiar parts of the Passover meal—unleavened bread and the cup—and used them as reminders. The bread is a reminder of Jesus' broken body. The cup is a reminder of His blood given for the forgiveness of sin.

Jesus commanded His disciples to continue to eat this meal to help people remember His death until He returns.

Christ connection

LEADER • At the Passover, Jesus shared His last meal with the disciples before His death and resurrection. Jesus said that His death would establish a new covenant.

God's people had broken the old covenant, and God promised to make a new covenant to forgive sins. God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus. The Lord's Supper, like baptism, is a ceremony of the church and is a celebration for those who have repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus for salvation.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Easter, Session 2" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we take the Lord's Supper at church. Guide them to discuss other ways we can remember Jesus' sacrifice and look forward to His return.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 113 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

• "Easter, Session 2" questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • The Dye family are missionaries with the North American Mission Board. When Matt Dye was asked to check out the city of Atlanta as a mission location, he had already made up his mind that was not the city for his family. He believed people in Atlanta already had plenty of churches and access to the gospel.

After the visit to the city though, he realized there were actually many in the city who needed to hear that God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue them. Instead of running away from the city, watch this video to see what the Dye family did.

Show the “Casting the Dye (Part 1)” missions video.

LEADER • The Dye family ran toward the city of Atlanta, trusting the move would be for God’s glory.

• “Casting the Dye (Part 1)” missions video

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

• Key Passage Poster

LEADER • When we acknowledge and confess that Jesus is Lord, we recognize His power and authority. We believe that He is God the Son who died on the cross and was raised to life. Everyone who trusts in Jesus is saved from their sins. ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.***

Lead boys and girls to say Romans 10:9 again together.

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 18:46,49.

LEADER • Jesus knew God’s plan for Him. He knew it wouldn’t be easy, but He wanted to follow God’s

• worship song of your choice

plan. God sent His Son because He loves us. That makes me want to sing!
Sing together a worship song of your choice.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin. Jesus did not come into the world to be served, but to serve. We see His greatest act of service in how He made a new covenant by giving up His life on the cross. As we serve others, help us point them to the greatest servant: Jesus. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Last Supper

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26; John 13

STORY POINT: Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- foam or rubber ball

Instruct kids to stand in a circle. Show the key passage poster and lead kids to read Romans 10:9 aloud. Then remove or cover the poster.

Give one kid a ball and challenge him to say the first word of the key passage. He should pass the ball to his left. The next kid will say the second word. Kids will continue passing the ball around the circle and saying the key passage one word at a time.

If a player forgets a word, allow others to assist. Avoid eliminating players. Kids will learn the key passage through participation. Play again if time allows.

SAY • Many people believe that God accepts those who do good things or live a certain way. But our key passage is clear; we aren't saved by our own efforts. **Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.**

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find John 13. Ask kids what Bible division John is in. (*Gospels*) Challenge kids to name, in order, as many Bible books that follow John as they can. (*Acts; Romans; 1 Corinthians; and so on*)

SAY • Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at

Passover. Remember, Passover was a yearly reminder of what God had done to deliver His people from slavery in Egypt.

At this meal, Jesus took the bread and the cup and told the disciples to use these things as a reminder. The bread is a reminder of Jesus' broken body. The cup is a reminder of His blood given for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus knew His death was coming, and He wanted the disciples to remember its importance. Jesus gave up His own life for our sin.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why do you think Jesus made a new covenant? What happened to the old covenant? *Lead kids to recall that God's people had broken the old covenant, which required complete obedience to the Law. God promised to make a new covenant to forgive sins. God forgives the sins of those who trust in His Son, Jesus.*
(Choose a volunteer to read aloud Heb. 8:10.)
2. Why should we serve one another with joy? *Help kids identify Jesus as the ultimate servant. In His life and death, Jesus showed how to love and serve one another.*
(Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gal. 5:13.)
3. Whom can you serve this week? *Encourage kids to choose a friend, family member, or neighbor they can serve this week. Emphasize that God is honored when we love one another.*
(Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 John 4:12.)

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Throw a party
Share the Dye family photo and read the caption.

**LOW
PREP**

- "Dye Family Photograph" printable
- paper
- pen

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

Group kids into teams. Give each team a notebook paper and a pen. Instruct each team to plan a party with the intention of showing their friends God's love and sharing the gospel. Encourage them to make a list for food and party activities they would play as well as sketch out how they would decorate for their party.

Give each team an opportunity to share their party plans with the large group. Challenge kids to take their ideas home to their parents to coordinate something similar for their friends and neighbors.

SAY • The Dye family creates events and opportunities to invite people into their lives so that they can share the gospel with many people. Like in today's story, God uses events and all things to bring glory to himself. We can plan ways to share Jesus with others.

OPTION 2: Supper symbols

Instruct kids to stand. Make sure there is enough room for kids to move around a bit.

Display the five objects. Explain that each object will be a reminder of something. Hold up the objects one at a time. Identify what action the object should remind kids of, and then allow kids to practice the action. When you set the object down, kids should stand still.

After reviewing the actions, hold objects up one at a time in random order. Kids should react accordingly. Vary the pace and the order of the objects for an added challenge.

- *cup*—Clap three times.
- *plate*—Stomp three times.
- *fork*—Wiggle your arms.
- *spoon*—Do a jumping jack.
- *napkin*—Turn around.

• cup
• plate
• fork
• spoon
• napkin

SAY • At the Passover meal, the Jews used special foods and drink to help them remember the first Passover when God rescued His people from the Egyptians. God brought them out of slavery and into a new life of freedom. **Jesus and the disciples ate the first Lord's Supper at Passover.**

This was Jesus' last supper before He died on the cross. Jesus died to rescue people from slavery to sin and give us a new life of freedom with Him. Believers share the Lord's Supper to remember Jesus' life and death and to proclaim Him until He returns.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

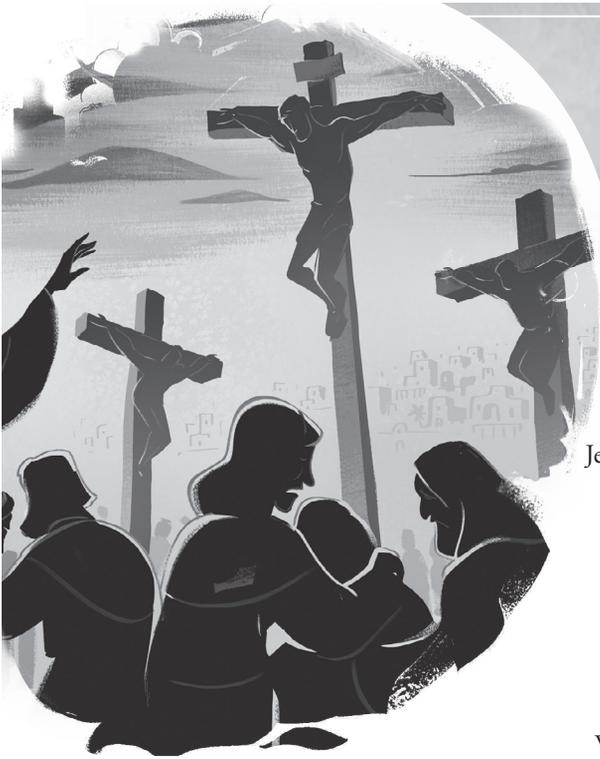
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to lead kids to serve one another with joy and to celebrate the new covenant Jesus made, bringing salvation to sinners through His death on the cross. As time allows, lead kids to complete "Remember Me" on the activity page.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "Remember Me" activity 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.



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 3 Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–28

STORY POINT:

Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 122



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 124



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 130



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

LEADER Bible Study

The events leading up to Jesus' death were terrifying for the disciples. Judas, their supposed friend, betrayed their Lord. Jesus was arrested, beaten, and killed. Though Jesus had plainly told the disciples that He would die and rise again on the third day, they did not understand. In fact, they were afraid to ask about it. (See Mark 9:31-21.) They had believed that Jesus was the One who would rescue God's people, but how could He if He was dead?

Then, on the third day, Jesus rose from the dead. When Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb, Jesus wasn't there. An angel of the Lord appeared. The guards were so afraid, that they fainted. But the angel said to the women, "Don't be afraid." The angel reassured the women that Jesus' body hadn't been stolen; in fact, "he has risen, just as he said" (Matt. 28:5-6).

The women left the tomb with fear (perhaps because they did not fully understand what was happening) and great joy (because they had heard Jesus was alive!) to tell the disciples the news. As they were leaving, Jesus also greeted them: "Do not be afraid."

Fear exists when there is a perceived danger or threat. When Jesus rose from the dead, He eliminated the threat of eternal separation from God for all who trust in Him. Even real dangers like suffering and persecution need not be feared because nothing—neither life nor death—can separate us from the love of God that is in Jesus. (Rom. 8:38-39)

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are not the end of the story, but the center of it. As you teach kids this Bible story, emphasize the gospel: the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place. Because Jesus is alive, we do not need to fear anything. Those who trust in Jesus have forgiveness and eternal life, and we can joyfully obey Him.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28

Jesus and His disciples went to a garden called Gethsemane (geth SEM uh nih). Jesus prayed, “Father! If it is possible, take this suffering from Me. But only if it is part of Your plan.”

Suddenly Judas arrived with a large crowd. Judas

betrayed Jesus by kissing Him so the crowd would know who Jesus was. **The crowd grabbed Jesus and arrested Him.**

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.”

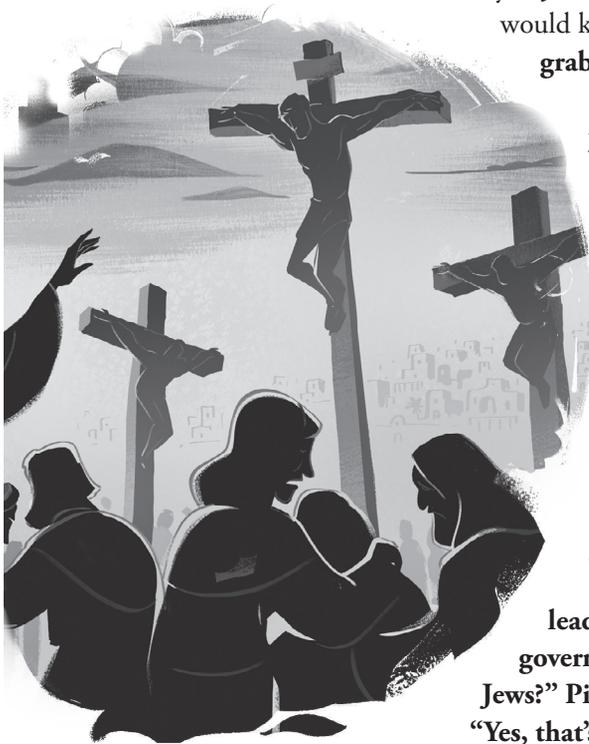
The high priest said, “He has spoken against God! He deserves to die!” The religious leaders refused to believe that Jesus was God’s Son.

In the morning, 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 to them.

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!” They **beat Jesus 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, THE KING OF THE JEWS.** **Two criminals were crucified next to Him.**

Darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, “My God, why have You forsaken Me?” **Jesus** shouted again 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 guards 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. He is not here. He has risen, just like He said He would.”**

The women left the tomb quickly. They **ran to tell the disciples the good news. Just then Jesus greeted them.** The women worshiped Him. **“Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told them. “Tell My followers to go to Galilee. They will see Me there.”**

Christ Connection: The death and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place. Because Jesus is alive, we do not need to fear anything. Those who trust in Jesus have forgiveness and eternal life, and we can joyfully obey Him.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use dramatic conversation:** Vary your voice for the dialogue of different people. For example, use one voice for Jesus and another voice for Pilate.
- **Use lighting effects:** Begin telling the story with a somber voice with the lights dimmed. After describing the Jesus’ resurrection, use a cheerful voice and cue an adult volunteer to raise the lights.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28

STORY POINT: Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

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. Prompt kids to describe the greatest thing someone else has ever done for them.

Activity page (5 minutes)

• “Stained Glass Art” activity page,
1 per kid
• pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Stained Glass Art” on the activity page. Guide kids to color the picture according to the key.
SAY • In what places have you seen a cross? [*Pause for kids to respond.*] Have you ever thought about why people display crosses in their homes or cars, why they wear cross necklaces, or why churches have crosses on them? The cross is a symbol of Christianity.

Today we’ll find out more about the significance of the cross.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Twenty questions

Invite kids to play a game of 20 questions. Explain that you are thinking of a person, place, or thing. Kids may take turns asking up to 20 yes-or-no questions to try to figure

**LOW
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out what person you are thinking of. For example, “Is this person a boy?” “Is this person still alive?” or “Is this person famous?”

Keep track of how many questions kids ask. If they are unable to guess the person after asking 20 questions, reveal the answer. Play multiple rounds as time allows. Use words related to today’s Bible story. (Suggested words: *Jesus, garden, prayer, king, cross, earthquake*, and so on)

SAY • In the Bible story today, something happened to Jesus that the disciples didn’t fully understand. It probably left them with a lot of questions.

OPTION 2: Not here!

Form groups of up to six kids. Give each group a set of playing cards. Instruct them to play a game like “Go Fish.” Give each player five cards. Stack the remaining cards facedown in the center of the table. The goal is collect four cards of the same kind.

• playing cards, 1 set per group

The first player will ask another player for a certain card. (“Do you have any 2s?”) If the player has any of that card, he must surrender them to the first player. If not, the player should reply, “Not here!” The first player will take a card from the facedown pile. Play passes to the left.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, some women went to Jesus’ tomb. An angel told them something amazing. The angel said, “He is not here!”

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28

STORY POINT: Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· Bible

[Leader enters empty-handed. He or she has hidden a Bible in the room before the session.]

LEADER • Welcome, everyone! I am so excited to see you today. I can't wait to get started. But, there's a problem. I seem to have misplaced by Bible. I thought it was on my chair, but it's not here! It has to be somewhere in this room.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Hmm ... can you look around and help me find it? *[Allow kids to search for the Bible and then bring it to you.]* Thank you so much! Whew, it is a huge relief to find something that was missing. You know, a few people in our Bible story today were sure relieved to find someone they were looking for.

Big picture question (1 minute)

· Big Picture Question
Poster

LEADER • Before we get to the story, let's review our big picture question. The question is, *Who saves us from*

our sin? Today's story explains what Jesus did to save sinners. We can't do anything to save ourselves. **Only Jesus saves us from sin.**

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • The Bible is full of stories! They are all true, and they tell us about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us one big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

In the beginning, God created everything. When the first two people—Adam and Eve—disobeyed God, sin entered the world and changed everything. But God did not turn His back on His people. God promised to bring a Savior through the family of Abraham. Many years later, God kept His promise by sending His Son, Jesus, to earth as a baby. Jesus grew up and lived a perfect life. He told and showed people what God is like. He came to do God's plan—to rescue people from sin and death.

Today's Bible story is called "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection." Those are two big words. A *crucifixion* was when someone was killed on a cross. *Resurrection* means "to come back to life after death." Let's listen to what happened.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–28. 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."

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

LEADER • The religious leaders decided that they wanted to get rid of Jesus. They didn't like that people were praising Jesus and following Him. So they made a plan and paid Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, to betray Him. They did not accept who Jesus is.

When Jesus said that He is the Son of God, the religious leaders didn't believe Him. They said He was guilty of blasphemy. *Blasphemy* is an attitude of disrespect for God. Jesus did not do anything wrong, but the leaders believed He had committed a crime by claiming to be God.

Is Jesus the Son of God? Yes! He is fully God and fully man. But the religious leaders convinced the crowd in Jerusalem that Jesus should die. The people who welcomed Jesus and praised Him at the beginning of the week now hated Him.

Jesus knew it was time for Him to do God's plan to save people from sin. God sent His Son into the world to be the Savior. The Bible says that sin requires a payment, and the fair payment for sin is death. Jesus died to pay the price for our sin.

On the third day, God raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus' resurrection shows us that God accepted Jesus' payment for our sin. **Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.** Jesus is alive! Because of His sacrifice, we can have forgiveness and the promise of eternal life.

Christ connection

LEADER • The death and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 129 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Because Jesus is alive, we do not need to fear anything. We can live for Jesus and His glory. ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*** Those who trust in Jesus have forgiveness and eternal life, and we can joyfully obey Him.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 3” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why Jesus rose from the dead. Why is it important that He is alive? Guide them to discuss how Jesus’ resurrection should change how they live.

· “Easter, Session 3” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • God wants everyone to hear the saving message of forgiveness through His son Jesus Christ. He gave the Dye family, North American missionaries living in Atlanta, Georgia, a surprising idea to get to know more people in their city which gave them more opportunities to tell others about Jesus. Just watch and see!

Show the “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” missions video.

LEADER • God knows just how to reach His people with the good news of the gospel. He uses all things ... even snow cones!

· “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” missions video

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

· Key Passage Poster

LEADER • Our key passage reminds us of the answer to our big picture question, ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from our sin.*** We are saved when we confess that Jesus is Lord and believe that God

raised Him from the dead.
Lead boys and girls in saying Romans 10:9 again.

Sing (4 minutes)

• worship song of your
choice

Open your Bible and read aloud Colossians 2:14.

LEADER • Jesus' resurrection proves that He has victory over sin and death. When we trust in Him, we share in His victory. Let's sing!

Sing together a worship song of your choice

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, You sent Your Son to die on the cross for our sin, and You raised Him from the dead! Our greatest enemies—sin and death—have been defeated, so everyone who trusts in You does not have to be afraid. Help us to understand the reality that Jesus is alive! We look forward to a future with You forever. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28

STORY POINT: Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

· Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster. Form four groups and assign each group a phrase of the key passage. Point to each group to say its part of the key passage in order. (Example: “If you confess with your mouth,” / “‘Jesus is Lord,’ and believe in your heart” / “that God raised him from the dead,” / “you will be saved.”)

Challenge all of the groups to say the Bible reference together: Romans 10:9. Reassign phrases and repeat the activity a few times.

SAY • *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.* Do you believe the words of our key passage? We don't have to do anything to earn God's approval. We look to Jesus with empty hands of faith, and He welcomes us into God's family. This is good news!

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

· Bibles, 1 per kid
· Story Point Poster
· Small Group Timeline
and Map Set
(005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 26. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Matthew 26–28. Challenge kids to identify which Bible division the Book of Matthew is in. (*Gospels*) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Matthew 27:41–42.

SAY • The religious leaders mocked Jesus. They thought He didn't have the power to save Himself from the cross. Jesus holds everything together! He could have stopped everything, but Jesus wanted to follow God's plan to rescue sinners.

The events leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection took place in and around the city of Jerusalem. [*Point to Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map.*] **Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did Jesus give up in order to save us? *Lead kids to discuss not only Jesus' giving up His life, but His humbling in coming from a position of honor in heaven to earth as a baby.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:5-8.)

2. Where is Jesus today? *Guide kids to recognize that Jesus is alive! He is in heaven at the right hand of God, and one day He will return to set up His kingdom and make everything right.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 9:28.)

3. What does it look like to "lay down your life" for someone else? *Prompt kids to think of situations in which they can put others' needs before their own. Point out that kids can lay down their lives even while they live, reflecting the servant attitude of Jesus.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 15:13.)

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

LOW PREP

- cone paper cups
- ziplock bags
- small treats like pretzels or fruit snacks

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Snow cone treat

Fill ziplock bags with treats. Be sure the bags are not too full to place inside the paper cone. Remind kids

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

that God gave the Dye family a fun idea to meet more people in the city of Atlanta—snow cones! This gave them more opportunities to tell others about God’s love. Explain that they are going to make something fun to give to a friend this week!

Give kids a cone paper cup and instruct them to decorate the outside of the cup using markers and stickers. Then put the treat bag into the cone.

Instruct the kids to think of someone who might need to know more about Jesus and His love. Challenge boys and girls to give their cones to others this week and to take the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

SAY • God wants everyone, everywhere to know He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and is alive today. Isn’t it exciting that He equips missionaries and us to share this good news! *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

OPTION 2: Gospel plan stickers

Cut from a roll or sheet five circle labels per kid. Display the Gospel Plan Poster or gospel plan icons. Point out the first icon—a crown—and prompt kids to use markers to copy the icon onto one of their stickers.

As kids work, use the Gospel Plan Poster to explain to kids what it means that God rules. Then point out the *X* and prompt kids to copy it onto another sticker. Explain what it means that we sinned.

Continue with the remaining icons—the cross, present, and hands—explaining their significance while kids draw the icons onto their stickers. Then review the meaning of each sticker. Encourage kids to put the stickers on a notebook or somewhere others will see them. When friends

- Gospel Plan Poster
- “Gospel Plan Icons” printable
- 2-inch circle labels, 5 per kid
- fine-point markers
- ziplock bags or envelopes (optional)

ask about the stickers, kids can use them to share the gospel.

SAY • We heard in our Bible story today that **Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death.** This is the most important thing that ever happened, and it is good news! We can share this good news with others and pray that they would believe and trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God that Jesus is alive and active in our lives today. Ask Him to bring some people into kids' lives who need to know Jesus.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "From Death to Life" on the activity page. Kids should number the events in the order they happened.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "From Death to Life" activity 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.



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 4 The Emmaus Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 24

STORY POINT:

Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 138



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 140



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 146



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

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' death and resurrection should not have surprised the disciples. Sometimes Jesus spoke metaphorically about His death and resurrection. (See Matt. 12:39; Mark 14:58; John 2:19; 3:14-15.) Other times, Jesus plainly told the disciples that He would be betrayed, crucified, buried, and resurrected on the third day. (Matt. 17:12; Mark 8:31; Luke 9:22) In fact, Jesus had spoken so frequently of His death and resurrection, the chief priests and Pharisees asked Pilate to place guards at the tomb in case the disciples stole Jesus' body. (See Matt. 27:62-66.)

On resurrection morning, the angel at Jesus' tomb asked the women, "Why are you looking for the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5). Even when Peter and John ran to the empty tomb to see it for themselves, Peter was amazed but uncertain (Luke 24:12), while John believed (John 20:8).

That same day, two disciples were walking to Emmaus, arguing about recent events. Jesus began walking next to them, but God prevented them from recognizing Jesus. (Luke 24:16) Jesus simply asked them what they were arguing about. They stopped walking. How could He not have heard about what happened over the last three days?

The two disciples had hoped Jesus was the Redeemer of Israel. Their hopes were crushed when Jesus died. Now Jesus explained to them why the Messiah had to die, starting with Moses and the Prophets. Jesus showed how the Scriptures point to Him. (Luke 24:27; John 5:39)

Remind kids that the Bible is not a collection of unrelated stories. The whole Bible is about Jesus. When Adam and Eve sinned, God began working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin. (Gen. 3:15) All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—the time when Jesus would bring God's promised salvation for sinners.

The BIBLE Story

The Emmaus Disciples

Luke 24

On the day that Jesus rose from the dead, two of Jesus' disciples were walking to a village called Emmaus (eh MAY uhs). The two disciples were talking about everything that had happened. As they talked, Jesus came and began to walk with them, but the disciples did not recognize Him.

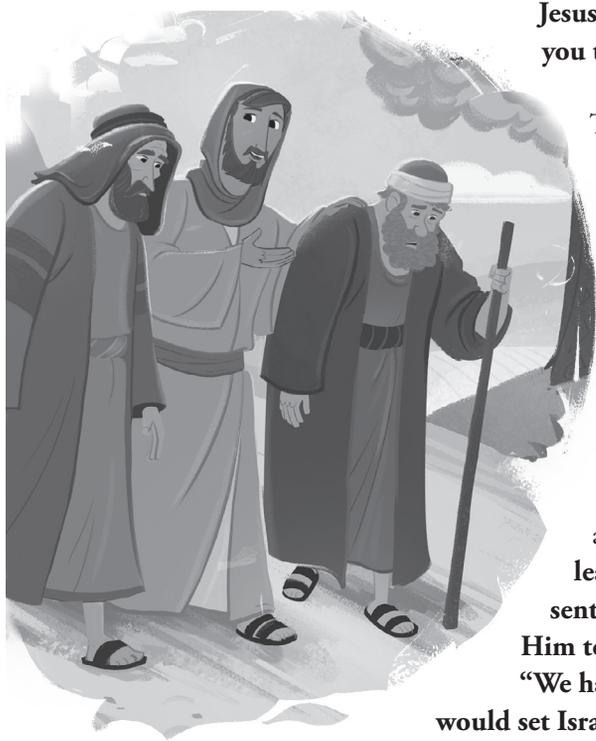
Jesus asked the disciples, "What are you talking about?"

The disciples stopped walking. They looked sad. **One of the disciples, Cleopas, answered, "Are you the only one in Jerusalem who hasn't heard what happened?"**

"What happened?" Jesus asked.

So **they told Him, "Jesus of Nazareth was a Prophet. He was powerful when He acted and spoke before God and all the people. The religious leaders handed Jesus over to be sentenced to death, and they nailed Him to a cross.**

"We had hoped He was the One who would set Israel free. Besides, it's the third day since these things happened. Early this morning, some women went to the tomb and did not find Jesus' body. They saw angels, who said that Jesus is alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb, and they too saw that the tomb was empty."



Jesus said, “You are foolish to not believe what the prophets said! Isn’t this what had to happen to the Messiah?” Then, beginning with Moses and the Prophets, Jesus explained to them what all the Scriptures said about Him.

Jesus and the two disciples arrived at Emmaus, and they asked Jesus to stay with them. So Jesus joined them at the dinner table. He took the bread, thanked God for it, and broke it into pieces. Then He gave the pieces to the disciples. Right away, the men recognized Jesus! But Jesus immediately disappeared from their sight.

The two disciples thought about their walk to Emmaus. They said, “When Jesus talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures, didn’t our hearts feel like they were on fire?”

The disciples immediately left Emmaus and went back to Jerusalem. They found Jesus’ eleven disciples and others who gathered with them. They told them what happened. They said, “Simon saw Jesus too! Jesus is alive!”

Christ Connection: The whole Bible is about Jesus. When Adam and Eve sinned, God began working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin. All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection—the time when Jesus would bring God’s promised salvation for sinners.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Pantomime it:** Choose three volunteers to portray the two disciples and Jesus. Guide them to walk in place, sit down to eat together, and act out talking together as you tell the Bible story.
- **Draw it out:** As you tell the story, sketch figures on a large piece of paper or dry erase board. Include two disciples and Jesus. Draw a road, and then draw a table and loaf of bread.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Emmaus Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 24

STORY POINT: Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

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. Prompt kids to tell about a time they went on a long walk. How far did they go? Where did they go? Did they walk with anyone else?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “On the Road” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “On the Road” on the activity page. Kids should connect the dots to discover who appeared to two disciples walking on the road. (*Jesus*)

SAY • Imagine walking along when suddenly Jesus starts walking with you! That’s what happened to two men in our Bible story today.

LOW PREP

- paper
- pencils

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Guess who?

Choose a kid to be *It*. Give each player paper and a pencil. *It* will stand at the front of the room and write down the name of another kid in the room. Call on kids one at a time to ask yes-or-no questions about the chosen person. For example, “Is this person wearing glasses?” or “Does this

person have dark hair?” Kids may use their papers to take notes if they wish.

On a kid’s turn, he may guess the identity of the chosen person: “Is this person [*person’s name*]?” If the player guesses correctly, show the name written on *It’s* paper. The player who guessed correctly now becomes *It*. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

SAY • Great job, everyone. You collected hints about a person to determine who he or she was. In today’s Bible story, two disciples were walking along the road. Jesus was with them, but they didn’t recognize Him! We are going to hear how they figured out who He was.

OPTION 2: Blind toss

Position kids on one side of the room and place a small trash can in the center of the room. Blindfold one kid. Challenge her to toss table tennis balls into the trash can.

Keep track of how many land in the trash can. Allow other kids to take turns as time allows. Congratulate the player who gets the most balls into the can.

SAY • It was difficult to toss the balls into the can when you couldn’t see. Many of the people in Jesus’ day could see Jesus physically, but they were blind in the sense that they didn’t understand who He truly was. Today’s Bible story is about two men who were blind to the whole truth about Jesus, but Jesus made them see.

Option: If a player’s guess is incorrect, he is out. (This encourages kids to ask questions.)

- blindfold
- table tennis balls
- clean, empty trash can or plastic bucket

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Emmaus Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 24

STORY POINT: Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· Bible

[Leader enters carrying a Bible.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone! I am so glad you joined me today. I have a question for you. *[Hold up the Bible.]* Can anyone tell me what the whole Bible is about? *[Allow kids to respond.]* The whole Bible is about Jesus. You might wonder how that can be true. The name *Jesus* isn't found in the Old Testament at all! But if you take a closer look, you'll see that Jesus was God's plan to save sinners all along.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

You know, that's what the disciples in today's Bible story learned. They were witnesses to the most significant event of all time, and Jesus helped them get a better look at what was going on.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • For the last few weeks, we've heard stories from the Bible about the One who saves us from sin. Let's

review our big picture question and answer: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • Wow, so all the stories from the Bible—all the way back to God creating the world—fit together to tell us the bigger story of God’s plan to rescue sinners through His Son.

This timeline helps us understand what God’s plan was all along, but back when these things were happening, it wasn’t so clear what God was up to. In today’s Bible story, “The Emmaus Disciples,” we will see how Jesus helped some disciples understand all the Scriptures. Check this out.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 24. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Emmaus Disciples.”

· Bibles
· “The Emmaus Disciples” video
· Big Picture Question Poster
· Bible Story Picture Poster
· Story Point Poster

LEADER • Jesus’ two disciples were walking on the road to Emmaus. They were very sad about Jesus’ death, and they didn’t know what to think about the women’s report that Jesus was alive. They were arguing about whether Jesus was really alive when He appeared and began walking down the road with them. Only they didn’t know it was Jesus. The Bible says they were prevented from recognizing Him. Jesus asked them what they were arguing about, and the question actually made them stop in their tracks.

One of the disciples basically asked Jesus if He had

been paying attention at all. All of Jerusalem had witnessed Jesus' triumphal entry and then His death on the cross. Jesus' disciples had scattered when He was arrested, but the two disciples traveling to Emmaus had heard rumors that Mary and the other women had seen Jesus. They weren't sure what to believe!

What did Jesus say to the disciples? Jesus said they were unwise and slow to believe. Hadn't Jesus told them that He would die on the cross and rise from the dead on the third day? Besides that, didn't the prophets explain that the Messiah would have to suffer and die to take away our sins?

Jesus began at the very beginning. When the Bible says He started with Moses and all the prophets, that means Jesus began with Moses' writings—the first five books of the Bible—and continued through the Old Testament. **Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.**

Christ connection

LEADER • The whole Bible is about Jesus. When Adam and Eve sinned, we begin to see God's working out His plan to send Jesus to rescue people from sin. All of the Old Testament points forward to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection—the time when Jesus would bring God's promised salvation for sinners.

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin. When someone trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God forgives his sins and welcomes him into God's family. The New Testament teaches believers how to live as members of God's kingdom.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 145 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we read the Old Testament. Guide them to discuss what the Old Testament teaches us and if they have a plan for reading the whole Bible.

· “Easter, Session 4” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Write the words *HOME*, *NEIGHBORHOOD* and *CITY* on three separate sheets of poster board or large paper. Tape the signs on different areas of a wall.

· poster board or large paper, 3 sheets
· marker
· tape

LEADER • We’ve been hearing about the Dye family, missionaries in Atlanta, Georgia. They pray often for their city. We can pray where God has placed us too! Place kids into three groups and assign them to pray at one of the locations on the signs. Encourage them to think of things they can specifically pray for in each location. Be ready to offer suggestions.

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

· Key Passage Poster

LEADER • **Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.** The Bible isn’t a rulebook for how to be good enough to get to heaven. God does tell us how we should live as believers, but the whole story is about God’s plan to save undeserving sinners. All we do to receive His gift of salvation is believe. That’s grace. Lead boys and girls in saying Romans 10:9 again together.

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • In many ways, we are like the disciples on their

· worship song of your choice

way to Emmaus. Understanding God's plan can be difficult, but I am so thankful for His Word that tells us everything we need to know about Him and about ourselves. Let's sing.

Sing together a worship song of your choice.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father God, open our eyes. Give us eyes to see who You are. Give us eyes to see who we are. We need You, and we look to Jesus as our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: The Emmaus Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 24

STORY POINT: Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Form two teams of kids. Show the key passage poster and lead them to say the key passage aloud together. Call for the first team to read the passage and then the second team.

Challenge teams to say the verse in their softest voice, fastest voice, happiest voice, and so on. Invite kids who have memorized Romans 10:9 to recite the key passage without looking at the poster.

SAY • God's Word reminds us what is true. Romans 10:9 tells us how we are saved from sin and death. Are we saved by being nice people? (*No!*) Are we saved by doing good things? (*No!*) Salvation is a gift—we believe in Jesus by faith and receive forgiveness and eternal life with open hands.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles and remind kids that Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him. He began with Moses, who wrote the first five books of the Bible. Challenge kids to name the first five books of the Bible. (*Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*)

For an added challenge, prompt kids to name the books

of the Old Testament prophets.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How do you think the disciples felt when they finally realized the person they saw was Jesus? *Remind kids that the disciples knew Jesus had died and had heard that He had been resurrected. They were amazed at the report that Jesus was alive. When they recognized Jesus and saw that everything they heard was true, they got up and went to tell the other disciples.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Luke 24:31-32.)

2. What Old Testament stories can you think of that remind us of Jesus? Allow kids to refer to the small group timeline to review previous Bible stories. Use the story of Jonah as an example.

(Option: Choose a kid to read Matt. 12:40-41.)

3. What can we do when we read something in the Bible that we don't understand? *Remind kids that when Jesus met with the disciples, Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him. He opened the disciples' eyes so they realized who He was. When we don't understand something about God, we can pray and ask God to open our eyes and help us understand. The Holy Spirit gives us understanding. God also gives us other people and resources to help us see what is true about God and about ourselves.*

(Option: Choose a kid to read 2 Tim. 3:16-17.)

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: My big impact

Give each kid a blank piece of paper. Instruct them to write the word *ME* in the center of the page and to draw a circle around it. Next, draw a larger circle around the me

**LOW
PREP**

· Gospel Plan Poster
· paper
· pencils

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

circle. Draw a larger circle around those two circles and continue drawing the circles until the page is full.

Remind kids that, like the Dye family, God can use us to make a strong impact for the gospel wherever He has placed us. Instruct kids to think about places they have influence (home, school, sports practice, and so on) and write them down in each of the circles.

Give kids time to pray for over each of the places they have written down and to ask God to use them to make a strong impact in that place.

SAY • God has picked this exact place for you to live! You can make a big difference for God in this place by telling others that Jesus died and rose again to save us from our sins.

Review the gospel plan poster.

OPTION 2: Closed-eye drawings

Give each kid a piece of paper. Provide pencils or crayons. Guide kids to fold their paper in half. Kids will draw on one half of the paper at a time.

Blindfold kids or instruct them to close their eyes. Explain that they will follow your instructions to draw a picture. Give the following commands, pausing after each one for kids to draw.

1. Draw an oval.
2. Draw the letter *T* inside the oval.
3. Draw the letter *V* on top of the oval.
4. Add three short lines on the outside of each side of the oval.

Guide kids to take off their blindfolds or open their eyes. Compare their drawings. They should slightly resemble six-legged bugs with antennae.

· paper
· pencils or crayons
· blindfolds (optional)

Now repeat the commands, allowing them to draw with their eyes open. Compare their drawings with the first drawings. If time allows, turn over the paper and play again with your own instructions.

SAY • Your pictures are so much clearer when your eyes were opened! When Jesus met with the disciples, **Jesus taught that all the Scriptures point to Him.** He opened their eyes so they realized who He was. When we don't understand something about God, we can pray and ask God to open our eyes and help us understand.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

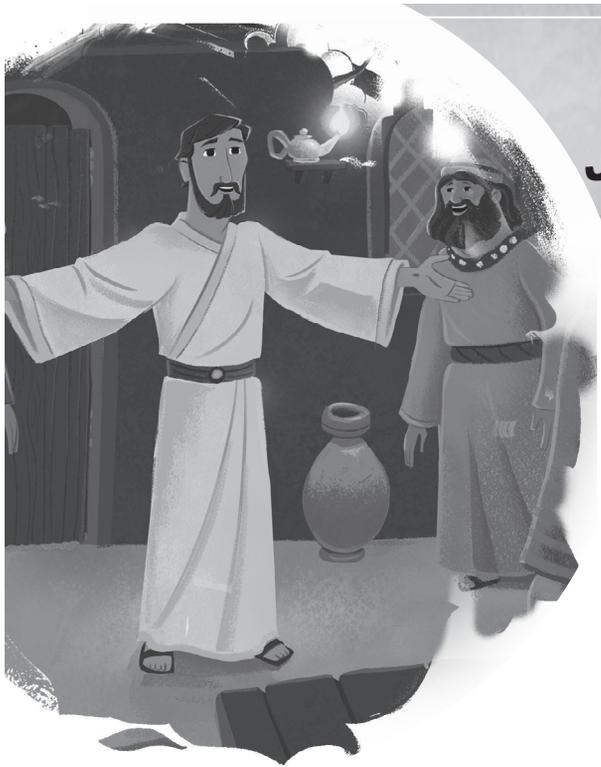
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for His Word. Ask for the Holy Spirit to guide kids as they read the Bible and help them understand God's great plan.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "All About Him" on the activity page. Encourage kids to look up the Bible passages and match each Old Testament Scripture to Scripture from the New Testament.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "All About Him" activity 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.



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 5

Jesus Appeared to the Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Luke 24; John 20

STORY POINT:

Jesus appeared to His disciples.

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 154



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 156



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 162



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

LEADER Bible Study

Only a few days had passed since Jesus was arrested, beaten, and crucified. His followers were undoubtedly afraid and confused. They met together in a house, locking the doors because they were afraid of the Jews. Would the Jews do to them what they had done to Jesus? They had believed that Jesus was the Messiah, but they had abandoned Him and Jesus was killed. How could He save anyone if He was dead?

But now some people were reporting that Jesus was alive! Could it be true? The disciples were talking about these things when Jesus stood among them. They thought they were seeing a ghost.

“Peace to you!” He said. What good news. Imagine how Jesus’ words might have calmed the disciples’ anxious hearts. Their Lord, whom they had deserted, didn’t show up to scold them for their failures or shame them for their lack of faith. He spoke peace to them.

Even though Jesus had foretold His death and resurrection (Matt. 20:17-19), Jesus showed His disciples physical proof that He was alive. He showed them His hands and His side. With His resurrection, Jesus’ mission was accomplished. He paid the debt for sinners, and the transaction cleared. But the disciples’ work was just beginning.

Jesus gave His followers a job to do: “As the Father has sent Me, I also send you” (John 20:21). This verse contains the Gospel of John’s version of the Great Commission. Jesus, the One sent from the Father, sent the disciples to be His messengers and representatives. Jesus equipped the disciples with the Holy Spirit to proclaim the gospel—the good news of what Jesus has done—to the world.

Emphasize to the kids you teach that Jesus is alive today. We haven’t seen Him for ourselves, but we believe this by faith. He sends out all believers to tell others about Him, and He gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

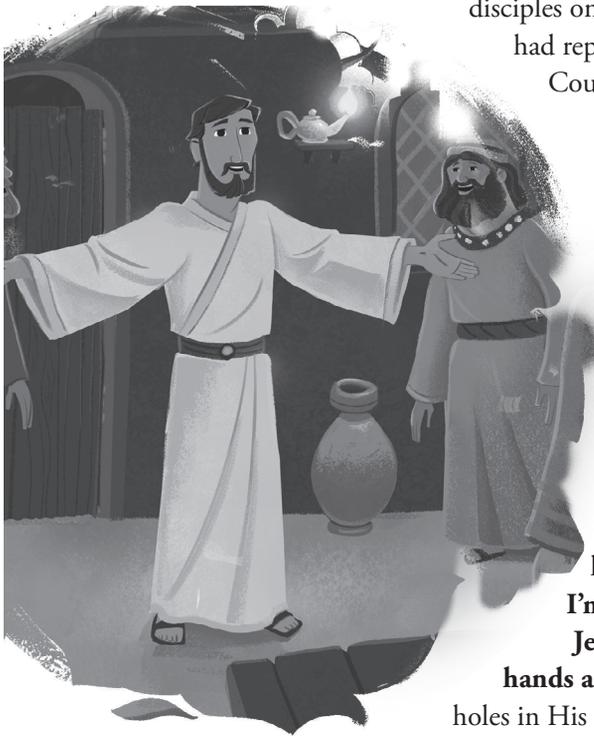
The BIBLE Story

Jesus Appeared to the Disciples

Luke 24; John 20

On the first day of the week, in the evening, the disciples gathered together in a house. They locked the doors because they were afraid of the Jews. They didn't want to be killed like Jesus had been killed.

But wait ... Jesus had appeared to two disciples on the road, and Mary Magdalene had reported seeing Him alive too. Could it be true?



As the disciples talked, Jesus came, stood among them, and said to them, "Peace to you!"

The disciples were afraid! They couldn't believe their eyes! Was this really Jesus? The disciples **thought they were seeing a ghost.**

"Why are you afraid? It's Me! Why do you doubt?"

Jesus said. "Look at Me and touch Me. A ghost does not have flesh and bones, but I do. I'm not a ghost."

Jesus showed His disciples His hands and His side. They saw the holes in His hands and in His side. Jesus was alive? It seemed too good to be true. The disciples **rejoiced because they were so happy to see Jesus!**

The disciples gave Jesus some fish to eat. **Jesus talked to them and explained the Bible to them.** "The Bible is about Me," Jesus said. **He**

helped them understand how the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms told about Him. Then Jesus told the disciples that they had a job to do. Jesus had died and was raised from the dead so that people could be forgiven for their sins. The disciples needed to tell other people to repent from their sin and be forgiven.

“Peace to you!” Jesus said to them again. “God sent Me to earth, and in the same way, I am sending you.” **Jesus sent out the disciples to be His witnesses and to tell all the people that He is alive.**

Christ Connection: For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive. (1 Corinthians 15:3-8) Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Set the scene:**
Create a house's perimeter with large blocks or masking tape on the floor. Gather kids inside the "house" and pretend to lock the door. Tell the story.
- **Use emotions:**
Tell the story. Pause from time to time and ask kids to show you on their faces and in their pose how they might have felt if they had been there with Jesus' friends. Would they feel afraid? Amazed? Happy? Joyful? Determined?

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Appeared to the Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 24; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus appeared to His disciples.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

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. Prompt kids to share about the best surprise they ever got.

Activity page (5 minutes)

• “Five Senses Observations” activity page,
1 per kid
• pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Five Senses Observations” on the activity page. Instruct kids to describe a food item to a partner based on sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch. Can the partner guess the item?

SAY • In the days after Jesus’ death on the cross, Jesus’ disciples began to hear stories about people who claimed to have seen Jesus alive. Could it be true? We’ll find out how Jesus used some of His senses to prove it—He is alive!

LOW PREP

• index cards
• pencils

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Make introductions

Give each kid an index card. Instruct kids to write on their cards the name of a well-known person, such as a leader, actor, or fictional character. Then guide kids to list three or

four things of that person's accomplishments.

Invite a volunteer to stand at the front of the room and introduce or describe the person without saying his name. Then say, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to introduce to you" Pause and invite the rest of the kids to guess the person's name. Choose additional volunteers to make introductions as time allows.

SAY • It sure would be exciting to meet some of those people! Let me introduce to you someone from our Bible story today. This is someone no one expected to see in the room. He was born in a stable, lived His entire life without sinning once, and died on the cross to rescue sinners! Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to introduce to you ... Jesus, the Son of God!

OPTION 2: Collect and conclude

Before the session, list pizza ingredients on separate index cards. You may choose to provide the actual ingredients for kids to touch: flour, oil, tomatoes, cheese, sausage, green peppers, onions, pepperoni, black olives, and so on.

- index cards
- marker
- pizza ingredients (optional)
- Allergy Alert

Show one ingredient or read a card. Prompt kids to guess a possible recipe. Then read another card and allow more guesses. Add ingredients one at a time. Challenge kids to guess a final result. (*pizza*)

SAY • Great work! You collected the clues to figure out the food. In today's Bible story, Jesus' disciples collected clues about Jesus to figure out what was happening. We are going to learn more.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus Appeared to the Disciples

BIBLE PASSAGE: Luke 24; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus appeared to His disciples.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

· leader attire
· clipboard
· pen

[Leader enters carrying a clipboard and pen.]

LEADER • Oh, hey there! I am so glad to see you! Wow, there are so many of you. This is just wonderful. My name is *[your name]* and I'd like you to raise your hand if you like to travel. *[Pretend to make notations on the clipboard.]* OK! Hands down.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Now, raise your hand if you like to be part of a team. *[Make notations.]* Perfect. Now, raise your hand if you like to talk. *[Make notations again.]* That's great! I'm looking for a team of people to learn about Jesus together and tell others about Him. I think you all are the perfect fit. Are you all ready? Let's get started.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • For the last several weeks, we've heard this big picture question: *Who saves us from our sin?* The

answers might seem obvious, but people actually try a lot of different things to fix their relationship with God. They might try to act a certain way or do certain things to earn God's favor, but the Bible is clear that we can't save ourselves. Let's say our big picture question and answer together: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • The stories of the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of God's plan to save sinners through His Son, Jesus. Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead, but the story doesn't end there.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He helped His disciples understand that their part of God's plan was just beginning. Our story today is called "Jesus Appeared to the Disciples." Let's find out what happened.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Luke 24; John 20. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus Appeared to the Disciples."

· Bibles
· "Jesus Appeared to the Disciples" video
· Big Picture Question Poster
· Bible Story Picture Poster
· Story Point Poster

LEADER • Jesus sure was busy after He rose from the dead.

First, He appeared to the women at the tomb. Then **Jesus appeared to His disciples.** Jesus appeared to many people as proof that God had raised Jesus from the dead.

Can you imagine how frightened the disciples

must have been when Jesus appeared to them? They were in a locked room! Once again, Jesus explained to the disciples that Scripture tells about Him. Jesus also told the disciples to go and tell people about Him. Jesus told them to share with people that He had died and was resurrected so people could repent of their sins and be forgiven.

And that's what they did. They went and told other people that Jesus was the Messiah—the Savior God had promised. They said He died on the cross for their sins but He was alive again! They had seen Him themselves! Then they told other people, and those people told others.

Isn't it great that a couple thousand years later, people are still telling others about Jesus?

Christ connection

LEADER • When Jesus appeared to His disciples, He said, “Peace to you.” Peace is a blessing or gift that believers have because Jesus is alive. Jesus paid the penalty for our sin and defeated evil through His death and resurrection. Followers of Jesus have peace because we know that Jesus is the all-powerful, risen Lord and Savior.

For 40 days, Jesus presented Himself to at least 500 people and proved that He is alive. (1 Cor. 15:3-8) Jesus is still alive today. He sends out believers to tell others about Him and gives us power through the Holy Spirit. If you are a believer, it is your mission to tell others about Jesus too. ***Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.***

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 161 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about where Jesus is today. Guide them to discuss some ways the Holy Spirit has worked in their own lives.

· “Easter, Session 5” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Many people around the world and in our neighborhoods haven’t heard the gospel. Remember the Dye family? They are missionaries living in Atlanta, Georgia. They share this news everywhere they go. They also invite the people they meet to their church. Watch this video to see how God is changing lives at the Dyes’ church.

Show the “Casting the Dye (Part 3)” missions video.

· “Casting the Dye (Part 3)” missions video

LEADER • People who have not heard the gospel don’t know that when we confess our sins, He is faithful to forgive us. Just like the Dye family, we can tell people this good news wherever we go too.

Key passage (5 minutes)

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

· Key Passage Poster

LEADER • The words in our key passage are not actual words a person is required to say in order to become a Christian, but these are good words to say. They show that a person has faith in Jesus. Jesus will save anyone who trusts in Him.

Lead boys and girls in saying Romans 10:9 again.

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:3-4.

· worship song of your choice

LEADER • Wow. After **Jesus appeared to His disciples**, those guys must have been so excited to tell everyone about everything that had happened. God had done great things, and when we tell others about Him, God gets glory. Let's sing.

Sing together a worship song of your choice.

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, thank You for Your Word. Even though we do not see Jesus face to face today like the disciples did, we believe that Your Word is true and by faith trust that one day we will see Him face to face when we are with You forever. We love You. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

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. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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STORY POINT: Jesus appeared to His disciples.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Romans 10. Choose a volunteer to read aloud verse 9. Form two groups of kids. Display the key passage poster and assign groups alternating phrases of the key passage.

Call on group 1 to read its first phrase, group 2 to read its first phrase, group 1 to read its second phrase, and so on until kids read the entire key passage.

Repeat a few times. Then reverse the assigned phrases and lead kids to read the key passage again.

SAY • Do you know who wrote these words? (*Paul*) Paul wrote a letter to the believers in a city called Rome. Paul's letter to the Romans tells us the basic points of the Christian faith—that we are all sinners; we are saved by the grace of God, and not because we deserve it; and it is our faith in Jesus that saves us, not anything we do. These words from Romans 10:9 remind us of how we are saved from sin.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 24. Remind kids that the Book of Luke is in the

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Story Point Poster
• Small Group Timeline
and Map Set
(005802970)

division of the Bible called the Gospels. It was written by Luke, who was a doctor and a Gentile (non-Jew). Luke is the third book in the New Testament.

SAY • Jesus appeared to His disciples in Jerusalem. [*Point to Jerusalem (H5) on the New Testament Israel Map.*]

He sent them out to tell people about Him. Jesus' disciples obeyed and the good news about Jesus spread.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. At least 500 people said they saw Jesus after His resurrection. Why do you think we can believe their testimonies? *Guide kids to consider the reliability of a testimony when it is verified by multiple people. Point out the risk of early believers who claimed to see Jesus alive; many were persecuted or killed. Emphasize that we believe the Bible is completely true, but we also believe by faith that Jesus is alive.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 66:16.)

2. Why do you think some people doubt that Jesus is the Messiah? *Lead kids to recognize that many people want physical proof of something in order to believe. Jesus said that those who have not seen and yet believe are blessed. Faith is a gift from God. When we doubt, we can pray and ask God to help us believe.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 20:29.)

3. What is our mission as believers? *Prompt kids to conclude that our mission as believers is to make disciples of all nations by the power of the Spirit. Emphasize that people need to hear and believe the gospel—the good news about Jesus—to have forgiveness of sins and to have eternal life.*

(Option: Choose a kid to read Matt. 28:19-20.)

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

- watercolor paper
- scissors
- paintbrushes
- permanent markers
- cups of water
- watercolor paints
- chalkboard or dry erase board
- chalk or marker

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

LOW PREP

- white crayons
- washable markers
- index cards
- Big Picture Question Poster

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Watercolor invitations

Cut pieces of watercolor paper in half and fold each sheet in half to make a card. Group kids at tables and give them each a card, a paintbrush, and a permanent marker. Place cups of water and watercolor paint at each table.

Explain that they are going to make invitations to invite friends to church. Instruct kids to write a message on the front (For example: *You are invited*) and the inside of their card. Write the church address on a dry erase or chalkboard for kids to also include in their cards. Invite kids to decorate the fronts of their cards. Let the cards dry.

Be sure to explain to parents that the cards are invitations to invite someone to church. Encourage them to help their child invite someone to church.

SAY • Share that part of the Dye family's plan to let people in Atlanta know the good news about Jesus is to invite everyone they meet to their church. We can invite people to our church too!

OPTION 2: Invisible messages

Give each kid a white crayon and an index card. Display the big picture question poster. Assign each kid to write a word or phrase of the big picture question and answer on his index card.

Collect the cards and redistribute them among the kids. Provide washable markers and instruct kids to color over the crayon to reveal the hidden words. Then challenge kids to work together to arrange the big picture question and answer in order.

SAY • Jesus is still alive today. God has a plan for each of us. Our mission as believers is to make disciples of

all nations by the power of the Spirit. God gives us power through the Holy Spirit to obey His commands to go and tell the good news of the gospel: *Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.*

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then lead kids in prayer. Thank God for His Word so we can know Him more. Pray that kids would believe by faith that Jesus is alive.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "He's Here!" on the activity page. Kids should color the boxes marked with odd numbers to reveal a special name. (*Jesus*)

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "He's Here!" activity 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.

Why to Teach the Crucifixion to Kids

The Easter season is upon us. Pastel colors and candy abounds, but as believers, we know Easter means remembering and celebrating the event most crucial to our faith, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some preschool and children's leaders approach this time of year with trepidation. *How am I going to talk to young children about the cross? What if we have guests who have never been to church? Some leaders avoid the issue altogether. Let's just have a party. Maybe we can do an egg hunt?* Here's why you should not shy away from teaching the crucifixion to kids of all ages:

1. The cross is the center of the gospel narrative.

What is Christianity without the cross? In the grand narrative of Scripture, we see everything pointing to Jesus' death on the cross. Avoiding the crucifixion story is like fast-forwarding through the climax of a movie. We won't fully grasp the happy ending if we don't see the pain and toil the characters triumphed over. How will children understand the gravity of redemption if they don't know the cost? Celebrating the resurrection without the crucifixion just doesn't make sense.

2. The cross equips children to deal with the harsh realities of life.

We live in a culture that tries to shield children from anything sad or scary. The problem is, life really is harsh. Sometimes the baby in mommy's tummy doesn't come home. Sometimes the kid on the playground gets very sick and can't come out to play anymore. Sometimes Grandma spends months in the hospital and then we go to her funeral. Sooner or later, kids of all ages will encounter suffering and loss. Rather than avoiding pain and death, we can teach kids to confront pain and death head-on with a hope that lies not in this life but in the one to come. The message of the cross points to the One who swallowed up death in victory. We want kids to say with triumph, "O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?"

3. The cross saves children.

The proclamation of the gospel is the means by which God ordained that people are saved. There isn't a special gospel message for kids and another one for adults. There is only one message: Christ and Him crucified. I think it is safe to assume that every Christian parent and kids ministry leader's greatest desire is to see our kids turn from sin and trust in the finished work of Christ. How can a child trust in what Jesus did on the cross if he doesn't know about it? There is no salvation apart from the cross.

As you teach preschoolers and children this Easter season, by all means, tell them why we celebrate! Trust that God has created children with the spiritual capacity to understand His message. And most of all, trust the Father in heaven to reveal Himself to even the youngest ones in your midst.

How to Teach the Crucifixion to Kids

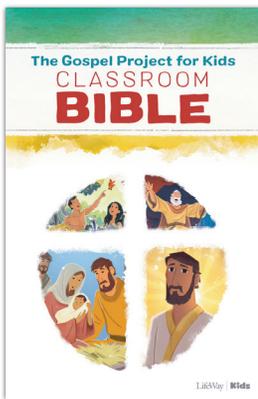
Even if you agree that teaching the crucifixion to children of all ages is paramount, that doesn't make it any less of a daunting task. Let me offer these suggestions as you prepare:

- 1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.** As a believer, you have the very Spirit of God in you! Rely on this gift! Ask the Holy Spirit to take over as you teach kids the pinnacle of the redemption story. Ask Him for words and wisdom to communicate the crucifixion story to your kids in a way that makes Jesus more glorious to them.
- 2. Know your kids.** Forming community with the youngest of God's image bearers is one of the beautiful things about serving children in the local church. You know Olivia is headed straight to the crafts table when she walks in. You know which gluten-free cookie is Luke's favorite. Keep your particular group of children in mind as you prepare to teach. Speak at a level they can understand. Preschoolers don't need you to bring in a life-sized replica of the nails used to put Jesus on the cross, but maybe that is something that would fascinate your sixth graders.
- 3. Give them the facts.** Jesus hung on a cross, bled, and died. He who knew no sin became sin for us. You don't have to give them every gruesome detail, but the fact is that the evil deeds of the sinners you teach is why Jesus hung on the cross. And just so no one is off the hook, that goes for you and me, too. Seeing our sin and understanding the cost of our redemption is a lesson for all ages.
- 4. Don't be afraid of emotion.** A wise counselor friend once said to me, "Health is feeling all your emotions." Feeling emotions is one of the ways we humans bear the image of God. The crucifixion was a sad and scary event. It is OK to feel sad or scared. But that sadness won't turn into despair because we know that Jesus rose again and is coming back for us. That fear won't paralyze us because we know Jesus defeated death once and for all.
- 5. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."** The children in your class will have questions. Answer as best you can, and don't be afraid to say when you don't know the answer. Also be careful to simply answer the questions kids ask. Sometimes we adults think we need to give a theological discourse when a kid is actually just asking us if the nails hurt Jesus' hands. The answer is simply, "yes."
- 6. Leave them with hope.** He is risen! We are redeemed! We don't have to fear God's judgment! When God looks at us, He sees the righteousness of His Son! This is the hope of the gospel and it is GOOD NEWS!

Karen Jones is the preschool content editor for The Gospel Project for Kids. Karen came to LifeWay in 2014 after serving as Minister to Preschool and Children at Third Baptist Church of Murfreesboro, Tennessee, for seven years.

The Gospel Project® for Kids

The Gospel Project® for Kids is a Christ-centered Bible study resource that follows a chronological timeline of Bible events—from Genesis to Revelation—over the course of three years. Each week, these stories come to life through video, music, activities, and more as kids connect biblical events to God’s ultimate plan of redemption through Christ. It’s the whole Bible like kids have never seen it before! Check out these products to supplement The Gospel Project for Kids!



Classroom Bible – A one-time investment!

The Gospel Project for Kids: Classroom Bible (005803464) has been designed to align with The Gospel Project for Kids 2018-2021 study plan. Its unique features will help point kids to Jesus. The size, cover, and weight make it a great fit for any child. At an affordable price point, this Bible is great for stocking your ministry’s Bible supply. Contact your local LifeWay store or Customer Service (1-800-458-2772) to find out about bulk discounts.

Great resource for home!

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