

JESUS DIED FOR US

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

WITNESS CROSS SINS FORGIVENESS DIED LIFE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Luke 22:47-53 and 63-71 plus Luke 23

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the students know why Jesus came into the world and died on the cross for their sins; and understand the need to ask him for forgiveness for their sins.

MEMORY VERSE

“God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it” (Acts 2:32, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Elementary-aged children are not so small that they do not know that Jesus died on the cross for their sins. This session will be appropriate to invite the children to receive him as their Savior. However, we must do it in the most appropriate way. First, we need to saturate our children in the truth of God’s love for them. When they understand (not only know about) that God loves them unconditionally, it will be easier to go to him to receive his forgiveness.

This lesson will give you the opportunity to help our students understand more clearly the love God has for them. He loves them in such a way that he gave Jesus, his only Son, to suffer and die on the cross. Jesus loved and welcomed the thief who repented. In the same way he loved those who plotted his death. Unfortunately today, many children do not feel unconditionally loved by anyone. Ask God to help you communicate his unconditional love to each child in your group. Pray that God will allow you to show the children that they need to respond to the one who loves them more than anyone else: Jesus.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Luke 22:47-53 and 63-71 plus Luke 23. In Mark 15:12, Pilate exclaims, "What, then, do you want me to do about what you call the King of the Jews?" Pilate had not realized how critical the question he was asking them was. But, the eternal destiny of all humanity depended on what those people "did" with Jesus.

In today's passage we see some people "acting" in different ways in response to Pilate.

The response of betrayal. This was the response of Judas and Peter, which was particularly atrocious. Betrayal is the opposite of what one would expect in a relationship. In biblical times, a kiss on the neck or on the cheek was a common way of greeting men. Judas used that sign - which represented friendship and esteem - to abandon Jesus, giving him to his enemies. Peter's denial completely changed his promise to be with Jesus until death. We also betray Jesus if we live hypocritically or abandon our commitment to him when the path becomes difficult.

The response of mockery. It reflects the way in which Herod, the soldiers (except the centurion), the governors, the people and a dying thief responded to Jesus. For them, he was simply the object of a good joke. They did not see anything particular in him or in what he represented, to be revered. Do you know people for whom nothing is sacred? When confronted by Jesus, by the people of God, or by Christian institutions, they make fun of them, sometimes reaching the point of blasphemy.

The response of indifference. This was also Herod's response. He was expected to conduct a serious investigation into an alleged crime. But all he wanted was to see Jesus perform magic tricks. When Jesus refused, Herod lost interest. This is how people often respond when they discover that they cannot manipulate Jesus for their particular purposes.

The response of hate. This is the most violent response, and was represented in the first place, by the religious leaders. These men worshiped power, receiving honors and having material goods. When Jesus publicly opposed them in all their arguments, there was only one thing left for them to do: eliminate him. Even today, Jesus is hated by those who want to become gods, who cruelly torment, persecute and kill his followers.

The response of a leader: "it does not matter to me." Pilate almost seemed like the good guy in the story. He recognized that Jesus did not deserve death and made numerous efforts to avoid his execution. He sent Jesus to Herod, hoping that in this situation he would reach an agreement. Then, he proposed him for the annual program of "set a prisoner free." When that failed, he suggested that they beat Jesus to intimidate him, and then release him. But when none of those tactics worked, Pilate shrugged, washed his hands (Matthew 27:24) and walked away from Jesus. We see Pilate's response in those who are indifferent to the gospel or openly reject it.

The response of acceptance. This group is small, but important. It includes the woman who cried for him, the repentant thief, the frightened centurion, and Joseph of Arimathea. Although the details given by Luke are not very precise, we can see in these people an attempt to approach Jesus, with different levels of love and faith.

There are many ways to respond to the Lord, and each person is responsible for their choice. The question then still remains today: "What, then, do you want me to do with him who is the King of the Jews?"

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Sin - It is wrong!

Before the session, write the title of the activity on a poster or construction paper and attach it to the wall at eye level with the children. In the group, show the children the word "SIN" (which will be written in large capital letters) and ask them to explain what it means.

Say: "At Easter, there is always talk that Jesus died on the cross, and that's why people can receive forgiveness of their sins. Let's think about why Jesus died." Give them blank pages and let each one write words or phrases naming different sins. Tell them they can decorate them with dark colors so they look ugly and dark, but so that others can read them. Children can draw pictures in relation to what they wrote, and then cut their papers in different ways. Finally, let each one stick his sheet on the mural that you put on the wall, under the title.

Ask: "What things does sin produce in the world and in people?" Let the children talk, and repeat the main thing each one said. Add: "Jesus never did any of these bad things, but he suffered and died for those sins. We will learn more about this in our Bible story today."

TEACH THE LESSON

The saddest and happiest day in history

Read Luke 22:47-53 and 67-71 plus Luke 23. "What's that noise?" murmured some of the disciples as they struggled to stand up.

In the distance they could hear the metallic sound of swords and heavy boots. At that moment, the light of flaming torches illuminated the darkness of the garden where they were. Dozens of men, armed with clubs and swords, appeared out of nowhere. Leading the group was Judas, one of Jesus' disciples. Quickly, Judas approached Jesus and gave him the usual, friendly and respectful greeting: a kiss on the cheek.

Sadly, Jesus looked at his disciple. "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?" he asked. The disciples were now wide awake, ready to defend Jesus. Suddenly, Peter took his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. "Enough!" said Jesus. And touching the man's ear, he healed it. Then Jesus, turning to the crowd, said, "Am I leading a rebellion that you have come with swords and clubs. Every day I was with you in the temple courts, and you did not lay a hand on me."

"Let's go!" yelled the temple guards, who violently took Jesus away. Filled with panic and pain, the disciples fled for their lives, leaving Jesus behind with those who were arresting him. That night, the temple guards beat Jesus with a whip full of small pointed pieces of metal. Then they blindfolded him. And laughing, they said, "Hey, prophet! Every time we hit you, tell us who it was." And they insulted him by saying many other disrespectful things.

Later, they took Jesus before Pilate. And there they began to accuse him of all kinds of crimes. "We have found that he is causing problems in our country," they said, "and that he forbids paying tribute to Caesar, saying that he himself is the Christ, the King." Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the King of the Jews?" "You say it," the Master replied. Pilate asked him other questions. Then, turning to the furious crowd, he said, "This man has not done anything wrong."

"Jesus causes everyone to get upset," the leaders said. "He has begun to do this in his hometown. And now he is doing it here." That gave Pilate an idea. "I do not want to take care of this," he thought. "I will send Jesus to Herod. He rules in the birthplace of Jesus. Let him decide what to do with Jesus." Then Jesus was taken to King Herod. Herod had wanted to talk with Jesus for quite some time, because he had heard many things about him. "Do some miracles," he told Jesus. But Jesus stood there, quiet, without saying a word. Soon, Herod became tired. And together with his soldiers, he made fun of Jesus for a while. Then, dressing him in splendid clothes, he sent him back to Pilate.

Pilate began to get upset with the religious leaders. And he told them, "Nothing this man has done is worthy of death, so I'll let him go after punishing him." Each year, Pilate released a criminal, and he hoped to use that as the basis for releasing Jesus.

"Do not do that!" exclaimed the angry crowd. "Release Barabbas to us!" (Barabbas was a bad man who was in prison for causing riots against the rulers and for murder.) Pilate spoke to them again, wanting to release Jesus; but they shouted again saying, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"OK" said Pilate finally. "Here, you can have Jesus. I will have him beaten, and then you can do whatever you want with him. I'm going to set Barabbas free as you requested."

The soldiers took Jesus from there and put a heavy wooden cross on his back. Then they took him down the long road that led to the place where the criminals were crucified. But Jesus was so weak after being beaten so badly that he could not carry his cross. "Hey you!" the soldiers called to a man who was standing nearby. "Carry that cross to Golgotha."

Finally they came to Golgotha, to the crucifixion mountain. The soldiers nailed Jesus' hands and feet to the cross and hung a sign over him that said: "THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS". Then they put the bottom of the cross in a hole in the ground and stood the cross up. Jesus' pain was terrible. There were also two robbers being crucified at the same time, one on each side of Jesus. Jesus looked at the crowd, the religious leaders, the soldiers, and the people, and prayed saying, "Father, forgive them because they do not know what they are doing."

One of the robbers made fun of Jesus saying, "Save yourself and us." The other robber responded saying, "Do not you fear God, since you are going to die? We are suffering because we are receiving what our bad deeds deserve; but this man did nothing bad." And then he said to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

With love, Jesus replied, "Truly I tell you that today you will be with me in paradise." The hours passed slowly. At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit." And having said this, he died.

One of the Roman soldiers, looking up, said with great surprise, "This man was truly righteous."

Among the crowd that day was a follower of Jesus called Joseph of Arimathea. He went to Pilate. "Please let me take Jesus' body," he asked. "I want to bury him." "Take him," Pilate answered. Then, Joseph lowered Jesus' body from the cross and took it to a grave in a garden. Filled with pain, he went home to prepare good smelling spices and perfumes to put on the body. His friend was dead! It was the saddest day in history!

After concluding the story, tell the children: "The title of our Bible story is: 'The saddest and happiest day in history.' Why do we say that it was the saddest day? (Because evil people crucified Jesus, the Son of God.) Why do you think we can also call it the happiest day?" (Because now we know that Jesus suffered and died for our sins, and rose again three days later. We can be forgiven and someday live in heaven with him forever.)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Choose some activities to help the children understand the plan of salvation.

Jesus is OUR Savior

Ask the children: "What were the sins committed by the people in the Bible story that we just heard? Did Jesus die for those sins? Could he have forgiven them if they had asked him? What kind of sins do people commit today? Did Jesus die for those sins? Does he forgive us if we ask him?"

Tell them: "Everyone has sinned. Surely we have not murdered anyone, nor have we deceived anyone to arrest and kill an innocent person. But we have all disobeyed God. That's the reason why Jesus came to earth. He came to show us his love and to die for our sins. Anyone in the world can be forgiven for all the bad things they have done because Jesus died for their sins. I'm going to tell you how we can be forgiven and become friends with God."

Tell the children the ABC steps a person must take to accept forgiveness for their sins:

- 1) Admit that he/she is a sinner: repentance.
- 2) Believe in faith that Jesus died for their sins and that God loves them.
- 3) Claim Jesus as their Savior, and tell others that Jesus forgave their sins, that is, they already gave their lives to Jesus.

Tell them: "Perhaps some of you are sorry for having disobeyed God and want to ask Jesus today to be your Savior. Ask the children to bow their heads. Sing a song that talks about repentance, forgiveness of sins or surrender to Christ.

Then, say: "If you want to receive Jesus as your Savior, raise your hand." If anyone raises their hand, ask one of your assistants to take care of the other children. And you, along with other helpers, speak and pray with those who responded. Allow God to guide you in this task.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Before the session, write the memory verse in large print on a piece of construction paper (God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it (Acts 2:32).) Then, cut out each word so that they are all separated, like pieces of a puzzle to put together. In the group, read the memory verse and repeat it together several times. Then, put the words that you cut into a bag. Mix them well. Allow each child to take out a word. Ask: "Who has the piece with the word 'Jesus'? Say the verse with me." Let the child say it alone if she can, or with you if she cannot. Then ask her to put it on the table. Then ask: "Who has the piece with the word 'witnesses'? Say the verse with me." Let him also say it out loud by himself if he can and put his piece on the table. Each child should place their piece on the table in the correct place until the complete verse is assembled. That way everyone will have repeated the memory verse.

The cross

Help the group make cross necklaces using the directions on Student Activity Sheet #223-A and #223-B. Encourage them to use the pendant so they always remember that Jesus died for them. Challenge them to share the lesson with their families and friends.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Make a circle with the children. Tell them to put on the necklaces with the cross. Ask some volunteers to pray, thanking God for his love shown in sending Jesus to die on the cross of Calvary and for saving them.

Encourage

Encourage the children to tell the Bible story to their family and explain the title: "The saddest and happiest day in history." Sing an appropriate chorus.

Invite

Say something interesting about the next session to encourage the students to attend and to invite friends.

