



Use Week of:

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.

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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.

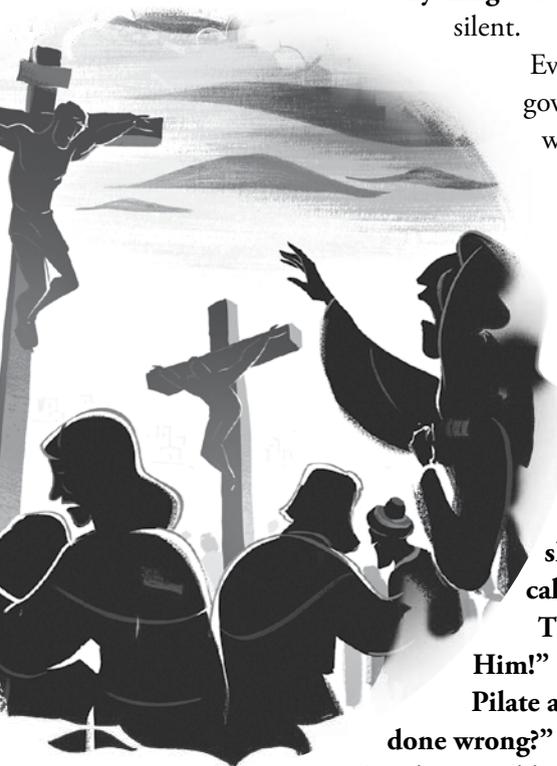
The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion

Matthew 26–27; John 18–19

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.

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.

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.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: 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.

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 times they did something to help someone else.

SAY • Helping others is a great way to show you love them and God. Sometimes, we might have to sacrifice, or give up, something we enjoy in order to help someone else. For example, to help your parents prepare dinner, you may have to give up some time you would have spent playing with your friends. Today we will learn about the greatest sacrifice—and show of love—that has ever happened. Can you guess what it is?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Connect the Cross” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the “Connect the Cross” activity page. Invite the kids to draw lines to connect the dots in numerical order.

SAY • When you finished, those dots revealed three crosses. Today we will learn about Jesus’ death on a cross. He was killed alongside criminals, but He never sinned.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Crime and punishment

Write silly ideas for crimes on index cards, such as eating too many bananas, wearing more than one hat at a time, or sleeping in your shoes. Allow the kids to take turns drawing cards and brainstorming ideas for punishments that might fit the given crime. End the game with a card that says *live a perfectly holy and obedient life*.

SAY • Obviously, none of those crimes were really illegal. No one will be punished for eating too many bananas, though if you do, you could get a stomachache. But that last card was especially odd. Today we will learn about a time Jesus was punished despite living a perfectly holy and obedient life.

OPTION 2: Ink blob art

Before the session, place a small blob of black ink near the center of each sheet of heavyweight paper. Fold the sheets in half, forcing the ink to spread into an abstract shape. Unfold the sheets and allow them to dry. During the session, distribute an ink blob sheet to each kid. Give them time to turn their blob into an artwork using crayons, markers, or colored pencils.

SAY • Those blobs of ink looked like mistakes. Even so, you were able to turn them into wonderful works of art. In a similar way, God can take any sad, scary, or difficult situation and turn it into something wonderful. Today we will learn about the saddest day in history and why we call that day *Good Friday*.

LOW PREP

- index cards
- pens

- heavyweight paper,
1 sheet per kid
- black ink
- crayons, markers, or
colored pencils

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
• gavel

[Leader enters wearing a long black robe and carrying a gavel. He or she looks very sad.]

LEADER • Hello, everyone. I'm glad you are here.

Sometimes being a judge is really difficult. It always feels good to help justice flow through our nation, but at times the weight of this job can feel unbearable. When you hear about some of the awful things people do, it can feel like there's no hope. Thankfully, I know that no matter what crimes are committed or how hard it might be to ensure the bad guys are always caught and prosecuted fairly, there is always hope.

The hope we have doesn't come from a criminal justice system. It doesn't come from laws or government. It doesn't come from lawyers, judges, or any people at all. It comes from God. Our hope comes from the work that Jesus did to save us.

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

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • That brings us to our big picture question and answer. *What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.* We have hope because of God's perfect plan to send His Son, Jesus. He lived a life without any sin, perfectly obeying all of God's laws. He died the death we deserve to die, as though He were a criminal guilty of sin. Then, He rose again to prove His sacrifice was perfect and complete. When we have faith in Jesus, God says we are righteous with Jesus' righteousness and gives us eternal life. Hope comes from the truth of the gospel.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • You may remember that a few weeks back we learned about Jesus' triumphal entry. **People welcomed Jesus to Jerusalem as their King.** They sang praises to Him and followed Him lovingly. When the religious leaders tried to trick Him, **Jesus spoke with wisdom and authority.** While eating the Passover meal, **Jesus commanded His disciples to remember His sacrifice.** Then, Jesus went to pray in the garden, where Judas betrayed Him. **Jesus allowed His enemies to arrest Him.** Today, we'll see what happened after Jesus' enemies arrested Him.

· Bibles

· "Jesus' Crucifixion" video

· Big Picture Question Poster

· Bible Story Picture Poster

· Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–27; John 18–19. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help

you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Jesus’ Crucifixion.”

LEADER • This story is the saddest story in the history of the world. All people are guilty of sin, and the Bible teaches that we all deserve death. Jesus is the only Person who ever lived who did not deserve death, and He experienced one of the saddest and most painful kinds of death.

Though a week before the people had praised Jesus, now the crowds laughed at Him, called Him names, and demanded that Pilate nail Him to a cross. The people even called for a murderer named Barabbas to be set free. They preferred a dangerous criminal be on the loose rather than Jesus.

It’s important to realize that Jesus could have stopped the whole process at any time if He had chosen to. Jesus could have explained to Pilate how He had not broken any laws. He could have used His power as God to instantly transport Himself away from His enemies. But instead, Jesus chose to let the evil plan happen. Jesus knew that the evil plan of His enemies was just a small piece of God’s wonderful, unstoppable plan!

And so, Jesus carried a cross to a hill outside the city and allowed the Romans to nail His hands and feet to it. **Jesus died on the cross for our sins**—on purpose, of His own free will.

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • 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.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 26, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why we do good deeds. Guide them to discuss the ways doing good things can point others to Jesus.

· “Unit 26, Session 5”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Display the “Connect 2020” printable and read the three goals of that ministry to the kids.

· “Connect 2020”
printable

LEADER • The Bible teaches us that **Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins**. This is what we want to teach people all over the world. Missionaries in Japan knew they would have a unique opportunity to reach many nations during the Olympics. They created a ministry called Connect 2020 to direct their Olympic missions efforts. Even though the 2020 Olympics are over, the missionary efforts in Japan are still going. We can be a part of them by praying for the missionaries working there and the people who will hear the gospel.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Philippians 2:8. Then sing the key passage song.

· Key Passage Poster
· “He Humbled Himself
(Philippians 2:8)”
song

LEADER • We learned today about the story our key passage is based on. Paul explained that Jesus didn’t die because He deserved to or because He had no control

over the situation. Jesus died on the cross because He was obedient to God's plan—100 percent, all the way. We have forgiveness and eternal life because of Jesus' perfect obedience, including His death and resurrection.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Jesus Saves" song

LEADER • Jesus is the wonderful Savior God sent for us. We do not deserve Him, but because of God's grace, we don't have to work to earn salvation. Faith is a gift from God. Let's sing praises to Him.

Sing together "Jesus Saves."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Father, thank You for sending Jesus. Thank You that He obeyed Your plan. Thank You for loving us and giving us grace. Help us obey You as Jesus did and love You with all our hearts, minds, and strength. 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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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What did Jesus do to save us? Jesus lived a sinless life, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- pool noodles, 2
- scissors
- permanent markers
- hula hoops

Before the session, cut the pool noodles into sections that are about two inches in length. Write each word of the key passage on a section of pool noodle. Cut a slit along each section of noodle so that they can be placed onto a hula hoop. During the session, challenge the kids to place the key passage on the hula hoop in order. Then allow volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Praise each kid's efforts and encourage kids to continue working to memorize the key passage.

SAY • **Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins.** God could have chosen to allow all of us to die apart from Him, but Jesus obeyed God's plan and came to earth to rescue us. Jesus is the perfect example of what obedience and love looks like. He is our Savior.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

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

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help kids find John 19. Consider using the New Testament Israel Map to point our 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:

1. How many men were crucified with Jesus? (*two, John 19:18*)
2. What did the sign over Jesus' cross say? (**JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS**; *John 19:19*)
3. What did Jesus say right before He died? ("*It is finished,*" *John 19:30*)
4. 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.*
5. 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.*
6. 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!

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

LOW PREP

· yarn

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

· adhesive price tags
· pens
· play money
· toys, games, or classroom supplies

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Missions connections

Instruct the kids to spread out around the room. Give a ball of yarn to one kid. Encourage the kids to pass the ball of yarn across the circle to others, holding onto the string each time so that it begins forming a web. Continue this until all the kids are connected by the string.

SAY • Through missions, we can be connected with people all over the world and even throughout history.

When we are committed to sharing the gospel, God will connect us with many opportunities and people all over the world. For example, through ministries like Connect 2020, God has connected churches in the U.S. with churches in Japan, Olympic athletes, and tourists who visited Japan to watch the 2020 Olympics. God uses these connections to spread the gospel and build His kingdom.

OPTION 2: The ultimate price

Write various prices on the price tags and label different toys, games, or classroom supplies in the room. Provide the kids with play money and help them use their play money to “purchase” different objects to play with. After a few minutes, gather the kids to discuss their purchase choices.

SAY • You all had different reasons for buying the toys and games you bought. In our story today, we learned about the price Jesus paid to rescue us from sin.

Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins. There was no other way for us to have forgiveness and eternal life with God. Jesus showed His incredible love for us by paying the ultimate price.

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.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring 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.