



UNIT 31 | SESSION 5

EASTER SUNDAY

MATTHEW 26-28

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus died on the cross and is alive!

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.

MEMORY VERSE

“By his wounds you have been healed.” 1 Peter 2:24



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 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)

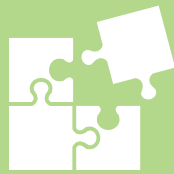
The time between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning must have been dark hours for Jesus' disciples. Fear, doubt, and confusion certainly overwhelmed their thoughts. Jesus, their Lord, was dead. He had been unjustly arrested, falsely accused, and severely beaten. Even worse, He had been killed in a horrible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

But 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.

OPENING & ACTIVITIES



Connect with children through games and activities

WELCOME

Play music in the background as you greet children coming into the classroom. Help them transition in and feel welcome as they play games and interact with other children. You can find music on the TV or the CD player in your classroom.

ACTIVITY 1: PRACTICE THE GOSPEL

Create simple motions to help children remember each part of *The Gospel: God's Plan for Us*.

Have children circle up on the floor. Explain each statement and practice the motions several times. Use the suggested motions or create your own.

God is King: hands on head like a crown

- Ask: "Who is in charge at home? Who is in charge over the whole world?" Explain that God made everything! He is King over everything and He is in charge.

We sinned: hands over downward face

- Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell children that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin makes God sad.

God sent Jesus: arms extended straight out to sides like a cross

- Explain that sin makes God sad and must be punished, so He sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.

Jesus loves: hands over heart

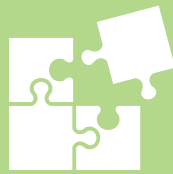
- Ask: "Do you like presents?" Explain that Jesus gives us the best present. He never did anything wrong, but He was punished in our place. Jesus wants to take away our sin because He loves us.

CONNECT THE DOTS



You're 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 and for all! This is what we get to celebrate at Easter.

OPENING & ACTIVITIES



Connect with children through games and activities

ACTIVITY 2: EASTER SNACK

As you mix this snack as a class, tell the Easter story using the verses below!

- **Bread/Crackers** (The Last Supper – Matthew 26)
- **Silver Kisses** (The Betrayal – Matthew 26:47-49)
- **Pretzel Sticks** (The Cross – Luke 23:44-46)
- **Raisins** (Gethsemane – Matthew 26:36-39)
- **Vanilla Wafers** (The Stone Rolled Away from the Tomb – Luke 24:2)
- **Goldfish** (Be Fishers of Men – Matthew 4:19)
- **M&Ms** (Taste and see that the Lord is good – Psalm 34:8)
- **Marshmallows** (Our sins are washed away! – 1 John 1:9)

ALLERGY ALERT



Some children may be allergic to one or more elements of the snack. Please check their tags and ask if anyone has any allergies before mixing and serving the snack.

CONNECT THE DOTS



It was sad when Jesus died 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.

CRAFT: “STAINED GLASS” CROSS

Supplies: paper crosses, tissue paper squares

Use the provided supplies and the craft examples to help children glue bits of tissue paper to their crosses to make “stained glass” crosses!

Be sure to write each child’s name on their craft so they know which one to take home.

BIBLE TIME



Review the Bible story with your class

PREPARE

Open your Bible to **Matthew 26-28** or **John 20** and tell the following story. You can also play the Bible story video on the TV.

JESUS' CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION

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

Jesus died on the cross and is alive!

CLOSING



Continue to engage children near the end of the morning

REVIEW TIME

Show children the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions and retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What was your favorite part of today's Bible story?
2. What did you learn about God in today's Bible story?
3. What happened on the third day after Jesus died?
4. Why did Jesus become human? **Jesus became human to rescue sinners.**

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Pick up toys and games from around the room and put them away. After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let children work on today's Bible story coloring page or activity page until their parents arrive.

You can also choose a book to read to children as they work or for those who don't want to work. Please make the effort to have children quietly engaged in the last few minutes of the service. When parents arrive to pick up their child, share about something their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

BEFORE YOU GO...

Please clean up by doing the following:

1. Spray down toys with disinfectant
2. Spot sweep if needed
3. Return toys to closet, close door
4. Throw away any trash left on counters and in room
5. Return storage cubes to **Room 108**

THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!