Pre-K & Kinder

**April 2, 2023**

**THE CRUCIFIXION**

LESSON **AT A GLANCE**

**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:** Jesus makes us new. —from 2 Corinthians 5:17

**CURIOSITY 15–20 minutes**

Hands-on activities to help kids begin thinking about the wonder of God.

* Play Stations:
	+ Play Dough Crosses and Hearts

* + Love Sensory Bag
	+ Crucifixion Coloring Sheet
* Curiosity Activity: Love in Action
* Declaring God’s Wonder

**BELIEF 20 minutes**

A deep and interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

* Prayer of Invitation
* God’s Big Story: The Crucifixion
* Word of Wonder: 2 Corinthians 5:17

**FAITH 15–20 minutes**

An intentional interactive discussion that helps kids discover the wonder of God’s story and how it connects to their own.

* Circle Time: What I Love So Much
* Craft: Cross Collage
* Game: Flashlight Hide and Seek

**IDENTITY 15–20 minutes**

An interactive 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.

* Worship Response: Jesus Loves ME!
* Prayer and Blessing
* Closing Game: Jesus Loves Me Freeze Dance

**FOR LE ADERS**

**INVITATION**

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

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**WORD OF WONDER:** From 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.

 **FOR LE ADERS**

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**THE CRUCIFIXION**

**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 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!

**Pre-K & Kinder**

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


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**Series Bumper Video**

Introduce kids to the Easter: Created New series by playing the Created New: Series Bumper Video.

**Play Stations**

**SUPPLIES:** play dough; play dough tools (rollers, scissors, etc.); cookie cutters (heart and cross shaped); beads and pom-poms (optional)*;* disposable, resealable plastic bags (gallon size, 1 per kid); permanent marker; clear hair gel (1 cup per kid); heart-shaped plastic beads; clear packing tape; heart- shaped stickers; coloring utensils

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

**Welcome to church! While we’re getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas what we’ll be learning about today?**

**Play Station: Play Dough Crosses and Hearts**

**Set-up:** Set out play dough, play dough tools, and the cookie cutters. You could also add some items like beads or pom-poms to give the kids more with which to create and explore.

**Play:** Let the kids take turns creating a variety of play dough creations of crosses and hearts.

**Play Station: Love Sensory Bag**

**Set-up:** Ahead of time, create the sensory bags. On the outside of each disposable, resealable, plastic bag, draw in permanent marker a cross outline. Then add about a cup of clear hair gel and 10–15 heart- shaped plastic beads. Close the bag across the top and seal with clear packing tape.

**Play:** Encourage the kids to use their fingers to push the heart beads onto the cross.

**Play Station: Crucifixion Coloring Sheet**

**Set-up:** Set out the Crucifixion Coloring Sheet and coloring utensils.

**Play:** Let the kids color. The kids could also add heart shaped stickers to their pictures or draw someone they love.

**Curiosity Activity: Love in Action**

Invite one or two kids to act out the Love in Action scenarios. Encourage the kids to guess what is happening in each scenario. The goal is for the kids to see situations with people showing love in action.

**We’re going to play a fun guessing game. We are going to act out some things, and you can guess what we are doing.**

Whisper the scenarios to 1–2 kids and help them act out each scenario while the other kids guess. Love in Action Scenarios:

* Helping a hurt friend
* Hugs or High Fives
* Giving a gift
* Reading a book to someone
* Playing with someone
* Cooking a meal for someone
* Tucking in a child at night
* Praying with someone

**Leader Tip:** Act out scenarios for as long as your kids are engaged. You may not complete them all. Also, add some of your own ideas, if you’d like!

**Wow! You did great guessing what we were doing! Now, let’s think about all those things you guessed. What did those actions show?** Allow the kids an opportunity to guess. You may have to remind them of the scenarios as they are guessing. **Love! That’s it! All those things that we were doing are ways we show love to someone. Today, we’re going to hear about a very special way Jesus showed love to us!**

**Declaring God’s Wonder**

**Wonder Ink DIGITAL:** PLAY the Declaration VIDEO so you and the kids will get an idea as to how it goes; then, show the slide on the SCREEN so you will have the words.

Optional: Show the Declaration video or Declaration slide and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

**Let’s say these words together.**

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

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

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

March like you’re following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I’m a wonder, this is true.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating (“praise hands”).

**Pre-K & Kinder**

**Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.**


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**Prayer of Invitation**

Before entering into God’s big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, thank You for loving us with a big, unchanging, never-ending love! Help us understand how great Your love is for us and help us to hear the truth of Your word today. Thank You most of all for Jesus, who loves us so much He was willing to die for us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

**God’s Big Story: The Crucifixion**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** God’s Big Story Video

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found in the book of Matthew.

**Bible Time Rhyme**

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week with the kids before the Bible story, to remind kids that what they’re about to hear is part of God’s big story.

**I open my Bible and what do I see?** *(Hands together then opening palms up, like opening a book.)*

**God’s big story, waiting for me!** *(Point to yourself.)*

**Let’s hear part of God’s big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible.**

Read the God’s Big Story Script provided or read Matthew 27:32–56 from the Bible.

GOD’ S BIG **STORY SCRIPT: THE CRUCIFIXION**

**Parts of our story today might be sad. Can you show me your sad face?** Demonstrate a sad face. **But other parts will be happy. Can you show me your happy face?** Demonstrate a happy face. **As we hear about how Jesus showed His love for us, you can make a sad face when the story makes you sad and a happy face when the story makes you happy.**

**Make It Inclusive!**

This is a very heavy story and may be a lot for preschoolers to handle. Be sensitive in how you share the story to sensitive or emotionally fragile kids, while still telling the truth of what Jesus did. For some kids who are highly emotional a leader may need to be available to explain or answer questions.

**The Bible tells us after Jesus ate His last meal with His friends, the disciples, He spent the night praying in a garden. Jesus asked His Father for strength because He knew He was going to die for all people. Does that make you happy or sad? Show me by making a sad or happy face.** Pause for responses. It’s OK if the kids aren’t sure how to respond or feel at this point.

**Jesus knew He was going to die because people do so many wrong and bad things. These wrong things that we do are called sin, and sin separates us from God. Is that sad or happy?** Pause for responses. It’s OK if the kids aren’t sure how to respond or feel.

**Our sin is sad! But Jesus knew that to fix our relationship with God, He needed to die for all people. Jesus loves us so much that He died so that we can be with God. Is that sad? No! Show your happy face. Jesus loves you and wasn’t sad about giving His life for you! Show me a big happy face.**

**After Jesus’ meal with his disciples, one of the disciples named Judas made a bad choice. He led the soldiers to Jesus, and they arrested Him. Do you feel sad about that?**

**Jesus was put on trial, which means a judge tried to figure out what He had done wrong, but they couldn’t find anything He had done wrong. That didn’t matter, because the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, handed Jesus over to be punished by dying on a cross. That makes me feel sad. Do you feel sad?** Allow the kids to respond. It’s OK if the kids don’t fully grasp the emotions involved.

**God allowed Jesus to die on the cross because that was His plan for people to be forgiven for their sins and have a relationship with God. Jesus loved you and me—all people—so much He sent Jesus to take our punishment for our sins, even though Jesus never sinned! Show me with your face about how that makes you feel. You can feel sad Jesus died or happy He loves you so much that He rescues you from sin. Whatever you feel is OK!** Allow kids time to show their expression and be willing to talk about it if needed.

GOD’ S BIG **STORY SCRIPT: THE CRUCIFIXION**

**When Jesus died, the sky turned completely dark. Jesus showed His love for us when He died on the cross. Jesus showed His love by dying for us. That can feel sad, but Jesus’ love for us is**

**something to smile about and be happy! Jesus loves us! And He didn’t stay dead—the best part of the story is coming next week!**

# PLAY THE GOD’S BIG STORY VIDEO

**Connecting the Wonder Truth**

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God’s big story:

**Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE BY DYING FOR US! Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story?** Allow kids to answer freely.

**Word of Wonder**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Created New Word of Wonder Slide

**We’re learning about how Jesus makes us new. When we trust Jesus and follow Him, He makes us new! That means the old part of us that is full of sin and bad choices changes because of Jesus. We have new**

**hearts that are filled with love and His Spirit! Let’s play a game to help us remember what Jesus has done for us!**

**Word of Wonder**

**Jesus makes us new.**

—From 2 Corinthians 5:17

**Let’s sit in a circle and play a game of popcorn. One person will pop up and say the first word: Jesus.**

**Then the person beside that person will pop up and say the next word in the verse: makes. The next person will say the third word: us. The next person will say the last word: new. Then we’ll start over!**

**We’ll keep going through our verse with each person in the circle saying the next word in our verse.**

Repeat the verse as many times as you’d like. To add a little extra challenge and fun, have them do the motions as they say the word.

Optional: Teach the kids motions to the verse and encourage the kids to say the verse and do the motions with you.

* **JESUS—***Point fingers from left hand into right palm, then right hand into left palm (sign language for ‘Jesus’).*
* **MAKES US—***Both hands over your heart.*
* **NEW.—***Bring both arms out in front of you and down to your sides.*

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

* **What did Jesus do for us so we can become new?**
* **What part of us do you think Jesus makes new?**

**Pre-K & Kinder**

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


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**Circle Time: What I Love So Much**

**SUPPLIES:** heart-shaped pillow or heart cutout (use foam sheets or laminate a paper heart for durability)

**In today’s God’s big story, we learned that Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. We’re going to play a game and tell something or someone we love. We are going to pass the heart and share. The kid with the heart can say, “I love so much.” For example, “I love my mom so much!” or “I love going to the park so much.” Think about people or things you love that you can share. Once you’ve shared, pass the heart to your neighbor.**

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

* **What did Jesus do first when He was in the garden after the meal with His disciples?**

(He prayed.)

* **What happened to Jesus in the garden?** (He was arrested.)
* **Had Jesus done anything wrong?** (No.)
* **What happened to Jesus, even though He hadn’t done anything wrong?** (He died on a cross.)
* **Why do you think Jesus was willing to die even though He didn’t deserve it?**
* **How can you thank Jesus for His love and for dying on the cross?**
* **How do you feel knowing Jesus loves you so much He chose to die to rescue and forgive you?**

**Jesus chose 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 and be in His family. Let’s take a moment to pray to God and thank Jesus for being willing to die for our sins.**

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That’s OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for hearing us and caring about us. God hears all our prayers!

**Craft: Cross Collage**

**SUPPLIES:** heart-shaped stickers or confetti, glue for heart confetti

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Cross Collage Sheet

Before the kids arrive, make one copy per kid of the Cross Collage Sheet. Set the sheets out with heart stickers or confetti and glue, if needed.

**In our story today, we learned about how Jesus died on the cross. Why do you think He did that?** Allow the kids to answer. **Jesus showed His love for us by dying on the cross. What do hearts make us think of?** Allow kids to answer. **Yes, love.**

**We’re going to make a cross collage to help us remember that Jesus showed His love on the cross by placing hearts all over our crosses.**

**Game: Flashlight Hide and Seek**

**SUPPLIES:** heart cutouts, flashlights (1 small light per kid, or several larger ones to share), paper, scissors (prep only)

Before kids arrive, use scissors to cut several heart shapes out of paper. Hide heart cutouts around the room.

**Do you remember what happened in the sky when Jesus died?** Allow kids to answer. **That’s right, the sky turned dark. We are going to play a game of Flashlight Hide and Seek. I have hidden hearts around the room, and you all can work together to find them. But there’s a twist, the lights will be off, and you will use a flashlight to see and find the hearts!**

**Leader Tip:** If you don’t have a flashlight for each kid, group them in pairs or allow one kid at a time to find one heart.

Encourage the kids to look for the hidden hearts around the room using flashlights. When they find one, they can shout out “Jesus loves me!”

**Pre-K & Kinder**

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


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**Worship Response: Jesus Loves ME!**

**SUPPLIES:** butcher paper or large posterboard, scissors (for prep), marker, tape, heart cutouts (1 per kid; optional)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Heart Cutouts;

Before the kids arrive, make a large paper cross (at least 3 feet tall). Use tape to attach the cross to the wall at a height the kids can reach. Set out heart cutouts and a marker.

If kids are able, have them write their names on heart cutouts. If they are unable to write their own names, write it for them.

**Jesus showed us a true love when He died on the cross. We all mess up and do things that hurt God; we all sin. Jesus died so we can have a friendship with God and be forgiven. Jesus died because He loves us so much. As you go to the cross and place your heart with your name on it, say, “Jesus died for me.” You can tell Jesus “Thank You.”**

Call kids up to the cross one at a time. Encourage them to say, “Jesus died for me.” Remind them that Jesus loves them. They can tape their hearts on the cross. If they want to, they can use markers to decorate it and make a praise poster.

**Prayer and Blessing**

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for loving us and sending Jesus for us.

**Let’s pray and talk to God.**

**God, thank You for loving us and sending Jesus. Thank You for forgiving our sins. Please help us to live as new creations. We love You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

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