

Unit 32, Session 4: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26:36–28:10; John 18:1–20:18

Christ Connection:

Preschool: 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. God raised Jesus from the dead to be King over everything.

Kids: The crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus is the center of the gospel. We deserve to die because of our sin, but Jesus died in our place. He was the blood sacrifice made once and for all for the forgiveness of sin. God was pleased with Jesus' sacrifice and raised Jesus from the dead to reign as King over all creation. We are forgiven only through Jesus (Acts 4:12).

Adult Connection Point:

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are the most important events in history. Paul said as much in 1 Corinthians 15:1-4:

Now brothers, I want to clarify for you the gospel I proclaimed to you; you received it and have taken your stand on it. You are also saved by it, if you hold to the message I proclaimed to you—unless you believed for no purpose. For I passed on to you as most important what I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures,

But for what purpose did Christ die and rise? In a word, fellowship—that is, the restoration of relationships that sin has fractured and corrupted.

The foundation of true fellowship is being reconciled to God through Christ, and this reconciliation affects the whole of our lives. Jesus died to heal four broken relationships that resulted from the fall recorded in Genesis 3, namely, between (1) humanity and God, (2) human and human, (3) humanity and creation, and (4) human and self.

God in Christ has provided salvation for His people past, present, and future through His work on Calvary's cross. Paul concluded one of the earlier sections of 1 Corinthians with thanks to God because He is faithful to His children, and this faithfulness is evident because of the fellowship (Greek, *koinonia*) His people have with His Son (1 Cor. 1:9).

The apostle Paul reminded us that "[we] are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from [ourselves]; it is God's gift—not from works, so that no one can boast." Paul continued, saying, "For we are His creation, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time so that we should walk in them" (Eph. 2:8-10). Here we see the proactive nature of God in salvation contrasted with our inability to save ourselves. Our salvation, from first to last, depends upon God's grace.

Our gratitude grows deeper still when we recognize that only Jesus was able to purchase true, restored fellowship between God and humanity. In the Old Testament, the priests rehearsed the ritual sacrifices to obey the law and cover over the sins of the people. To cease the endless shedding of blood, Jesus, who was fully man and fully God, intervened and completely satisfied the wrath of God by fulfilling

the law and healing the gaping wound of sin. In contrast with the human priests, Jesus offered the final sacrifice—Himself—that ended the religious rituals and made a way for genuine relationship with God (see Heb. 10:11-14).

The gift of salvation is Christ Himself, but with Him comes the security that makes fellowship possible. Those who are in Christ are eternally secure. Jesus said, “I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28). Because of God’s grace, a relationship with Christ might be the first time that many of us have experienced unconditional acceptance.

Search around the house looking for things in the shape of a cross. Consider the architectural features of your house. Point out a cross when one is found. When you are finished, review the Bible story.

Before Jesus death, several people turned away from Jesus or turned Him over to someone else. Ask: “What did Judas, Peter, Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate do to show their true feelings about Jesus?”

Recall how Judas identified Jesus to the mob by giving him a kiss. Peter denied Him three times. Caiaphas had Him beaten. Pontius Pilate turned Him over to the crowd. All alone, Jesus asked God if it was possible He would not have to suffer, but in the end He accepted God’s plan—death on the cross.

Ask: “What amazing natural events happened during Jesus death on the cross?”

Remind your kids that darkness covered the sky, the temple curtain ripped from top to bottom, and an earthquake occurred. After Jesus death another earthquake happened and the tomb rolled away. The most amazing event, though, was the empty tomb. Jesus was alive!

Comment that Jesus’ death and resurrection are the main point of the gospel. We all sin so we all deserve to die. However, God’s plan was to save us through Jesus’ death on the cross. This sacrifice was once and for all. When we trust in Jesus our sins are forgiven.

Sing a praise song from this week’s lesson.

Pray, thanking God your sins are forgiven through Jesus.