

A CRUSHING TRUTH

Jesus Is Crucified
Matthew 27:11–66
AD 33

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

Jesus died for our sins.

BIBLE VERSE

Christ died for our sins. 1 Corinthians 15:3

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that Jesus paid for my sins by dying on the cross.

LAW & GOSPEL

We are all sinful and deserve eternal death.

Jesus paid the price for the sin of the world by His suffering and death on the cross.

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

The events of Christ's crucifixion unfold in a series of brutal and bloody vignettes: questioned before Pilate, mocked and abused by the Roman guard, nailed to the cross. Jesus hangs between life and death—abandoned by His Father—yielding up His life at the moment He chooses. Multiple witnesses see where Christ is laid in a borrowed tomb.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Matthew 27:11–66 and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Explore the Passion Week map (*TLSB*, p. 1690–91) and the burial bench image (*TLSB*, p. 1823) to visualize this lesson more clearly.

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- LSB* hymnals
- Travel-size tissue packs
- Blank address labels
- Digital device
- Vegetable oil
- Pretzel sticks, cheese dip, dark paper plates

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You have done everything for us, even dying on the cross for us. Thank You! Bless our time today as we learn about how much You love us. In Your name we pray. Amen.

SAY

- Hi, friends! I'm glad you are here to learn more about our friend and Savior, Jesus!
- What are different kinds of sins? Today, we're going to think about our sin, but also about how Jesus saved us from sin.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or both of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE YOUNGER** Hand out blank sheets of paper. Ask students to divide their paper into sections, giving help as needed. In each section, students can draw elements of this account (a tree for Jesus praying in the garden, a sword for the soldiers taking Jesus away, a crown of thorns for Jesus before Pilate, a cross for Jesus dying on the cross, a tomb for where Jesus was buried, etc.). You could also pair students up to divide the work.
- FOR CHILDREN WHO ARE OLDER** Sing "Go to Dark Gethsemane" (LSB 436). Pause after every stanza, and summarize what part of the account the stanza describes. (Focus on stanzas 2 and 3 for the content addressed in the lesson today.) You could also sing "Were You There" (LSB 456). If you aren't comfortable singing, you could ask volunteers to read the stanzas aloud.

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose the questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- How did Jesus pay for our sins?
- What happened to the sky when Jesus died?
- Crucifixion is still one of the worst deaths someone could go through. Why would Jesus suffer so much for us?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- Ever since Adam and Eve sinned, God promised a Savior. Jesus is the promised Savior. We don't like to think about our sins, but everyone is sinful. Jesus paid for all our sins on the cross.
- It's sometimes easy to be angry with the people who put Jesus on the cross. But Jesus went to the cross for our sins too. Jesus willingly went to the cross because He loves us.
- Jesus paid for our sins out of love for us. Now we have eternal life! We don't have to worry about death anymore.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus' death on the cross and rising from the dead is at the heart of God's plan for us.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Make a cross with two fingers each time you hear the word *Jesus* while reading.

Jesus knew that there was a big problem in the world. That problem was sin. Ever since Adam and Eve sinned long ago, sin has been a problem for all people. **Jesus** loves people. **Jesus** loves you and me!

So **Jesus** left His home in heaven and became a person like us, but He was still God too. He came to earth to help us with our sin problem. **Jesus** was born as a little baby. Then He grew bigger just like you are growing bigger. People have a sin problem, but not **Jesus**. He never whined or fussed. He never said no to His parents. He never hit a friend. He never did any naughty things. **Jesus** never sinned! **Jesus** kept all of God's rules for us! When **Jesus** grew to be a big man, He taught people about God's love and healed people for three years. But the biggest reason **Jesus** came to earth was to save us from our sins.

Jesus knew He would soon die on the cross to pay for our sins. So **Jesus** went to a garden to pray. He asked His Father in heaven for strength. Soon, some soldiers came. March, march, march. They took **Jesus** to some important church rulers. These rulers did not believe that **Jesus** was the Savior God promised to send. They wanted to get rid of Him.

They took **Jesus** to a man named Pilate. Pilate was the ruler of the country. They told Pilate, "**Jesus** is a trouble-maker. He should die."

Pilate did not think **Jesus** had done anything wrong. But he was afraid of the people. He let his soldiers put a robe on **Jesus** and hurt Him. They gave **Jesus** a crown, but it was made of thorns. Then Pilate had an idea. He brought out **Jesus** and another man who had done bad things. Pilate asked the people, "Whom do you want to go free? Whom do you want to die?" The people shouted, "Free Barabbas! Nail **Jesus** to a cross!"

So Pilate let the soldiers take **Jesus** and nail Him to a cross. This hurt **Jesus** very much. But **Jesus** stayed on the cross so He could take the punishment for our sins. When **Jesus** hung on the cross, the sky turned very, very dark. It was dark for three whole hours. Finally, **Jesus** cried out, "It is finished." Then He died. The ground shook, and rocks broke apart. A big curtain in the temple tore into two pieces.

A soldier said, "Truly, this was the Son of God!"

Jesus' friends came and put His body in a tomb.

But this is not the end of the story. **Jesus** did not stay dead. On Easter morning, He came alive again! Because **Jesus** suffered and died and rose again, God forgives our sins. Because **Jesus** did this, we can live with Him in heaven someday. **Jesus** loves us so much!

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

Jesus continued to heal and to teach about God's kingdom. The Pharisees and others grew so angry that they decided Jesus must die. They arrested Him and took Him to the Romans because they could not put anyone to death. Only the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, could do that.

Early Friday morning, they brought Jesus before Pilate. After talking with Jesus, Pilate told the Jews, "I find no guilt in Him." He knew Jesus had done nothing wrong, but Pilate thought if he had Jesus whipped, that would satisfy the leaders who hated Jesus so much.

So the Roman soldiers took Jesus and whipped Him badly. But when the Jewish leaders saw Him, they shouted, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!"

Finally, Pilate gave up. He ordered his soldiers to take Jesus outside the city and crucify Him.

The Roman soldiers made Jesus carry His cross through Jerusalem to a hill called Golgotha outside the city. There, they nailed His hands and feet to the cross and raised Him up between two criminals.

They put a sign over His head that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Jesus prayed, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do."

At noon, the sun stopped shining, and it grew very dark. Jesus was being punished in our place for our sins. God the Father left Jesus all alone to suffer the punishment for all our sins.

This went on for three long hours until Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"

Jesus shouted in a loud voice, "It is finished." He had finished everything God the Father had sent Him to do. Every sin had been paid for, and heaven now stood open for everyone who believes in Jesus.

Finally, Jesus prayed, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit." Then, He died.

The curtain in the temple that divided the place made for God and the place made for people tore from top to bottom. The earth shook, rocks split, and even some people came back to life.

A Roman military leader said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

Many people are scared to die. But we don't have to be. Jesus died, was buried, and rose to life again. He promised that whoever believes in Him will live with Him forever because He saved us by dying for our sins and winning the battle over death.

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

Loving Others

Bring travel-size packets of tissues and blank address labels. Say, **Because of sin, sad thing sometimes happen.**



Mention that we can help others feel better when they are sad. Ask children to decorate a label with crosses and hearts and to place a label on the front of a tissue pack. Tell children to give their pack to someone who looks sad and tell that person, "Jesus loves you!"

Movie Moments

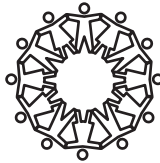
Build a playlist from a few brief video clips online. They can be famous parts of children's movies or silly clips of animals. Some of these may be happy (a puppy does a trick), and some may be mildly sad (a kitten loses a toy). Ask children to identify the different clips as happy or sad.

Talk about how our world has happy and sad things that happen. It was sad that Jesus had to die, but it was happy that He saved us from sin.



Happy News

Gather everyone in a circle. Have everyone join hands and walk around the room as you sing the song below to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."



I have happy news to share; I will tell it ev'ry where. Jesus died and rose for me. From my sins I am set free! I will tell both big and small: Jesus died and rose for all!

"Stained Glass" Cross

Cover work area. Give each child a large cross outline on white paper to color. Rub the back of each cross with oil to make it translucent. Attach yarn to hang in window.



Cross Snack

Serve cups of water and small pretzel sticks on dark paper plates. Offer a dip such as soft cheese. Let children arrange the pretzel sticks as a cross on the dark plate before dipping the pretzels and eating them. Say, **Let's say a thank-You prayer to Jesus for dying on the cross for us. And let's thank God for this snack too.** Pray, or invite a child to say the prayer.



Bible Verse

Read the Bible Verse from 1 Corinthians 15:3 in your Bible: **Christ died for our sins.** Ask the children to say the verse with you. Say, **Jesus died for our sins because He loves us. What are other ways that Jesus shows His love for us?** Discuss ways Jesus shows His love, such as caring for us, listening to our prayers, and so forth.



Cross Scavenger Hunt

Ask the children to join you on a scavenger hunt. Lead them in a line, and see how many crosses you can find. Look in your room and perhaps even throughout the building. Some children may notice crosses in architecture and the like.



LEAVE

SAY

Jesus loves us so much, He died for our sins. Now we don't have to be afraid of death anymore. But that's not the end of what Jesus does for us. He gives us eternal life!

PRAY

Dear Jesus, thank You for loving us. Thank You for dying on the cross for our sins. We don't have to be afraid of death because You give us life forever with You. In Your name we pray, Jesus. Amen.