



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 2

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:

Deuteronomy 31:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

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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 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: Deuteronomy 31:8

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

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.

LOW PREP

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

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



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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 my 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, ***How can we***

glorify God? The answer is, *We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.*

Today's story is a great reminder of why we want to glorify God. We don't glorify God in order to be saved from our sins; salvation is a free gift from Jesus! We bring glory to God because He is our Creator, Savior, and King.

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: the 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.

- Bibles
- “Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

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.”

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.

Because Jesus is alive, we do not need to fear anything. We can live for Jesus and His glory. ***How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.*** Those who trust in Jesus have forgiveness and eternal life, and we can joyfully obey Him.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 131 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 2” 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 2” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • We’ve seen how God is bringing people from all over the world to Clarkston, Georgia. Today, we’ll hear from the DeLoaches, a missionary family who are sharing the gospel there. Mr. DeLoach started a very unique church in Clarkston. Watch the video to see why this church is so special.

Show the “Puzzle Pieces” missions video.

LEADER • Clarkston International Bible Church is special because God has brought people from all over the world to worship there. God is also bringing people from many different countries to our own towns and cities! Many of these people don’t know Jesus. We can help others understand why the death and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel.

• “Puzzle Pieces” missions video

• Key Passage Poster
• “Do Not Be Afraid”
song

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Deuteronomy 31:8.

LEADER • These words come from the Old Testament. God chose the family of Israel to be His people. Through the nation of Israel, God brought His Son, Jesus, into the world. God is the same today. God was with the Israelites, and He is still with His people—everyone who trusts in Jesus. Remember these words when you feel afraid. Let’s sing.

Lead boys and girls in singing the “Do Not Be Afraid” song.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Onward, Christian
Soldiers” song

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 “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”

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



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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: “The LORD is the one who will go before you.” / “He will be with you”; / “he will not leave you or abandon you.” / “Do not be afraid or discouraged.”)

Challenge all of the groups to say the Bible reference together: Deuteronomy 31:8. Reassign phrases and repeat the activity a few times.

SAY • *How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.* Do you believe the words of our key passage? When we have faith that God is who He says He is and that His Word is true, we can live with boldness and joy because of the hope we have in Him.

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

• dry erase board
• marker

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Easter offering

Remind kids that DeLoach family are missionaries

in Clarkston, Georgia. They can spend most of their time sharing the gospel with people there because people like you give money to missions. Explain that many churches focus on giving to North American missionaries like the DeLoach family by collecting a missions offering at Easter.

Challenge your kids to do the same. Brainstorm some creative ways kids could earn money to give to missions, and write their ideas on a dry erase board. (Examples: mowing lawns, babysitting a sibling, doing extra chores, selling baked goods or craft items)

Encourage each kid to pick one of the ideas to do in the next few weeks. Decide on a Sunday to bring the offering and use the giving box (if you have one) to collect their gifts that week.

SAY • Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. Missionaries all over the world and even in our own towns are telling people this good news! By giving to our church's missions offering, we can support missionaries like the DeLoach family who live and work around the world.

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

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

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 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?

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "From Death to Life" activity page,
1 per kid

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.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.