

Use Week of:

Easter • Session 2

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT:

Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE:

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.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
PAGE 74



TEACH THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 76



APPLY THE STORY
(25–30 MINUTES)
PAGE 82



Leaders, grow on the go! Listen to session-by-session training every week on Ministry Grid, Apple Podcasts, Spotify, or LifeWay's Digital Pass:
ministrygrid.com/gospelproject | gospelproject.com/podcasts

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: 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 kids 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.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28; John 20

Jesus had been arrested and taken to Pilate, the governor. The governor's soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus and made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then they mocked Him: "Here is the King of the Jews!" They beat Jesus and led Him away to be killed.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross.

They put a sign above His head that said THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.

Darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus shouted again and then He died.

Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the men guarding Jesus' body said, "This man really was God's Son!"

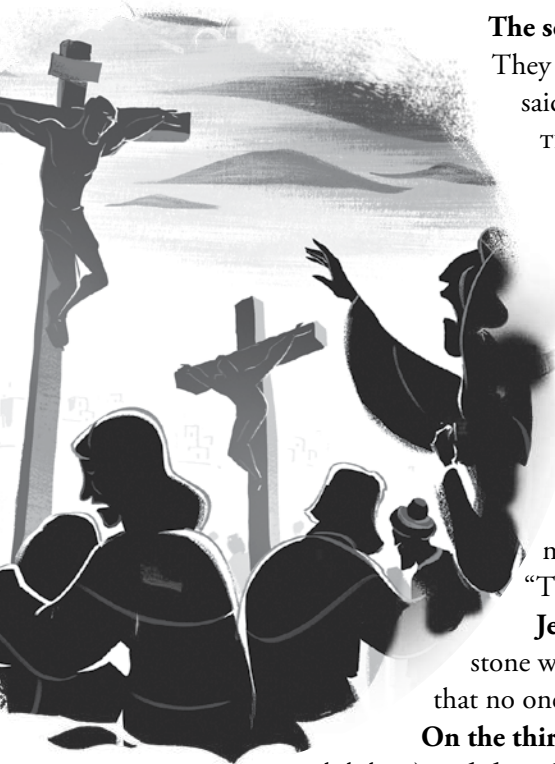
Jesus was buried in a tomb.

A stone was sealed in front of the tomb so that no one could steal Jesus' body.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene (MAG duh leen) and the other Mary went to the tomb.

Suddenly there was an earthquake. **An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone and sat on it.** The guards were so afraid that they fainted.

The angel spoke to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are



looking for Jesus. He is not here. He has risen, just like He said He would.”

The women left the tomb quickly. They ran to tell the disciples the good news. Just then Jesus greeted them. The women worshiped Him. “Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told them. “Tell My followers to go to Galilee. They will see Me there.”

Jesus appeared to Peter and then to the other disciples. Jesus also appeared to more than 500 people who followed Him. Many people witnessed that Jesus is alive!

Christ Connection: Jesus’ death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives hope and true joy to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use a flannelgraph:** Use pictures on a board to tell the story. Find pictures of the people and locations in the story. Move them around as you tell the story.
- **Enter the story:** Tell the Easter story as an eyewitness to the events, such as Mary Magdalene or Peter. Convey the emotions of sadness and excitement as you tell the story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE: 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.

Welcome time

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 share about a time they experienced a happy surprise.

SAY • Happy surprises are lots of fun, from receiving a wonderful gift you didn't expect to walking through a door to a group of friends shouting "surprise" on your birthday. Today we will take a step away from the timeline of the Bible to look back on the greatest surprise of all time. But the people surprised should have known it was coming! What event do you think I might be talking about?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- "Crack the Code" activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete the "Crack the Code" activity page. Instruct kids to use the code provided to figure out the good news.

SAY • Jesus is alive! His resurrection surprised His followers, but it shouldn't have. He told them in advance that He would die and rise again. Jesus didn't tell them in a secret code, He said it plainly and then proved it.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: A part of the whole

Display a small item that may look unimportant but serves a vital role in some kind of device, such as a spring from a clothespin, a bobbin from a sewing machine, or a rubber gasket from a spray nozzle. Allow the kids to guess its function before showing the rest of the device and explaining the item's vital purpose.

SAY • If you only hear the story of Jesus' death, it might not make any sense. How could Jesus be victorious if His enemies killed Him? But when we understand Jesus' crucifixion as a part of the whole story of the Bible, it, along with the resurrection, allows the rest of Scripture to tell God's beautiful story.

LOW PREP

• small part, such as a clothespin spring, a sewing machine bobbin, or a rubber gasket from a spray nozzle

OPTION 2: Roll the stone relay

Form two teams of kids. Instruct the teams to make two lines on one side of the room. Set a cone at the far end of the room in front of the two teams. Give the first kid in each line a playground ball. Each player on the two teams must roll the playground ball to the end of the room, around the cone, and back. Play continues until a team has sent every player down and back with the ball.

• playground balls, 2
• cones, 2

SAY • When Jesus rose again, an angel rolled the stone away from His tomb. Today we will learn more about why Jesus' death and resurrection are so vital to the story God is telling about His desire to glorify Himself and save us from sin.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE: 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.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

[Leader enters wearing business attire and a national flag pin.]

LEADER • Hey everyone! Welcome back to our Model UN pre-meeting. I'm so excited you all have come back. For those of you who are new this week, Model UN is a fun activity in which students get to pretend they are representatives from nations around the world. We work together to come up with solutions to problems and disagreements between countries.

We had some awesome developments last week that led to a really great idea getting accepted unanimously. We were all really happy about it. We even went out to celebrate with pizza afterward. But as happy as we felt about that successful vote, nothing can match the true joy that comes from knowing Jesus.

This week, I want to talk about the central story to the whole gospel message. All of the Old

Testament pointed forward to Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and everything that happened afterward was a direct result of His victory on the cross. Let's talk more about it.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Our big picture question is, *what is the gospel?*

The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners. Jesus rescues sinners when they have faith in Him. He lived a perfect life, died the death we deserve, and rose from the dead. Apart from Jesus, there is no salvation, but with Him we can have lasting peace and true joy.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • Although we've been talking about the early church, stories that come from the time after Jesus rose and went back to heaven, today, because it is Easter, we are going to take a look back at the wonderful news that led to the entire start of the Christian faith. Our story is called "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–28; John 20. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."

• Bibles
• "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Story Point Poster

LEADER • This story is the center of the Bible's one story. This is like the climax, where everything in the

history of the world turned around. After years and years of offering sacrifices for forgiveness of sin, Jesus died to be the final and perfect sacrifice. After years and years of being separated from God, the temple curtain ripped in two to show that we could approach God personally. After years and years of people being dead in sin, Jesus rose again to bring us eternal life with God.

The gospel is absolutely the most important story that the world has ever known or will ever know. God has been telling it from the very beginning. Since before Adam and Eve sinned, God had a plan to send a Rescuer. Jesus came, He lived, He died, and He is alive again. Because of Jesus, we don't have to fear anything—not even sin or death. We have victory because Jesus is victorious. This is the gospel, and it is good news. **Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.**

Christ connection

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

LEADER • Jesus died on the cross to pay for sin and rose again to defeat death. 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.

Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives hope and true joy to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why Jesus’ enemies were able to kill Him. Guide them to discuss other times God has used something sad, scary, or painful to do something wonderful.

• “Easter, Session 2”
Questions from Kids
video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask volunteers to read the Wiltons’ prayer requests. Show the photo of the Wilton family and direct kids’ attention to it while the requests are read. Pause after each request and ask for a different volunteer to voice a short prayer.

• “Wilton Prayer
Requests” printable

LEADER • The Wiltons believe that Jesus rose from the dead and that **Jesus’ resurrection gives true joy to believers**. They want to spread joy to others—and they believe that kids can do that, too! When we pray for missionaries, we are part of the mission of God.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Chronicles 16:31. Then sing the key passage song.

• Key Passage Poster
• “Rejoice, Be Glad
(1 Chronicles 16:31)”
song

LEADER • God is the creator of all heaven and earth. That is why He is in charge of all things. Jesus is the King of kings because He created everything and because He conquered death. We worship Him for who He is and what He has done. **Jesus’ resurrection gives true joy to believers**.

Sing (4 minutes)

LEADER • The more I know about Jesus, the more I want to tell the world about His goodness.

• “Go Tell the World”
song

Sing together “Go Tell the World.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for sending Your Son. Thank
You that He was willing to die the death we deserve.
Thank You for raising Him from the dead. Help
us to experience the true joy that only He can give.
Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE: 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.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- paper
- pencils

Invite volunteers to say the key passage from memory. Thank each kid for her efforts and encourage all the kids to continue working to memorize the key passage. Challenge the kids to work together to write the key passage in reverse order, starting with the last word and working their way forward without consulting the key passage poster.

SAY • Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers. He reversed the curse of sin and replaced it with the blessing of eternal life with God for all those who believe the gospel. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.***

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970, optional)

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them find Matthew 26–28; John 20. Remind the kids that Matthew and John are both in the Gospels division of the New Testament. Ask a volunteer to summarize what that division contains. (*stories of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection*) Explain that Matthew is the first book in the New Testament, and John is the fourth.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did Jesus pray in the garden? (*He asked God for another way to save people, but agreed to obey God's plan; Matt. 26:39*)
2. How did Jesus die? (*He was crucified—hung on a cross; Matt. 27:33-50*)
3. What did the women find on the third day? (*an empty tomb and an angel who said Jesus rose, Matt. 28:5-6*)
4. Why is it important that Jesus really died? *Guide kids to understand that God demands a sacrifice for sin. Because we are sinners, we deserve death. If there were no sacrifice, God would not be perfectly just. Jesus had to die for us to be forgiven. (See Heb. 9:22; Rom. 6:23; and 2 Cor. 5:21.)*
5. Why is it important that Jesus rose to life? *Help kids see that Jesus' rising again was proof that His sacrifice was enough. He rose again to prove that sin and death were totally defeated. We have victory in Christ. (See 1 Cor. 15:12-22.)*
6. How does Jesus' resurrection give us joy? *Help the kids think through the hope we have for the future. Remind them that because of Jesus' resurrection, there is no suffering we can face that could ever take away our salvation. The worst that could happen to us in life is still outweighed by the wonderful nature of God's mercy and grace toward us.*

SAY • Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers. When we have faith in Jesus, we are credited with His righteousness and all our sins are forgiven. We can then walk in victory over sin, knowing that we will spend eternity with God.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- foam ball
- music

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Hot potato

Invite kids to sit in a circle and play a simple game of hot potato. Direct kids to pass the ball around the circle as you play music.

Randomly pause the music. Give the kid with the ball the opportunity to share one fact she has learned about missions in this unit or one way that she can be on mission right where she is. Play several rounds as time allows.

SAY • Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have a wonderful message to tell others. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.*** Sharing the gospel is an important part of being the church. And you are an important part of our church!

OPTION 2: He's alive!

Provide each kid with a palm-sized stone. Help the kids to write *Jesus is alive!* on the stones in marker. You may provide decoupage paste and brushes as well as various art supplies and decorations to allow the kids to decorate their rocks. Encourage the kids to take their rocks home to display somewhere to help them remember the good news of Jesus' death and resurrection.

SAY • ***Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.*** When we have faith in Him, we are saved from sin and gain eternal life with God. This has been God's plan all along. Whenever we feel sad, scared, lonely, or upset, we can remember the love Jesus showed for us on the cross, and the victory he won through His resurrection. The gospel is a comfort to all people who believe. ***What is the gospel? The gospel is the***

- palm-sized stones
- markers
- decoupage paste (optional)
- paintbrushes (optional)
- various art supplies and decorations (optional)

good new that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

- pencils and crayons
- paper
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.