



### LESSON 3 THE CRUCIFIXION

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 27

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jesus is crucified on a cross to save all people from their sins, allowing everyone to have a personal relationship with God.

**WORD OF WONDER:** When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIRV)

#### **CURIOSITY** 15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An object lesson, experiment, or activity that sparks curiosity, encourages exploration, and gets kids thinking about the wonder of God.

- Welcome Question: With what word or words would you fill in the blank?  
I love \_\_\_\_\_ so much!
- Curiosity Questions
- Multisensory Activity: One Word Love
- Declaring God's Wonder



#### **FAITH** 15 minutes • Small Group

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own, emboldening their faith and fostering a deeper understanding of their place in God's kingdom.

- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger Kids and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time

#### **IDENTITY** 10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids of these core truths: I am known, I am loved, I am led, and my life can tell of God's wonder.

- Responding in Worship: Interactive Object Lesson
- Blessing Your Kids

### Invitation

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 27

**WORD OF WONDER:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

Have you ever been wrongfully accused? Perhaps someone spread false gossip about you, or maybe someone took something you said out of context.

When living in a fallen world of nearly eight billion imperfect humans, we are bound to face difficult things and difficult people. It's easy to develop a jaded view of humanity. And no one understands the imperfection of humans better than God, yet still He loves us.

Take some time to read Matthew 27:32–56.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus chose to die such an excruciating death? He had every right to show His power and put humans in their rightful place. Yet He chose to submit himself, facing the humiliation of being put on trial. Even the earthly authorities couldn't find anything illegal or evil about Him. He was innocent, yet His love for us was so great that He chose to die on the cross. Jesus showed His love by dying for us.

Does knowing what Jesus did for us give you the strength to face the evil in the world? Take some time to dwell in God's wonderful love. May it inspire you to show grace to those who might not deserve it but need it.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

The climax (and turning point) of God’s big story is the death and resurrection of Jesus, God’s Son. Jesus became nothing and took on the nature of a servant, humbling Himself to death on a cross (Philippians 2:6–8).

**WHAT?**

Crucifixion was a horrible and painful process—a form of slow torture as the recipient suffocated to death. Jesus willingly went to the cross, submitting Himself to “the joy set before Him” (Hebrews 12:2) as He endured the cross so we could be restored to right relationship with God.

**WHERE?**

The crucifixion of Jesus took place outside the city gates of Jerusalem on a hill called *Golgotha*. Jesus would have been exposed up on that hill as He suffered. Jews from all over would have been in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

**WHEN?**

It is no coincidence that Jesus died at Passover—the time when all of God’s people remembered God’s salvation in the Exodus. Jesus died as a sacrificial lamb, ushering in a new and better exodus event: freedom from our slavery to sin and death.

**WHY?**

Jesus died to pay the penalty for sin and to make a way for us to be with God. Jesus fulfills the promise God made after the first sin in Genesis 3, reversing the curse of sin. He is the only one who can defeat sin and death!

### Large or Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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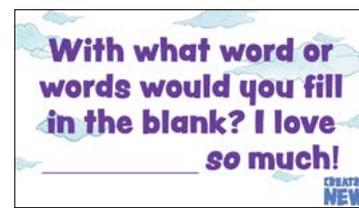
## Welcome Question

**SUPPLIES:** paper, colored pencils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** The Crucifixion Welcome Question Slide

Before kids arrive, display The Crucifixion Welcome Question Slide or write the following question on a whiteboard: With what word or words would you fill in the blank? I love \_\_\_\_\_ so much!

Set out paper and colored pencils.



### As kids arrive ...

Welcome kids by name, if possible, and invite them to answer the Welcome Question on the board. Invite up kids who would like to draw pictures of things or people they love and let them do so on the whiteboard. Encourage everyone to share their answers with two or three others. For younger kids, read the question aloud and give them a few ideas of your own to help them think of an answer.

Use one of the countdown videos provided and show it every week two minutes before your official start time.

### At your start time ...

Welcome the whole group and let them know you're happy they're here! Ask if anyone would like to share their answer to the question: **With what word or words would you fill in the blank? I love \_\_\_\_\_ so much!** Instead of asking kids to raise their hands to volunteer, consider telling them to look at you and make a funny face if they want to share!

It's so good to hear all the things and people you love so much! If we asked Jesus to answer our Welcome Question, how do you think He'd answer? Listen to kids' answers. Those are great ideas! I think Jesus would write each of our names in the blank because He loves each of us so much! In fact, today we are going to hear about what Jesus was willing to do all because He loves us, but before we do, it's time to be curious.

## Curiosity Questions

Pose the following "I'm curious" questions. Say "I'm curious ..." between each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I'm curious ...

- What do you think the word love means? Can it mean different things? Explain.
- Have you ever done something to help someone else even though you didn't want to? Tell us about it.
- What does the word relationship mean? Who are some people you have relationships with? What does it mean to have a relationship with God?

## Multisensory Activity: One Word Love



Display the One Word Love Slide. In the English language, the word love can mean many different things. You may love pizza and you may love your parents, but hopefully you don't love them the same way! In its original languages, the Bible uses different words for different types of love. God loves you! And the love He has for you is steadfast, which means it never changes. Love comes from God. Based on His example, we can define love as the emotions we feel, words we speak, and actions we do for the good of other people. We are going to do an activity that lets us use words that express love and encouragement for others.

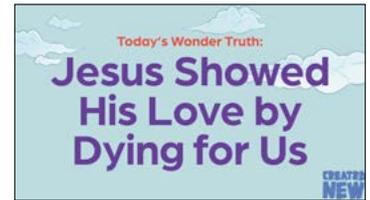
Help kids form two circles, one inside the other and each with the same number of people in it. The kids in the outside circle can face those in the inside and vice versa. The person they are facing is their partner.

When the music plays, everyone on the inside will walk in a counterclockwise circle, which is to the right. Demonstrate walking counterclockwise. Everyone on the outside will walk clockwise, which is to the left. Demonstrate walking clockwise. When the music stops, you will stop where you are and face your new partner. Encouraging one another is a way we can show love, and you'll encourage your partner with just one word. You can say something positive you've noticed about your partner, even if you don't know her well. For example, if you've noticed her being kind to others, you might say "kind" as your one word.

Start the music as kids begin walking in clockwise and counterclockwise circles. After 10–15 seconds, stop the music. Encourage kids to face their new partners and say just one word of love and encouragement. Start the music again and repeat the process several times, giving kids a chance to encourage different partners each time.

**Leader Tip: For Younger Kids.** If your group includes a lot of younger kids, consider simplifying this activity. Walk around the room lightly touching each child on the top of her head as you share one simple encouraging word.

Gather kids together and display The Crucifixion Wonder Truth Slide. **What are some of the words your partners used to encourage you? Allow kids to share freely. One way we can show love is through our words. And the words you used were very encouraging! Our actions are another powerful way to show someone you love them. Jesus understood this! And He showed us His love in the most powerful way imaginable. Our Wonder Truth today is “Jesus showed His love by dying for us.”**



## Declaring God's Wonder

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** The Crucifixion Declaration Slide

Display The Crucifixion Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

**Thank You, God, that You are good!** (Kids repeat.)

**You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** (Kids repeat.)

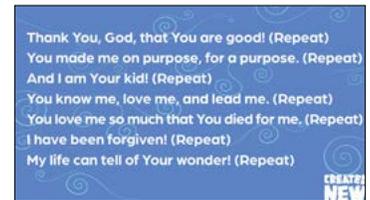
**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

**You know me, love me, and lead me.** (Kids repeat.)

**You love me so much that You died for me.** (Kids repeat.)

**I have been forgiven!** (Kids repeat.)

**My life can tell of Your wonder!** (Kids repeat.)



### Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us  
**SCRIPTURE:** Matthew 27  
**WORD OF WONDER:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

Divide your group into smaller groups based on age. If your group is already small, stay together for this time.

## Word of Wonder Activity

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles (1 per kid), sticky notes, paper, colored pencils, pens  
**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Word of Wonder Slide

With the Word of Wonder Slide on the screen, lead the kids in reading the verse a few times in unison. Then have a leader in each group split the verse into as many parts as there are kids in the group; then, write each part on a separate sticky note. Each kid will then put a sticky note on her forehead, being careful not to look at what it says. Next, kids will use their Bibles and work together to put the verse in the correct order, standing shoulder-to-shoulder in a line. Once every group has lined up in the correct order, have all the kids read the verse out loud one last time.



## Word of Wonder

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!

—2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come.

The old is gone! The new is here!

—2 Corinthians 5:17 (NIV)

## Questions: Younger Kids

- When Jesus was arrested in the garden, how did He respond—did He fight or go willingly with the guards? What does this show you about Jesus?
- How many times was Jesus put on trial?
- Did the trials show that Jesus was innocent (which means He didn't do anything against the law) or guilty (which means that He did)?
- What happened to Jesus next, even though He was innocent?
- Why do you think Jesus was willing to die?
- How can you thank Jesus for His love and for dying on the cross?

**Leader Tip:** This might be a good spot to revisit the question, “How did you feel after hearing the story today?” Some kids may feel more comfortable opening up during this small group time!

Jesus made the decision to die on the cross because He loves us and knew that's what it would take for us to be able to know God as a friend. Let's take a moment to pray to God and thank Him for this sacrifice—and all of the other blessings He's given us.

## Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Hand each kid a piece of paper and colored pencils. Encourage kids to write/draw a prayer request or something they're grateful for so they can speak to God about it during this time of prayer. Then pray together, giving kids the opportunity to speak their request or praises aloud.

## Large Group or Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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## Responding in Worship: Interactive Object Lesson

**SUPPLIES:** small whiteboards (1 per kid), dry-erase markers (1 per kid), whiteboard eraser, clear or white plastic plates (1 per kid; optional)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Responding in Worship Slide, "At the Cross (Love Ran Red)/The Cross Has the Final Word" from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#) (optional)



Gather kids together. Display the Responding in Worship Slide.

Hand out one small whiteboard and one dry-erase marker to each kid. (Use clear or white plastic plates as an alternative to small whiteboards.) Keep the eraser. **On each of our boards, let's write the word sin.** Consider writing the word on a large whiteboard in front or spelling it aloud to assist younger kids.

**Now, if you're sitting on this side of the room** (point to one side), **take your marker and scribble all over your board. Make it look messy!** **If you're sitting on this side of the room** (point to the other side), **draw tiny dots all over your board.** Give the kids a moment to draw.

**When you're finished, hold up your board so everyone can see. Take a look around!** Wait for everyone to hold their boards up. **Our boards represent all different people from around the world. Every mark represents sin—the wrong things people do and bad choices they make. Every person everywhere has sinned. And while some sins might seem bigger and some smaller, they are all sin. And all sin separates us from God. All of us need forgiveness!**

**You can put your boards back down. I'm going to walk around the room to visit each of you. When I get to your seat, you're going to say the Wonder Truth: Jesus showed His love by dying for us. Can you say that once with me now?** In unison: **Jesus showed His love by dying for us! Great! If it's not your turn, keep your board on the table in front of you and watch what happens as I walk around the room.**

Go around to each kid. After each says the Wonder Truth, with or without your help, take the eraser and wipe his board completely clean. Do this until everyone's board is blank. If your group is large, invite one or more volunteers to go around erasing boards as well.

Consider playing “At the Cross (Love Ran Red)/The Cross Has the Final Word” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as you make your way around. Ask kids to close their eyes and listen to the words of the song while they wait for their turn!

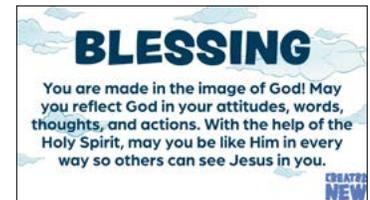
**Hold your board above your head and take another look around the room!** Hold up the eraser. **This eraser represents Jesus on the cross. Because of His sacrifice, we can be made new! Some of these boards had big, messy marks, and some had lots of smaller marks. No matter what we’ve been through or what wrong choices we’ve made, God will always forgive us when we turn to Him. Jesus showed His love by dying for us. Because of Him, we can be forgiven and made new!**

Collect all the whiteboards and dry-erase markers.

## Blessing Your Kids

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** The Crucifixion Blessing Slide

Close your time together by blessing the kids in your group. Display The Crucifixion Blessing Slide. Invite kids to hold their hands open in front of them with palms up as a physical sign that they are ready to receive a blessing from God.



**Blessing:** **Because of Jesus, your sins are forgiven, and you can have a relationship with God ... forever! May you always remember that Jesus loves you, and nothing in all the universe can change that! Jesus showed His great love by dying for you, and in Him, you are a new creation!**