

Unit 26 • Session 5

Jesus' Crucifixion

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–27; John 18–19

STORY POINT:

Jesus died on the cross to pay
for our sins.

KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 2:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' crucifixion, burial, and resurrection are the center of the gospel. Jesus accomplished the plan God had been working out throughout the Old Testament to bring salvation to sinners, and it happened in such an unlikely way.

In the Book of Acts, Peter testified to the Israelites about Jesus' death: "Though He was delivered up according to God's determined plan and foreknowledge, you used lawless people to nail Him to a cross and kill Him" (Acts 2:23). Crucifixion was a horrific way to die. As you teach kids, rather than focus on the graphic details of how Jesus died, emphasize why He died. Two primary reasons stand out: God is loving, and God is just.

First, God is loving. He sent His Son to be the Savior of the world because He loves us. (See John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 John 4:10.) Jesus submitted to the Father's will; He humbled Himself and came to earth as a man, and He laid down His life because He loves us. (Eph. 5:2)

Jesus lived the perfect life we failed to live and died the guilty death we don't want to die. Those who trust in Him receive forgiveness and eternal life.

Second, God is just. God's law for the people was plain. (See Deuteronomy 6:5.) But God's people, and all people, broke the law. We have loved other things more than we love God. That is sin. So why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He just say, "You are forgiven"? Because God is just, He requires due payment for sin. To simply forgive sin without requiring a payment would be unjust.

Jesus was our substitute, taking our place on the cross and absorbing God's wrath on our behalf so we can be forgiven and declared righteous. (See Rom. 3:25-26; Col. 2:13-15.) Jesus died to rescue sinners from slavery to sin, and when we trust in Him, we are free indeed.

The **BIBLE** Story

Jesus' Crucifixion

Matthew 26–27; John 18–19

Bible Storytelling Tips

Draw the story: As you tell the story, show simple drawings of elements from the story. Or ask an adult volunteer to draw corresponding images on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper.

Use props: Display props related to the story (scarlet robe, crown of thorns, large nail, torn curtain, picture of tomb). Consider playing a sound effect of falling rocks when you tell about the earthquake after Jesus' death.

Jesus stood before Pilate, the governor. Pilate asked Him, “Are You the King of the Jews?”

Jesus answered, “Yes, that’s right.” Then the religious leaders made accusations against Jesus, but Jesus did not say anything. Pilate was surprised that Jesus was silent.

Every year at Passover, the governor would free a prisoner—whichever prisoner the people chose. At that time, there was a prisoner named Barabbas (buh RAB uhs) who was very dangerous. So Pilate asked the crowd, “Who do you want me to set free? Barabbas or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?”

The crowd answered, “Barabbas!”

Pilate asked, “Then what should I do with Jesus, who is called the Messiah?”

The crowd answered, “Crucify Him!”

Pilate asked, “Why? What has He done wrong?”

But the crowd kept shouting, “Crucify Him!”

Pilate’s soldiers took Jesus to the governor’s palace and gathered around Him. They **took off His clothes and put a scarlet robe on Him. They made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then they hit Jesus and mocked Him. “Hail, King of the Jews!”** they said.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. Then they cast lots to decide who would get His clothes. **They put a sign above His head that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.**

As Jesus was on the cross, people mocked Him. “He saved others, but He cannot save Himself!” they said.

From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness covered the land. Then **Jesus cried out, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” Jesus shouted again with a loud voice, “It is finished!” Then Jesus died.** Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the men near the cross said, “This man really was God’s Son!”

Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb cut into a rock. A stone was sealed in front of the tomb and Roman soldiers stood guard so that no one could steal Jesus' body.

Christ Connection: We deserve to die because of our sin, but God loves us and kept His promise to send a Savior. Jesus never sinned, but He died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, and those who trust in Him have forgiveness and eternal life.

DISCUSSION:

Bibles, 1 per kid

Story Point Poster

Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

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

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find John 19. Consider using the New Testament Israel Map to point out Jerusalem (*H4*). Ask the kids which books contain accounts of Jesus' crucifixion. (*Matthew–John*) Remind the kids that the Gospels also tell of Jesus' life and ministry.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

How many men were crucified with Jesus? (*two, John 19:18*)

What did the sign over Jesus' cross say? (**JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS**; *John 19:19*)

What did Jesus say right before He died? (*"It is finished," John 19:30*)

What do you think Jesus meant when He said it is finished?

Guide kids to think through the various layers of meaning. Jesus' death provided the payment for sin, ending its power over people. His death was also the completion of the most

difficult part of His mission on earth. Discuss the importance of Jesus' death in purchasing our salvation.

Why did Jesus have to die? *Help kids process the depth and weight of sin. Remind kids that God created us to love and worship Him by enjoying Him. Explain that sin is rebellion against our Creator and King. The fair payment of sin is death, and the only way for us to escape that death was for Jesus to take the penalty for us.*

How do you feel when you think about Jesus' crucifixion? *Remind kids that Jesus' crucifixion is both wonderful and terrible. For a perfectly righteous man to die instead of us is a great tragedy. However, God used that tragedy in a beautiful way, to provide life and hope for all who trust in Jesus. Only God can work wonderful things from terrible situations.*

Say • **Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.** We could never do anything to earn such a gift, and God gives salvation freely to all who believe in Jesus. Thankfully, Jesus did not stay dead either! He rose!

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?

What does this story teach me about myself?

Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.