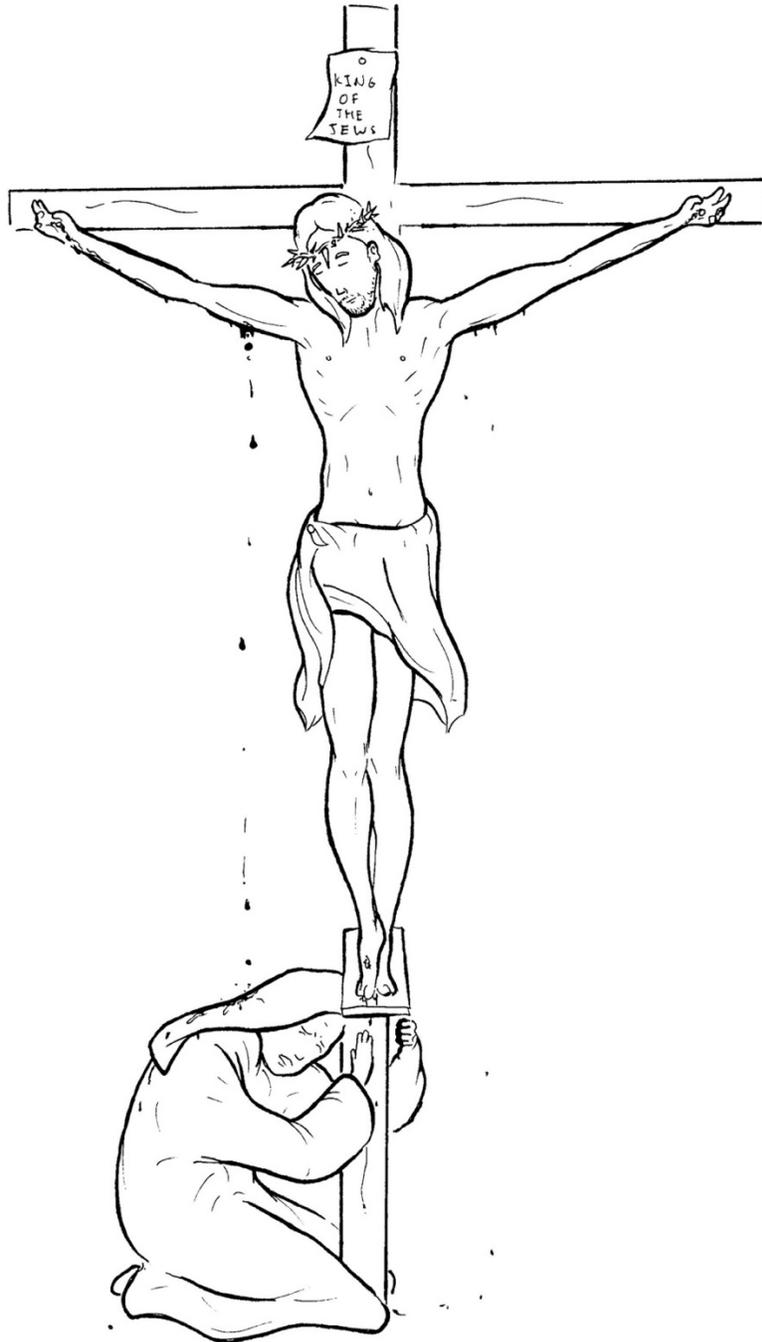


Bible Lesson

39. Jesus Dies on a Cross

Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19



“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing,” Jesus said.

Luke 23:34

Jesus Dies on a Cross

They crucified Jesus at a place called "The Skull." Soldiers put him on a cross. They put nails in his hands and feet. A note above him read, "This is the king of the Jews."

Two robbers hung on a cross next to Jesus. They made fun of him. So did the Jewish leaders. "He saved others but he cannot save himself," they mocked.

If Jesus asked, God would send hundreds of angels. He could have gotten off the cross. But he stayed there...to forgive us. "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing," Jesus said.

One robber begged, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

"Today," Jesus said, "you will be with me in paradise."

His mother Mary and a few friends cried at the cross. Darkness covered the land. "My God, my God, why have you left me?" Jesus cried out loud. "It is finished!" Jesus gave up his spirit. The curtain in the temple ripped in two. The earth shook. Dead people rose out of their graves! The soldiers yelled, "Oh no. He truly was the Son of God!"

But it was too late. Kind and gentle Jesus was gone.

Questions

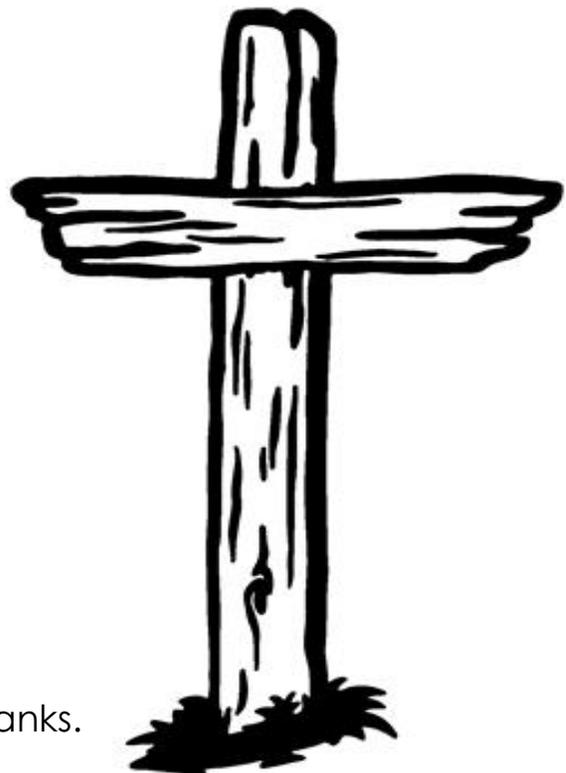
1. Why did Jesus die on the cross?
2. What could Jesus have done if he chose to?
3. What did Jesus say would happen to the robber who believed in him?
4. Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to forgive your sins? What will happen to you after you die?

Pray this prayer:

Dear Jesus,

You could have gotten off the cross. You decided to die for me. Thank you. I know when I die that I will be with you in paradise (heaven) forever.
Amen

Write in the cross sins you have done.
Write around the cross a prayer of thanks.



Story S-t-r-e-tch-ing

39. Jesus Dies on a Cross

Show students where the story is in the Bible. Use the Bible references above the illustration.

Before you read:

Activate Prior Knowledge

- a) We call the day that Jesus died "Good Friday. What is good about it?
- b) Jesus did many miracles. Why didn't he get himself off the cross?
- c) Has anyone given up something super important for you? How did you feel about that? Would you give up your life for anyone else?

After you read:

Good Traditions on Good Friday

The day that Jesus died is the most holy day of the year for believers all around the globe. Some Christians stay home from work or school to concentrate on Jesus.

Perhaps you can add one or more of these to your Good Fridays:

- * Jesus hung on the cross from noon until 3 pm. Close all your curtains and turn off phones, TVs, and other distractions.
- * Spend that time reading the gospel accounts of Jesus' death.
- * Don't eat or drink during that time. Instead, thank Jesus for what he endured.
- * Wear black like we do for funerals. Light some (electric) candles.
- * Draw a red dot onto your palms. Slowly stretch out your arms and say, "Jesus loved me so much he stretched out his arms and died for me."
- * Go to church for quiet prayer or Stations of the Cross at Catholic churches.

Passion Lunch

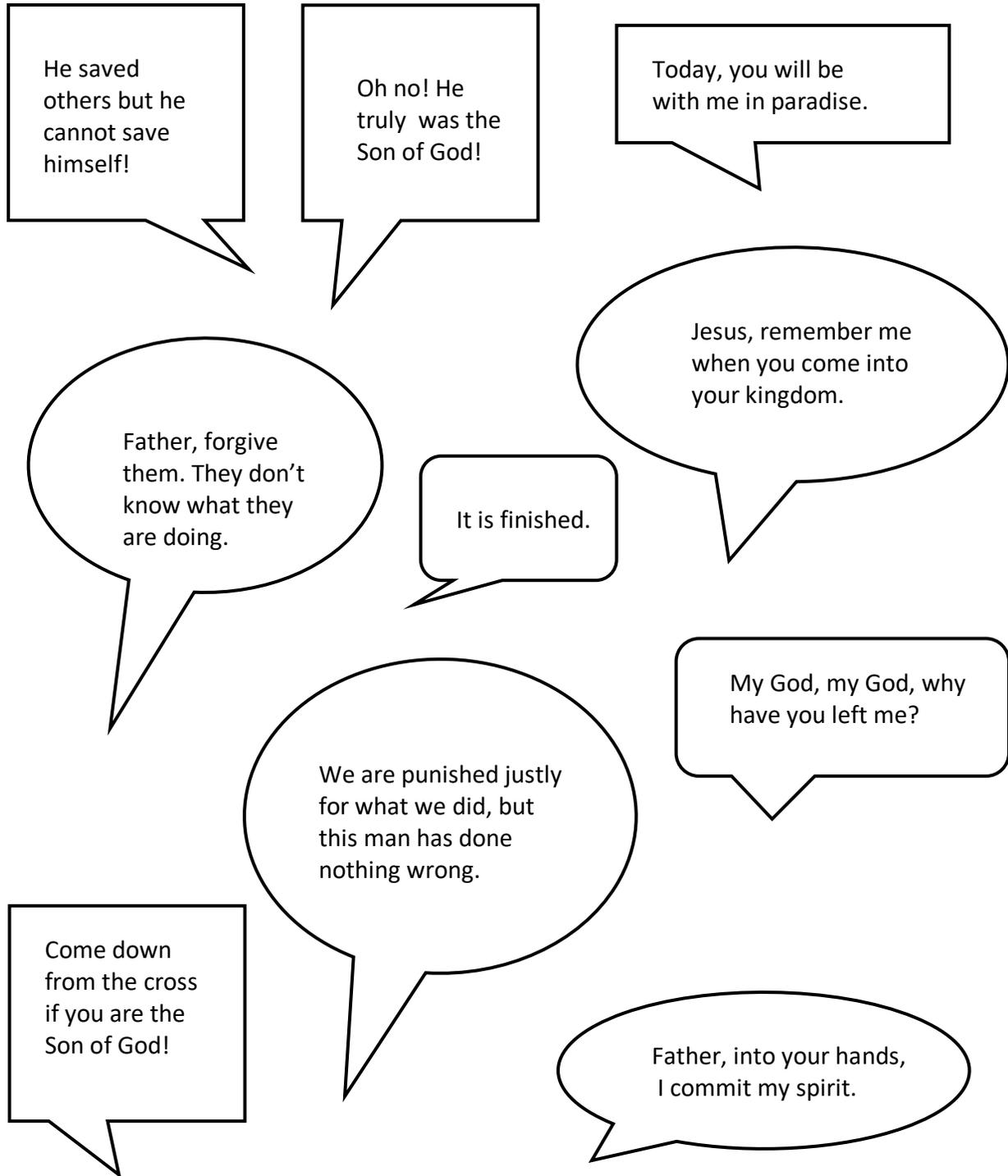
Before your 3-hour fast, kids can help make a meal to remember Jesus' final days. Crown of thorns: Spread peanut butter on a round cracker. Break up thin pretzel sticks into small pieces. Fashion them into a "crown of thorns" around the rim of the cracker. Cross: Form two large pretzel sticks into a cross. Use peanut butter to secure them. Peter's Sword: Use a toothpick or tiny, toy swords and pierce them with olives or cheese cubes. Buy plastic cocktail swords at a party store. Judas's Kiss: Hershey's dark chocolate kisses. Find more creative ideas at: <http://www.catholicicing.com/story-of-the-passion-lunch-symbolic-lunch-for-good-friday/>

Curtain Ripped

When Jesus died, the 40-foot heavy curtain that separated people from the Holy of Holies in the Temple was ripped in two by the hand of God, from top to the bottom. He wants us to know that because of the death of Jesus, every person now has access to God, not just priests on holy days. We can all come to God. Take a piece of fancy cloth. At the hour that Jesus died, cut or rip it in two vertically. Let the kids imitate you by ripping in two a paper towel. Write a prayer on both pieces thanking God for letting us to be close because of Jesus.

A Thief, Grief, and Belief

Look at accounts of Jesus' death in all four gospels. Determine who said what in the word bubbles. Cut them out and glue them to the illustrated page. Draw a picture on the page of who said it or write the name to attribute it. Draw a cross on either side of Jesus and a criminal on each cross.



Tiny Tale of Terror: Real-life Zombies

In only one of the four gospels (Matthew 27:51-53, 54b) do we read this hidden, three-verse "ghost" story. The entire earth convulsed at the death of the Son of God. Students rewrite the story word-for-word. They animate some of the words to match the meaning and sentiment of the word. For example, write the word "shook" in shaky-looking font. Get creative with illustrations, colors, and imagination. Then retell the story in voices that match your font.

The earth shook.

Rocks split open.

The tombs broke open.

The bodies of many holy people who had died were raised to life.

They came out of the tombs.

And, after Jesus' resurrection they went into the holy city.

They appeared to many people.

They were terrified and exclaimed,

"Surely, he was the Son of God!"

The Colors of the Cross

Cut out the good news cross and fold it up. Share your folding cross with friends so they can meet your Savior, King Jesus. You read each box while they color it.

Teaching Tip

Some gospel colors use black to stand for sin. We prefer you use dark blue (for sad tears). No child should feel like black is bad.

Teaching Tip

Let seven kids learn and recite this poem. They can each hold a piece of colorful paper to form a cross at the end.

Colors of the Cross

1. In the dark of the night, we hide our sins from the light.

We need a Savior.

2. On a cross of brown, thorns were his crown. Jesus Christ, our Savior.

3. To save the lost, Jesus died on a cross. Red is the blood of the Savior.

4. White like the snow; forgiveness we know and thank you, Christ our Savior.

5. Green plants grow. New Christians, go and grow to be like the Savior.

7. Good news we bring, purple for a king. Jesus is crowned Lord and Savior.

6. Yellow is bright and full of delights. In heaven, we'll meet our Savior.

Teaching Tip

Photocopy this page onto cardstock. Fold the cross and tape it with transparent tape to form a box. Let the kids first fill the box with jelly beans using the corresponding colors.

Teaching Tip

Let the kids look up these verses to match the boxes:

1. John 19:2
2. John 3:20
3. Ephesians 1:17 (NLT)
4. Isaiah 1:18
5. Colossians 2:6-7
6. Revelations 21:11
7. John 19:5