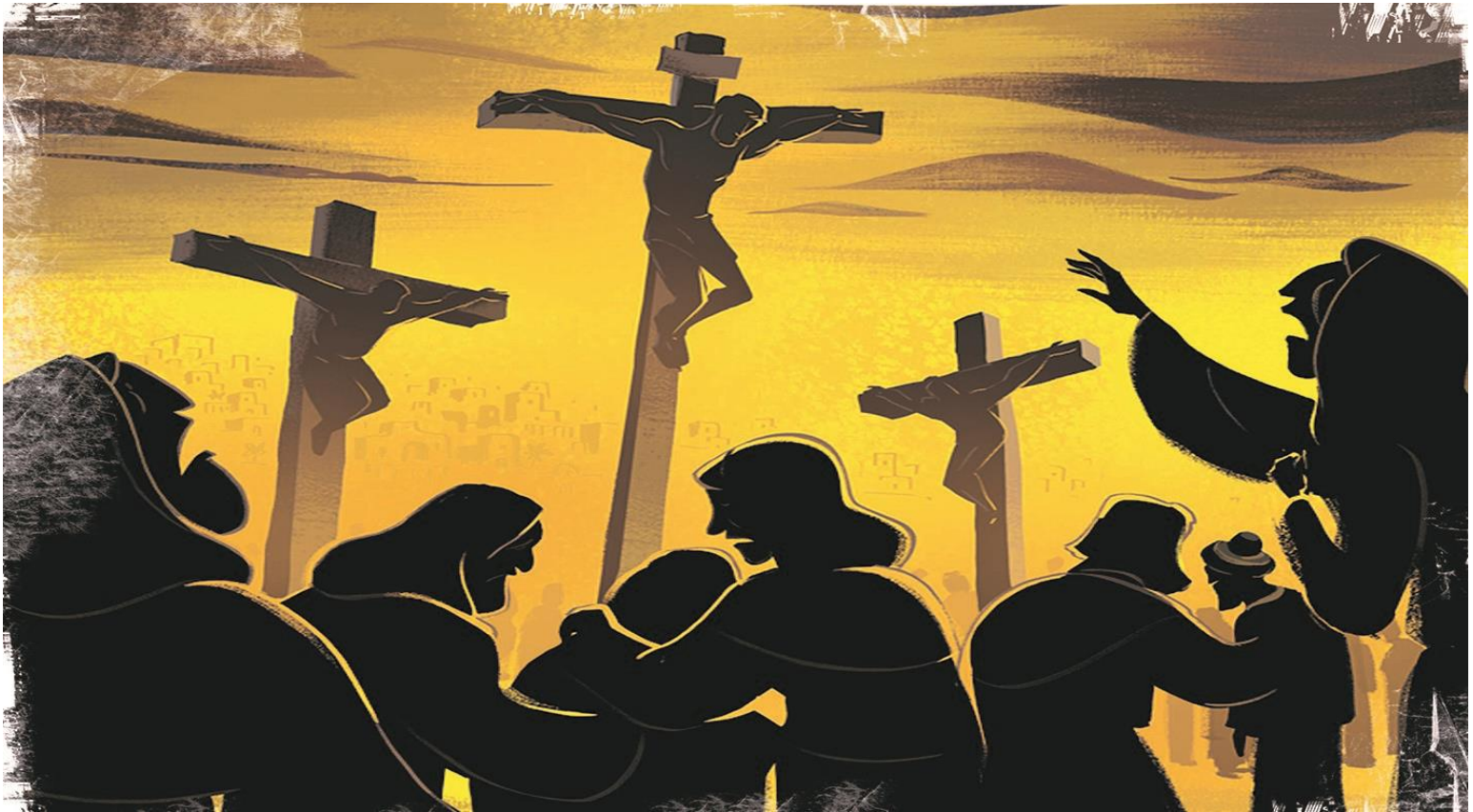




PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



Easter | SESSION 1

Jesus Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26-28

KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 10:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who saves us from our sin? Only Jesus saves us from sin.

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.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



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.



WELCOME Kids

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.

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

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.

2 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.

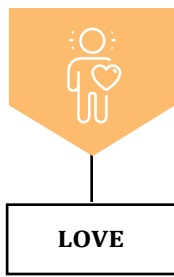
The first player will ask another player for a certain card. (“Do you have any 2s?”) If the player has any of that card, he must surrender them to the first player. If not, the player should reply, “Not here!” The first player will take a card from the facedown pile. Play passes to the left.

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 from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**



Easter Young Kids Session 1



THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

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.**

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY 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.)

SAY *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.)

SAY *What does it look like to "lay down your life" for someone else?*

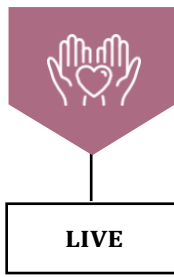
Prompt kids to think of situations in which they can put others' needs before their own. Point out that kids can lay down their lives even while they live, reflecting the servant attitude of Jesus.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 15:13.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**



Older Kids Leader Guide | Easter Session 3



THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: 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 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.*

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- 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 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?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then, pray that kids would trust God and live out their faith through obedience. As time allows, lead kids to complete "Pop Quiz" on the activity page.