

Bible Passage: Matthew 26–28; John 20

Story Point: Jesus died on the cross and is alive.

Key Passage: “Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, “The Lord reigns!” 1 Chronicles 16:31

Big Picture Question: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

LEADER DEVOTIONAL

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 came to earth to save us from our sins. (Matt. 1:21) He died 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 died so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus died to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

The time between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning must have been dark hours for Jesus' disciples. Fear, doubt, and confusion certainly overwhelmed their thoughts. Jesus, their Lord, was dead. He had been unjustly arrested, falsely accused, and severely beaten. Even worse, He had been killed in a horrible manner: by crucifixion.

The story doesn't end there. Jesus' body was laid in a tomb. The tomb was sealed, and guards watched over it. The Jews remembered Jesus' claim that He would rise from the dead (John 2:19-21), and they made sure no one could steal His body and insist He had risen. Imagine their surprise when Jesus did rise from the dead!

Jesus' resurrection gives us joy and hope for our own resurrection. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life. (Rom. 8:11)

As you teach preschoolers 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! Sadness turns to joy. There is hope for sinners.

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WELCOME

Play music in the background as you greet preschoolers and welcome them to class. As children enter, have them decorate a paper bag with Easter stickers. They will place their crafts, coloring pages, activity pages, and craft in the bag for easy transportation home. After children are finished decorating their bags, line them up outside the classroom along the wall for easy distribution and pick-up.

**** Please remember to reference the class schedules posted in your room for the timing of your class's various activities.*

ACTIVITY PAGE

Guide preschoolers to connect the dots to reveal the cross.

Say • The dots made a cross. Today's Bible story is about the most important thing that ever-happened Jesus **died on the cross and is alive**. Listen to the story to learn how we can have forgiveness for our sins and life with God forever.

BIBLE STORY

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28; John 20

Jesus had been arrested and taken to Pilate, the governor. Pilate's soldiers put a purple robe around Jesus and made a crown of thorns and put it on Jesus' head. They pretended to bow down to Him. Then they led Jesus away.

Jesus was put on 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 have true joy. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

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CRAFT

See the example in your bin and help children make the craft:

Say • It was sad when Jesus dies on the cross. Today we are thankful because Jesus is alive! When we trust in Jesus, we have true joy. The most important thing that ever happened is that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive**. Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES

Practice the gospel!

Create simple motions to help children remember each part of *The Gospel: God's Plan for Preschoolers*. Explain each statement and practice the hand motions several times.

Say • You are learning the basics of the gospel! ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*** God is the perfect King over everything. But we all sin or disobey God. God must punish sin, yet He wants to save the people He loves. So, He sent Jesus to rescue us. Jesus never sinned, but He died to take our punishment because He loves us. Then God brought Jesus back to life to prove that He defeated sin and death once for all!

Dance with joy

Guide preschoolers to sit and frown. Then invite them to jump up and do a happy dance. Repeat, emphasizing the dramatic emotional changes.

Say • In our Bible story today, some people were very sad because the worst thing ever had happened. But then they were very happy because the best thing ever happened! Listen to our Bible story today to find out what these very important events were.

Resurrection Eggs and Easter Book

Read provided Easter book and or use resurrection eggs to review/reiterate the Easter Story. (please use eggs for story telling only and return to package for use next year)

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SNACK AND PRAYER

Take a restroom break and wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Choose volunteers to help set up for the snack. (Crackers and cups for water located in the cabinet above the sink.) Pray and thank God for the snack.

As kids eat: Talk about how the most important thing that ever happened is that **Jesus died on the cross and is alive**. When we trust in Jesus, we have forgiveness and life with God forever.

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

Where was Jesus buried? (*in a tomb with a large stone rolled in front*)

When did Jesus rise from the dead? (*on the third day*)

To whom did the angel first tell the good news? (*two women named Mary*)

Why is this the most important thing that ever happened? (*Jesus brings forgiveness and life with God forever to sinners*)

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

CLOSING ACTIVITES

Before doing closing activities, please have the children help you clean up the toys and materials that have been used today. After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let kids work on today's **Bible Story Coloring Page** until their parents arrive. You can also choose a book to read to the children as they color or for those who don't want to color. Please make the effort to have the children quietly engaged when parents arrive.

When parents arrive to pick up their children, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

BEFORE YOU GO...

Please clean up by doing the following:

- 1) Put away any remaining toys.
- 2) Use sanitizing spray to wipe down tables.
- 3) Sweep up any cracker crumbs or dirt.
- 4) Please return your bin, binder, and sign-in clipboard to the resource room across from Toddler A.