

Unit 20 • Session 2
Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Bible Passage: Matthew 26–28; 1 Corinthians 15

Story Point: Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.

Key Passage: John 3:30

Big Picture Question: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

Christ Connection: Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. In Adam, we were spiritually dead in sin, but Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives new life to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Leader Bible Study

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are essential to the Christian faith. If we teach Jesus as a respected teacher and miracle-worker who claimed to be the Messiah and who was crucified on the cross—but who was not resurrected—then we are teaching the Jesus of Judaism. If we teach Jesus as a wise teacher and prophet who ascended into heaven—but who was not crucified—then we are teaching the Jesus of Islam.

Jesus' purpose for coming to earth was to save us from our sins. (Matt. 1:21) Jesus came to die to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus came to die so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus came to die to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

Jesus died on the cross to satisfy the wrath of God toward sin. His resurrection proved that God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice. If Jesus had died but not been raised up, He would have been like military leaders who died without a throne. (Acts 5:33-37) But Jesus conquered death, just as He said He would. (John 2:19-21) If there was no resurrection, Paul says, our faith would be worthless. We would be dead in our sins. (1 Cor. 15:17)

But Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for our resurrection. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life. (Rom. 8:11)

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 do not worship a dead Savior. Jesus is alive! There is hope for sinners. Jesus' resurrection gives believers the promise of new life. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Cor. 15:22).

The Bible Story

After Jesus was arrested, He 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 and said, "Do whatever you want."

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, 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 men guarding Jesus' body 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."

Jesus appeared to Peter and then to the other disciples. Jesus also appeared to more than 500 people who followed Him. Many people witnessed that Jesus is alive!

Part One: Introduce the Story

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 discuss what their family does to celebrate Easter. Steer conversations away from secular traditions to help kids focus on the true reason for Easter.

Say · Easter is a wonderful holiday on which we celebrate the most amazing thing that has ever happened: Jesus' resurrection from the dead. Many people have different ways they celebrate Easter, but Christians all over the world are all celebrating the same thing: Jesus' victory over death!

Activity page

Invite kids to complete the "Bleak and Beautiful" activity page. Guide kids to color the sheet according to the number key.

Say · The day Jesus died on the cross is called Good Friday. It was a very sad day, but we call it good because it was the day Jesus took our place and died on the cross for our sins. It was both sad and beautiful.

Session Starter

Option 1: Crime and punishment

Direct the kids to come up with silly rules and silly punishments to go along with those rules if they are broken. For example, you could say that there is a new rule that you may not bend your elbows; if you bend your elbows, you will have to hold your hands over your head for two days.

SAY · Those crimes were silly, and the silly punishments fit alongside the crimes. Today we will learn about Jesus. His punishment was severe and very serious, but He did not commit any crime at all. Why do you think Jesus was punished severely if He was not guilty?

Option 2: Empty tomb

Use chairs and tables to provide structure for a pillow fort. Stack pillows or cushions against the furniture and drape blankets over the structure to make a kind of "cave." Allow the kids to take turns going into the cave. To ensure everyone's safety, do not allow any kids to play unsupervised in the pillow fort and ensure no adult leader enters the fort one-on-one with a kid.

Say · Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb. Jesus' tomb would have been kind of like a cave; the Bible tells us it was cut into the side of a rocky hill. We took turns going into our little tomb and coming out, and today we will hear about how Jesus came out of His tomb. A little while later, some other people also went in the tomb and came out.

Teach the Story

Introduce the Bible story

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–28; 1 Corinthians 15. 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 · He is risen! For thousands of years, Christians have used this phrase as a greeting and a way to declare the good news. When you hear a person say "He is risen," you can respond by saying "He is risen indeed." Let's try that together; I'll say the first part, and you respond with the second part. Ready? He is Risen! [Allow responses, coaxing kids to say "He is risen indeed."] Great job!

The crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection on the third day make up the center of the one big story of the Bible. Ever since Adam and Eve chose to rebel against God and eat the fruit He commanded them not to eat, all of creation has been broken. People could no longer have a loving relationship with God without multiple sacrifices every year. For generations, it seemed as though evil might eventually win. When Jesus—the only perfect Person, who is God the Son—died, it looked like evil actually had won. But in a wonderful turn of events, God brought about the ultimate defeat of sin and death when Jesus' heart began to beat and His lungs filled with fresh breath. Jesus was alive!

He is still alive today. He will never again die because His sacrifice for sin is perfect and complete. He took the punishment of God's anger for sin on Himself. He died with it, taking it away from everyone who believes in Him. Then He rose from the dead without it. The sin stayed dead, but Jesus did not. Now we can live forever too. Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.

Christ connection

Leader · Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. In Adam, we were spiritually dead in sin, but Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives new life to everyone who trusts in Jesus. The Bible tells us that when we trust in Jesus, our sin was put to death with Jesus, and we have new, resurrected hearts.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Easter, Session 2" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we forgive others. Guide them to discuss if there are ever times we do not have to forgive others.

Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show "The Gospel" missions video. Ask kids to describe things we can tell other people about Jesus. (He was born on earth; He is fully God and fully human; He died on a cross for our sins; He rose to life; He wants everyone to be with Him in heaven forever; and so forth.)

Leader • The gospel—the good news of Jesus—is the reason that missionaries go all over the world. They want to be obedient to take the gospel to all people, even those who are very hard to reach. Missionaries sacrifice a lot so other people can know that Jesus’ resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Lead the boys and girls to read together John 3:30. Then sing “He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease (John 3:30).”

Leader • John the Baptist knew that Jesus is most important. John did not want his life to be about bringing glory to himself. He wanted to give all glory to Jesus, the only Person who deserves all glory! That’s why John said that he must decrease while Jesus must increase.

Sing (4 minutes)

Leader • In the Bible, Jesus teaches that there is no greater way to show love than to sacrifice your life to save someone else’s. Jesus showed this love perfectly when He died for our sins and rose again to give us eternal life. Let’s praise Him, the best friend we can have.

Sing together “Take It to the Lord.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

Leader • Father, thank You for the wonderful gift of salvation. We know that we could never earn such a perfect love. We praise You for giving it to us anyway. Help s love You and celebrate what Jesus has done. Give us hearts that want to obey. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

Bleak and Beautiful

INSTRUCTIONS: Color the picture using the number key below.



Younger Kids Activity Pages
Easter • Session 2
Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- The religious leaders in Jesus' day refused to believe that He is the Messiah.
- The religious leaders hated Jesus and had Him arrested.
- Jesus died on the cross even though He never sinned.
- Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.

KEY PASSAGE: John 3:30

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Why did Jesus become human?
Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Jesus have to die?
- What did Jesus defeat when He rose from the dead?
- Who can we tell about Jesus' death and resurrection?

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Use craft sticks and glue to make wooden crosses with your kids. Talk about how the cross was a symbol of death, but through Jesus it is now a symbol of hope for eternity.



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