



Use Week of:

Easter • 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.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit ministrygrid.com/gospelproject.

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

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28; 1 Corinthians 15

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.

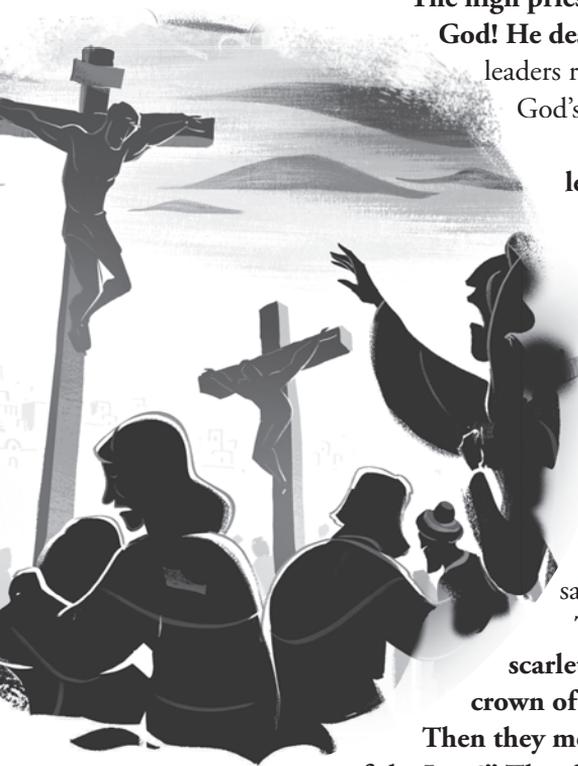
“What should I do with Jesus?” Pilate asked the crowd. “Crucify Him!” they answered. Pilate did not think Jesus had done anything wrong, but he handed Jesus over and said, “Do whatever you want.”

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!**

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.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Draw pictures:** Sketch symbols as you tell the story—a question mark for Jesus’ trial, a cross for His death, a rising sun for His resurrection, and so on.
- **Use lighting effects:** Begin the story with lights dimmed. Raise the lights when telling of Jesus’ resurrection.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: 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.

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 think about ways they can show love to their friends and family members. How can they tell if someone else loves them?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "He's Alive!" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete "He's Alive!" on the activity page. Guide kids to find the path from the cross to the tomb and then to Jesus.

SAY • Today's Bible story is about Jesus' journey from the cross to the grave and then out again! We will find out more about what happened.

LOW PREP

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Silent sillies

Choose a kid to stand at the front of the room. Whisper a phrase in her ear and challenge her to act it out silently. The rest of the kids should shout out what they think is happening. When a kid guesses correctly, she gets to act out the next phrase. Play several rounds.

Suggested phrases: *playing baseball, delivering mail, landing an airplane, flying a kite, playing chess, baking bread, scuba diving, watering a garden, finger-painting, building a campfire, shopping at the mall, dancing a ballet*

SAY • Sometimes what you thought was happening and what was actually happening didn't quite match. In today's Bible story, we will hear about a time when people thought Jesus had been defeated by His enemies. But that wasn't the true story.

OPTION 2: It's empty

Place a rock or paper wad beneath two of three inverted cups while the kids are watching. Try to confuse the kids by quickly rearranging the cups in front of them. After several seconds, ask the kids which cup they think is empty.

- rocks or paper wads, 2
- opaque cups, 3

To make the game more difficult, turn away from the kids and mix up the cups. Then ask one person to guess which cup is empty. Allow her to poll the rest of the group to see if they agree. Then lift the cup she chose to show whether or not it is empty. Play as time allows.

SAY • In the Bible story we will hear today, some of Jesus' friends went to the tomb and expected to find His body there. But the tomb was empty!

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
· bandanna
· Bible

[Leader enters quickly, carrying a bandanna and a Bible. Leader wipes his or her forehead and appears out of breath.]

LEADER • Whew! I was not sure I was going to make it in today. I was driving along when all of a sudden I saw a large boulder roll off a cliff ahead of me, and it landed right in the roadway! Thankfully it didn't hit any cars! But the road was partially blocked until the department of transportation could come out and move the boulder. They used some powerful machinery to move it out of the way enough to get traffic flowing again. I can't imagine what people did before the invention of strong machines. There's no way a person could move a rock that big on his own!

You know, that makes me think of the Bible story we are going to hear today. This story happened more than two thousand years ago. It involves a large stone that was rolled away from the entrance of a tomb.

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

But no construction trucks were involved. Let's find out what happened.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Raise your hand if you remember our big picture question. [*Call on a volunteer.*] That's right. **Why did Jesus become human?** That's an important question to think about because Jesus came to earth for us. Why? Here's the answer: **Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.** God the Son didn't come down because we were so awesome that He wanted to hang out with us; He loved us, and we needed Him!

Giant timeline (1 minute)

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

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • We are pausing in our timeline to hear today's Bible story, but let's look back at some recent stories. All the stories of the Bible actually point to the story we are going to hear. We've been hearing about how Jesus came into the world and how **Jesus obeyed God by being baptized.** Jesus wanted to do God's plan all along, and today's story—the story of Jesus' death and resurrection—show how Jesus carried out that plan.

• Bibles

• "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video

• Big Picture Question Poster

• Bible Story Picture Poster

• Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

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 • Jesus was the solution for a very big problem: the problem of sin. Ever since sin entered the world with Adam and Eve, everything has been affected. Our sin separates us from God, and no matter how hard we try to be good or to do the right thing, we cannot get back to God on our own. And the Bible says the punishment for sin is death.

That's bad news. But when sin entered the world, God did not leave people on their own to suffer the consequences and die, separated from Him forever. He made a promise that He would send a Savior. God did. He sent His Son to be born into the world as a baby. Jesus grew up and taught people the truth about God. Some people believed Him, but many did not.

Jesus never sinned, but He was arrested and crucified on a cross. When Jesus died, He took the punishment we deserve for our sins—past, present, and future.

Then something amazing happened. On the third day, Jesus came to life again. Who went to visit Jesus' tomb? Look at Matthew 28:1. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*] An angel told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead. Then Jesus appeared to the women! What did Jesus tell the women to do? Look at Matthew 28:10. [*Allow kids to read the verse and respond.*]

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 109 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus showed that He has power over sin and death. God accepted Jesus' payment for sin, so everyone who trusts in Him can be forgiven and have

eternal life. **Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.**

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.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Easter, Session 2" questions from kids video. Prompt kids to consider why Jesus died. Guide them to discuss whether or not Christians should always forgive.

• "Easter, Session 2" questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Show "The Gospel" missions video and then ask kids to describe things we should tell other people about Jesus. (*He was born on earth, He died on a cross for our sins, He rose to life, He wants everyone to be with Him in heaven forever*)

• "The Gospel" missions video

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 so that others can hear about Jesus and know that Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life. Lead a brief prayer for missionaries your church supports.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together John 3:30.

LEADER • When Jesus started His ministry, John the Baptist pointed people to Him. The King had come, and He was the very Word of God. At best, John could

• Key Passage Poster
• "He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease (John 3:30)" song

point people to Jesus, and say, “I am not Jesus! But look, there He is!” Jesus must increase because He is from heaven and is above all. He is the best and no one compares. Jesus spoke of what he had seen and heard from God the Father. Like John, we should say, “Jesus must increase!”

Lead boys and girls in singing “He Must Increase, but I Must Decrease (John 3:30).”

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Jesus Messiah” song
• Bible

Open your Bible and read aloud Hebrews 1:3.

LEADER • Jesus is amazing. Not only does He show us exactly what God is like, He holds everything together. He came to earth and paid the price for our sins by dying on the cross. He rose from the dead on the third day, later ascended into heaven, and then He sat down at the right hand of God the Father. He deserves our praise! Let’s sing.

Sing together “Jesus Messiah.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, You are mighty. With Your power, You raised Jesus from the dead. We praise You, Jesus, because You have power over sin and death. Help us to remember the cross and the empty tomb every day. When we trust in You, You give us new life. We feel the effects of sin in the world, but we have hope of life with You forever. Give us boldness to share this good news with the world. We love You. 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: Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- sticky notes

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud John 3:30 together. Choose a volunteer to cover one of the words on the poster with a sticky note. Guide kids to say the key passage again, filling in the covered word from memory. Allow another volunteer to cover another word. Repeat until kids recite the key passage from memory.

SAY • Can anyone explain what these words mean? [*Allow kids to respond.*] John the Baptist was speaking to his followers who were asking questions about Jesus. John's mission was to get people ready for Jesus, so John wanted people to follow Jesus! ***Why did Jesus become human? Jesus became human to obey His Father's plan and rescue sinners.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to 1 Corinthians 15. Explain that the apostle Paul wrote 1 Corinthians as a letter to believers in Corinth about 20 years after Jesus' death and resurrection. He wanted to remind believers what was true. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Corinthians 15:3-5.

SAY • In these verses, Paul shares the gospel—the good news about Jesus. This is the most important news ever! Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He was raised on the third day.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why is it important that Jesus didn't stay dead but He came back to life? *Lead kids to recognize that Jesus' resurrection proved that God accepted Jesus' death as the payment for sin. It shows His victory over sin and death. Paul said if there was no resurrection, we would still be dead in our sins. (1 Cor. 15:17) Jesus' resurrection gives us hope that we too will be resurrected one day.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 8:11.)

2. How do we know Jesus is alive? Where is He today? *Guide kids to recall that after Jesus rose from the dead, He appeared to the women and the twelve disciples as well as more than 500 other people. Emphasize that we ultimately believe by faith in Jesus' resurrection. Today, Jesus is alive in heaven. One day, He will return to set up His kingdom forever.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Acts 7:55-56.)

3. How does the fact that Jesus' tomb is empty affect how we live today? *Prompt kids to consider the reality that Jesus has conquered sin and death, providing forgiveness to all who trust in Him. The empty tomb shows that God is faithful, powerful, and loving. Because Jesus is alive, we can live with confidence that our future with Him is secure. **Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for eternal life.** We can live with a purpose—to know God and make Him known. We have hope even in hard circumstances.*

(Option: Choose a kid to read 1 Cor. 15:57-58.)

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

Activity choice (10 minutes)

- small clay or plastic flower pots, 1 per kid
- stickers
- markers

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

Note: Consider asking parents or church members to donate travel-size toiletry items for a mission project included in session 3 of this unit.



OPTION 1: Make a flower pot

If your church participates in a missions offering at Easter, like the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, tell your kids about your church's role in giving to missions this time of year. Giving even small offerings is one way that kids can be involved in supporting missions.

Distribute pots and invite kids to decorate a flower pot to use at home to collect coins.

SAY • Giving money is one way that we can support missionaries. That's why our church gives offerings to missions. We help to provide things like food, transportation, housing, and Bibles in different languages. It's one way that we can help missionaries who share the message of Jesus' death and resurrection with people who do not know.

Suggest that kids collect coins over the next month and add their offerings to the flower pots. Plan a time of collecting their offerings and presenting them to the church to use for missions.

LOW PREP

- poster board, 5 pieces
- crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- Bibles
- Gospel Plan Poster

OPTION 2: Gospel plan posters

Form five groups of kids. Give each group a piece of poster board; a copy of the Gospel Plan Poster; a Bible; and crayons, markers, or colored pencils. Review the gospel plan with kids. Then assign each group one of the sections on the poster:

1. God rules.
2. We sinned.
3. God provided.
4. Jesus gives.
5. We respond.

Instruct each group to design a poster featuring their section's logo, heading, and words from the Scripture passage. Then invite groups to share their posters in order.

SAY • *Gospel* means “good news!” Jesus’ death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. We are born into Adam’s family as sinners. In Adam, we were spiritually dead in sin, but Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God adopts us into His family and gives new life to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

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?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for the gift of salvation through His Son and for the hope of life with Him forever.

As time allows, lead kids to complete “Easter Scramble” on the activity page. Kids should unscramble the key words from today’s Bible story.

• pencils
• Journal Page
• “Easter Scramble” activity 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.