



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 3

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–28

STORY 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.

INTRODUCE THE STORY

(15–20 MINUTES)

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TEACH THE STORY

(10–15 MINUTES)

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EXPERIENCE THE STORY

(20–25 MINUTES)

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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 preschoolers 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.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28

Jesus and His friends went to a garden. 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' disciples, came with a large crowd. Judas betrayed Jesus by kissing Jesus to show the crowd which person was Jesus. The men in the crowd arrested Jesus.

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

“Yes,” Jesus said.

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

In the morning, the men took Jesus to see Pilate, the governor. “Are You the King of the Jews?” Pilate asked.

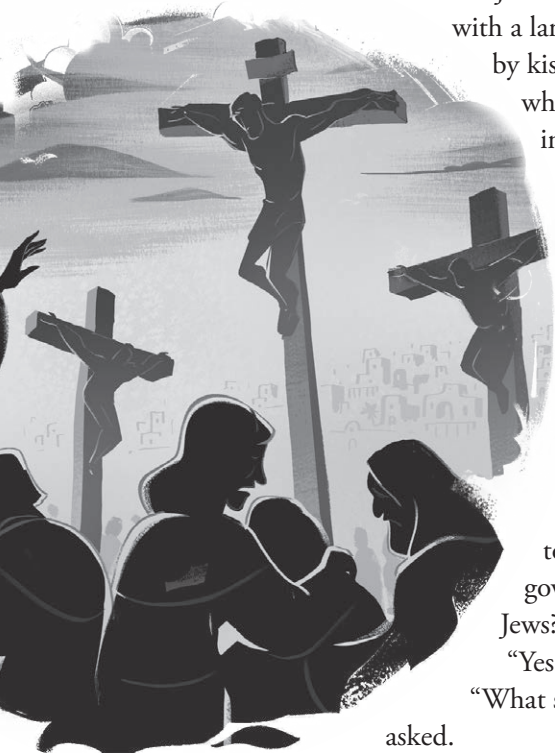
“Yes,” Jesus said.

“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. They put a purple robe around Him and pretended to bow down to



Him. Then they led Jesus away.

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

Darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus died and 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! Jesus is not here! He has risen from the dead, just as He said He would."

The women were so happy! Jesus was alive! They left the tomb to tell Jesus' friends the good news. Just then, Jesus greeted them. The women worshiped Him. Jesus said, "Do not be afraid. 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 is alive! When we trust in Jesus, we do not need to fear. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Sign Jesus:** Teach children the sign language motion for *Jesus*. (Touch the middle finger of one hand to the center of the palm of the other hand. Then switch hands, touching the other middle finger to the palm of the other hand.) Encourage children to make the sign for *Jesus* every time they hear His name in the Bible story.

• **Move with the story:** Designate different parts of the room as the garden, where the high priest was, where Pilate was, the cross, and the tomb. Move to each area as you tell the story to help children understand that the Bible story took place over several days. Add a few props, if desired, such as plants in the garden or a round table turned on edge to be the rock at the tomb.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28

STORY 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

- upbeat worship music
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play upbeat worship music 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

- "Shadow Matching" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to draw a line connecting each figure to its shadow.

SAY • Do you recognize Jesus in this picture? What do you know about Jesus? In today's Bible story, we will hear about Jesus, a cross, a large stone, and a crown made of thorns. God used all these things to give us the best news ever! Listen to the story.

Replicate an earthquake with blocks

Guide preschoolers to use blocks to build a city on a table. Once the city is built, let preschoolers gently shake the table to simulate an earthquake. Rebuild, and play several rounds.

SAY • An earthquake is what happens when the ground suddenly starts shaking very hard. Earthquakes can be very scary. There is an earthquake in today's Bible story, but we will learn from the rest of our Bible story that we do not need to fear anything, not even an earthquake!

**LOW
PREP**

• blocks

Tip: Let preschoolers know ahead of time what will happen to avoid hurt feelings when their buildings fall apart.

Compare and weigh rocks

Before the session, gather a collection of rocks. Spread the rocks on a table. Set out a food scale or simple balance scale and several magnifying glasses. Encourage preschoolers to weigh the rocks, compare their weights, and examine the rocks with a magnifying glass.

SAY • In today's Bible story, we will hear how Jesus died and was buried in a tomb. A large stone was rolled in front of the tomb. Can you imagine a rock so big that it took several men to move it? A heavy stone cannot stop God. Listen to hear how the stone was rolled away!

• rocks
• food scale or balance scale
• magnifying glasses

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage preschoolers to walk like they are very sad and then to walk like they are very happy.

• countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Place a bookmark at Matthew 26 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible tells us about Jesus and His life. Our Bible story today is a true story that tells about Jesus' death on a cross, His burial in a tomb, and what happened next! This Bible story is in the Book of Matthew in the New Testament.

Point to the Bible story picture. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video (optional)

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

SAY • **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** The women who came to the tomb that morning were so sad, but then they saw that Jesus was not in the tomb. He was alive! They went to tell Jesus' friends the good news. Just then, they saw Jesus. The women worshiped Him! Jesus' dying on the cross and rising from the dead is the most important thing that ever happened!

Practice the key passage

Cut an extra copy of the key passage poster into five or six pieces. Hide the pieces around the room before the session. Place the key passage marker at Romans 10:9. Invite a child to open the Bible to the key passage. Guide preschoolers to work together to find the hidden pieces and assemble the poster. Lead preschoolers in saying the key passage together with the motions you created in previous sessions.

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster, 2
- scissors (adult use)
- tape (optional)

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.

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question asks, *Who saves us from our sin? 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.

- Big Picture Question Poster
- worship songs

Lead children in singing worship songs that glorify Jesus.



Missions moment

SAY • The women were surprised and happy when the angel told them Jesus was alive. The Dye family, North American missionaries living in Atlanta, were surprised and happy with the way God gave them to get to know people in their city. Let's watch and see! Show the "Casting the Dye (Part 2)" video.

- "Casting the Dye (Part 2)" video

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

Sing a song

Sing the song “If You’re Happy and You Know It” while performing the motions. If you are unfamiliar with the tune, lyrics, or motions, check them out online before class.

SAY • We sang a song about being happy, but in today’s Bible story there were so many different feelings! The disciples felt sad, sleepy, mad, scared, and excited as they were with Jesus. **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** That’s the happiest news ever! When we trust in Jesus, we can be happy because Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

Build an empty tomb with blocks

Lead preschoolers to build an empty tomb with blocks. Read John 20:1-7 to preschoolers. Suggest preschoolers fold a piece of cloth to put inside the empty tomb. Encourage them to use a ball as the large stone that sealed the tomb.

SAY • The tomb was empty because **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** Jesus died on the cross for our sins, but He rose from the dead and is alive! God raised Jesus from the dead to be the King over everything. When we trust in Jesus, we do not need to fear. Jesus rescues us from sin and promises that we will live forever with Him.

- Bible
- blocks
- ball
- piece of cloth

Make a cross painting

Print the story point with a permanent marker at the top of a sheet of heavyweight paper for each preschooler. Guide children to use several strips of painter's tape to make a cross on their paper. Invite them to paint over their entire paper with watercolors. Allow the paint to dry, and then remove the tape to reveal a white cross.

SAY • The bright colors on your cross picture are happy colors. The women were very happy to see that Jesus was not in the tomb. They ran to tell Jesus' friends that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** The women had been sad and afraid when Jesus was dying on the cross and then placed in the tomb, but now they knew they did not need to be afraid. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever. Can you give your cross picture to someone in your family or to a friend and tell him or her that Jesus is alive?

- smocks
- white heavyweight paper
- permanent marker
- painter's tape
- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- cups
- water

Dress up like a king

Gather "royal" dress-up clothes, such as crowns, toy jewels, jewel-toned fabrics, velvet fabric, and so forth. Invite preschoolers to take turns dressing up as a king or queen. The other children will say, "All hail the king [*queen*]!" and to pretend to bow and curtsy.

SAY • Pilate's soldiers dressed up Jesus as a king. They put a sign above Jesus' head that said: THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. They were making fun of Jesus, but Jesus really is a king! In fact, Jesus is King over everything. The most important thing that ever happened is that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.** When we trust in Jesus, we do not need to fear. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

- dress-up clothes
- nonbreakable mirrors (optional)

- Allergy Alert
- cone paper cups
- plastic sandwich bags
- small treats like pretzels or fruit snacks

Option: Consider allowing preschoolers to make an extra treat cone to eat for snack.



Make a cone treat to share

Ask preschoolers to think of someone who might need to know more about Jesus and His love. Suggest preschoolers make a treat for that person.

Give each preschooler a cone paper cup. Provide stickers for preschoolers to decorate their cups. Sanitize hands. Help preschoolers fill a ziplock bag halfway with small treats such as pretzels or fruit snacks. Then place the bag of treats in the cone. Challenge preschoolers to give their cone to the person they thought of and to take the opportunity to tell him or her about Jesus.

SAY • God gave the Dye family a fun idea to meet more people in the city of Atlanta: snow cones! Selling snow cones gave them more opportunities to tell others how **Jesus died on the cross and is alive**. Isn't it exciting how God gives missionaries and us fun ways to share His good news?

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve half a doughnut and a doughnut hole to each child for snack. Show children how to stand the donut on the cut edge to make a tomb or cave. Use the donut hole for the stone in front of the tomb. Ask children who rolled the stone away and what the women saw. Remind preschoolers that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. After Jesus died, where was He buried? (*in a tomb with a large stone rolled in front of it*)
2. What did the two women named Mary see at the tomb? (*An angel came down from heaven and rolled the stone away. The angel said that Jesus was alive, and then they saw Jesus.*)
3. Where did the two women go after they left the tomb? (*to tell Jesus' friends that He was alive*)
4. ***Who saves us from our sin? Jesus saves us from sin.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page or play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question.

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.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- doughnuts (optional)
- doughnut holes (optional)
- plastic knife (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers