

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

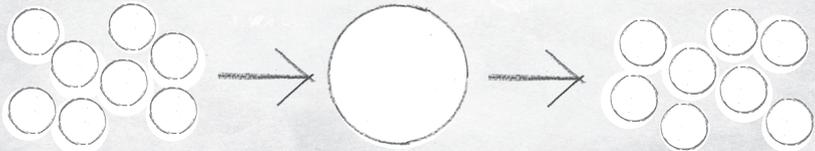
MAIN POINT: Jesus died on the cross and is alive.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Jesus saves us from sin.

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SMALL GROUP OPENING (15–20 MINUTES) **LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY** (10–15 MINUTES) **SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES** (20–25 MINUTES)
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Leader BIBLE STUDY

God's law for the people was plain. Read Deuteronomy 6:5. But God's people, and all people, have broken the law. We have loved other things more than we love God. That is sin.

Jesus' purpose for coming to earth was to save us from our sin. (Matt. 1:21) Why did Jesus have to die? Why couldn't He just say, "You are forgiven"? God is just and requires due payment for sin. To simply forgive sin without requiring a payment would be unjust. According to God's Word, the payment of sin is death. (Rom. 6:23) But not only is God just, He is also loving. That is why Jesus was willing to die in our place.

Jesus came to die to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him might 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. Jesus' resurrection proved that God was satisfied with Jesus' sacrifice, and forgiveness and life are found in Him. (See 1 Cor. 15:17.) 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)

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for our resurrection. (Rom. 6:5) And Romans 8:11 says that the same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life.

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are not the end of the story, but the center of it. Everything that was written about Jesus in the Old Testament and spoken by the prophets was coming true. As you teach preschoolers this Bible story, emphasize the gospel: the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done.



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

The BIBLE STORY

Bible Storytelling Tips

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

• Use sensory items:

Ask a small group leader to bring the items from the “Guess the item in the bag” activity on page 97 to large group. Give the items to children to hold during the story. Guide preschoolers to listen carefully and bring the items to you when you read that part of the story.

• Shout the big picture answer:

Invite children to shout the big picture answer, *Jesus saves us from sin*, when they hear parts of the Bible story where Jesus followed God's plan.

Jesus and His friends went to a garden to pray. Jesus was very sad. He prayed to God: “My Father! If it is possible, let Me save Your people another way. But if this is Your plan, I will do it!” While Jesus prayed, His friends fell asleep. “Get up,” Jesus said. “It is time.”

Then Judas, one of Jesus' friends, came with a large crowd. Judas kissed Jesus to show the crowd which person was Jesus. The men in the crowd arrested Jesus. Peter tried to stop the men, but Jesus told Peter not to fight them. Jesus knew this was all a part of God's plan.

Jesus' followers ran away, but Peter stayed nearby and watched. Three times, people saw Peter and said, “Aren't you friends with Jesus?” Peter said, “No! I am not His friend!”

Jesus was taken to the high priest. “Are You really the Messiah, the Son of God?” the high priest asked.

“Yes, you are right,” Jesus said.

“He has spoken against God! He deserves to die!” the men said. They did not believe Jesus was God's Son.

When morning came, the men took Jesus to see Pilate (PIGH luht), the governor. “Are You the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked.

“Yes, you are right,” Jesus said.

“What should I do with Jesus?” Pilate asked. “Kill Him on a cross!” the people replied. “Crucify Him!”

Pilate's **soldiers** made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head. “If You are a king, You need to dress like a king!” they said. They put a purple robe around Him and pretended to bow down to Him. Then they **led Jesus away** to kill Him.

Jesus was nailed to a cross. They put a sign above Jesus' head that said: **THIS IS JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS.** Two criminals were crucified next to Jesus.

Darkness covered the land. In the afternoon, Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus died. Jesus was buried in a tomb. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb, and Pilate's soldiers guarded the tomb so that no one would steal Jesus' body.

On the third day, two of Jesus' friends, both named Mary, went to the tomb. They were very sad. Suddenly there was a big earthquake as an angel came down from heaven. The angel rolled away the stone and sat on it. The guards fainted.

The angel spoke to the women, "Do not be afraid! You are looking for Jesus, who died. He is not here! He has been raised from the dead, just as He said He would. He is heading to Galilee, and you will see Him there."

The women were so happy! Jesus wasn't dead anymore—He was alive! Just then, Jesus met them. He said, "Good morning!" The women worshiped Him. Jesus told them, "Do not be afraid anymore. Go and tell My friends to go to Galilee. I will meet them there."

Christ Connection: The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was punished because we sinned. God forgives us for sin because Jesus died for us. God raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that the women who went to the tomb thought Jesus' story was over, but they were wrong. The angel confirmed: Jesus is not dead; He is alive! (Matt. 28:6) Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

MAIN POINT: Jesus died on the cross and is alive.

KEY PASSAGE: Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who saves us from our sin? Jesus saves us from sin.

Welcome time

- “Jesus Paid It All (Whiter Than Snow)” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “Which Does Not Belong?” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Invite preschoolers to draw an *X* over the item in each row that does not belong.

SAY • Last week we learned how **people welcomed Jesus as their King** when He came into Jerusalem. In today's Bible story, some terrible things happened to Jesus that you would not expect to happen to the King over everything. But everything that happened to Jesus was part of God's plan to rescue the world from sin.

Look for living and nonliving things

Set out an assortment of magazines for preschoolers to examine. Be sure to remove any advertisements or content that might be inappropriate for preschool eyes. Provide a



- magazines
- markers

marker for each preschooler. Invite preschoolers to look through the magazines, circling things that are alive and drawing an *X* over things that are not alive. Provide guidance and further explanation when needed.

SAY • Only God can give life. In today's Bible story, God's very own Son, Jesus, died. Jesus was the One who was supposed to save His people! How could Jesus rescue people now? But God did the most wonderful thing that has ever happened: He made Jesus alive again! When Jesus died and came back to life, He saved the world from sin once and for all. Listen to today's Bible story to hear how Jesus rescued the world.

Guess the item in the bag

Place each individual item in a lunch-size brown paper bag. Pass around one bag and let the children feel inside the bag without looking. After everyone has had a turn to touch the item, let children guess what is inside. Continue with each bag. Finally, pass around an empty bag.

SAY • The items in these bags are things we will hear about in today's Bible story. Why do you think the last bag was empty? [*Allow preschoolers to guess.*] Listen to find out what else was empty in today's Bible story.

- lunch-size brown paper bag
- blunt-tipped nail
- toy crown
- cross
- rock
- purple fabric

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite children to cup their hands around their ears to get ready to hear the most important story ever.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

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Introduce the Bible story

SAY • We are going to practice greeting each other the way believers in Jesus have greeted each other for many, many years, especially on Easter morning. When I say, “He is risen!” You say, “He is risen indeed!” Practice a few times, starting in a whisper and getting louder until preschoolers can shout, “He is risen indeed!”

Watch or tell the Bible story

Place a bookmark in Matthew or John in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • Today’s Bible story is the most important story in all of the Bible. This story has the greatest news there has ever been or will ever be, and the best part about this story is that it is true!

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling helps. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • Many terrible things happened to Jesus, but it was all part of God’s plan. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** Jesus loves us so much He went through all those horrible things so He could rescue us from sin once and for all. Jesus is alive! One day, Jesus will

- bookmark
- Bible
- “Jesus’ Crucifixion and Resurrection” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

come back and we will be with Him forever.

Point to the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Where was Jesus' body put after He died? (*in a tomb*)
2. Why did soldiers guard Jesus' tomb? (*so that no one would steal Jesus' body*)
3. Who went to the tomb on the third day? (*Jesus' two friends named Mary*)
4. What did the angel tell the two Marys? (*Jesus had been raised from the dead. He was alive!*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • *Who saves us from our sins? Jesus saves us from sin.*

The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead. Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was punished because we sinned. God forgives us for sin because Jesus died for us. God raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Romans 10:9. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song, "If You Confess."

SAY • Here, *Lord* means our God and King. Jesus is our God and King. Our key passage says that if we believe that Jesus is our God and King and that He died and came back to life to save us from sin, we will be forgiven and have life forever with Jesus.

• Key Passage Poster
• "If You Confess" song

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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Answer “Who am I?”

Say the following statements and invite preschoolers to guess the person. When a preschooler knows the answer, he should remain quiet and touch his nose.

- I kissed Jesus in front of the large crowd I brought to arrest Him. Who am I? (*Judas*)
- I stayed and watched after Jesus was arrested. I told people three times that I was not Jesus' friend. Who am I? (*Peter*)
- I was the governor. I asked the people what I should do with Jesus. They said to crucify Him, so I did. Who am I? (*Pilate*)
- We went to Jesus' tomb. An angel told us Jesus had been raised from the dead. Then we saw Jesus! Who are we? (*the two Marys*)
- I never did anything wrong, but I was punished because My people sinned. I was killed, but I did not stay dead. I came back to life to save sinners. (*Jesus*)
- I raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything. Who am I? (*God*)

SAY • **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** Jesus was punished because we sinned. God forgives us for sin because Jesus died for us. God raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything.

Place “sins” on a cross

Use painter’s tape to form a large cross on your classroom wall at preschoolers’ height. Invite preschoolers to tell you sins or wrong choices people make. Make it personal by asking preschoolers what they do wrong. If they point out what friends or siblings do wrong, gently redirect them to themselves.

Write the sins down on colored sticky notes and guide the preschoolers to stick them to the cross. Tell preschoolers sins you committed this past week too, and write them down on the sticky notes as well. When the cross is covered with “sin” notes, take each note down, and replace each with a white sticky note labeled *JESUS*. Make a show of wadding up the “sin” notes and throwing them away.

SAY • God forgives our sin because Jesus died on the cross to take the punishment for sin. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** I made sure we removed all of the sins we wrote down because when we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus, He takes away all of our sin and gives us His holiness.

- colorful sticky notes
- white sticky notes
- marker
- painter’s tape

Make stained glass art

Place a sheet of clear contact plastic sticky side up in front of each preschooler. Give children four strips of construction paper (one inch wide) to place on the edges of the plastic to make a frame. Invite children to tear pieces or cut shapes from colorful tissue paper to stick to the plastic. Write the main point on each preschooler’s frame. When completed, place another sheet of clear contact plastic on top of the tissue paper to seal the artwork.

SAY • Today we celebrate that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive**, but the good news about Jesus is news we

- clear contact plastic, 2 per child
- construction paper strips
- colorful tissue paper
- blunt-tipped scissors (optional)
- markers

need to think about every day! You can hang your art in a window at home to help you remember that Jesus died on the cross for sin and God raised Him from the dead.

- white cloth
- thick blanket

Look in the empty tomb

Fold the white cloth and place it under a table. Lay a thick blanket over the table to form a tomb. Invite preschoolers to take turns running to the table, looking under it, and saying, “He is not here! He has been raised from the dead!”

SAY • The cloths that Jesus’ body was wrapped in were in the tomb, but Jesus’s body was not. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** God’s plan all along was for Jesus to die on the cross for sin and for God to raise Him from the dead. God forgives us of sin because Jesus died for us! Jesus lives as King over everything!

- puzzles depicting people

Work people puzzles

Set out an assortment of puzzles depicting people. As preschoolers work, talk about how all people are sinners, but Jesus died and rose again to save sinners.

SAY • Every person who ever lived has sinned except for One—Jesus! Jesus never did anything wrong, but He was punished because we sinned. God forgives us of sin because Jesus died for us. The most important thing that ever happened is that Jesus died and was raised from the dead, and He did it for people like us. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.**

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

For snack, place several apple slices in a ziplock bag for each preschooler. Invite preschoolers to shake some cinnamon in their bag. Seal the bag and guide preschoolers to gently shake it to distribute the cinnamon. Preschoolers may open their bag and eat their apples. Explain to preschoolers cinnamon is a spice and the Bible tells us that the two Marys were bringing spices to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body, but Jesus was not there! Jesus had risen from the dead. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive!**

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes her snack, guide her to throw away any trash. She may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a cross or the empty tomb. Talk about how God raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything. Pray for the children.

SAY • God, of all the many good things You have given us, Jesus' dying on the cross for our sins is the very best. Thank You for making Jesus alive again so we can know He is our Savior. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers