



Use Week of:

Easter • Session 2

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT:

Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
(10–15 MINUTES)
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ministrygrid.com/gospelproject | gospelproject.com/podcasts

LEADER Bible Study

Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection are essential to the Christian faith. If we teach Jesus as a respected teacher and miracle-worker who claimed to be the Messiah and who was crucified on the cross—but who was not resurrected—then we are teaching the Jesus of Judaism. If we teach Jesus as a wise teacher and prophet who ascended into heaven—but who was not crucified—then we are teaching the Jesus of Islam.

Jesus came to earth to save us from our sins. (Matt. 1:21) He died to show God's love to us (Rom. 5:7-8) so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16) Jesus died so that we would be forgiven. (Eph. 1:7) Jesus died to bring us to God. (1 Pet. 3:18)

The time between Friday afternoon and Sunday morning must have been dark hours for Jesus' disciples. Fear, doubt, and confusion certainly overwhelmed their thoughts. Jesus, their Lord, was dead. He had been unjustly arrested, falsely accused, and severely beaten. Even worse, He had been killed in a horrible manner: by crucifixion.

The story doesn't end there. Jesus' body was laid in a tomb. The tomb was sealed and guards watched over it. The Jews remembered Jesus' claim that He would rise from the dead (John 2:19-21), and they made sure no one could steal His body and insist He had risen. Imagine their surprise when Jesus did rise from the dead!

Jesus' resurrection gives us joy and hope for our own resurrection. The same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead will raise our bodies to life. (Rom. 8:11)

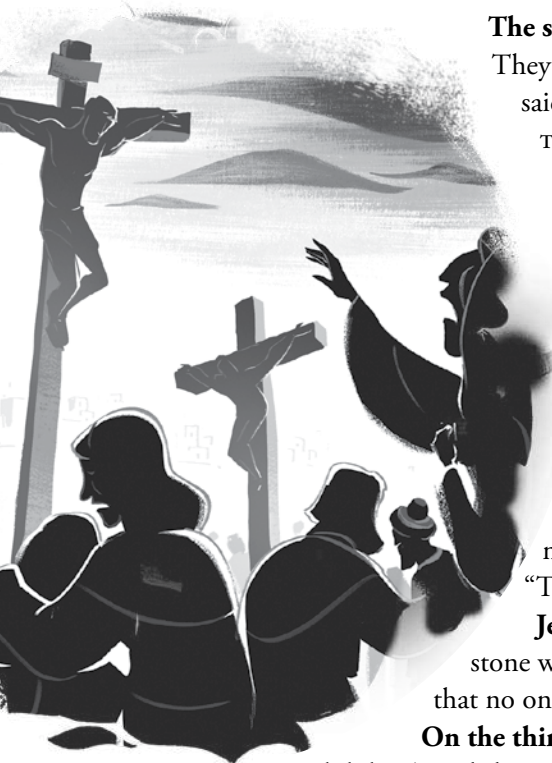
As you teach kids this Bible story, emphasize the gospel: the good news of who Jesus is and what He has done. We do not worship a dead Savior. Jesus is alive! Sadness turns to joy. There is hope for sinners.

The BIBLE Story

Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

Matthew 26–28; John 20

Jesus had been arrested and taken to Pilate, the governor. The governor's soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus. They made a crown of thorns and put it on His head. Then they mocked Him: "Here is the King of the Jews!" They beat Jesus and led Him away to be killed.



The soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They put a sign above His head that said THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Two criminals were crucified next to Him.

Darkness covered the land. Jesus cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Jesus shouted again, and then He died. Suddenly, the curtain in the temple sanctuary split in two, from top to bottom, and there was an earthquake. One of the men guarding Jesus' body said, "This man really was God's Son!" Jesus was buried in a tomb. A

stone was sealed in front of the tomb so that no one could steal Jesus' body.

On the third day, Mary Magdalene (MAG duh leen) and the other Mary went to the tomb.

Suddenly, there was an earthquake. An angel of the Lord rolled back the stone and sat on it. The guards were so afraid that they fainted.

The angel spoke to the women, "Don't be afraid! I know you are

looking for Jesus. He is not here. He has risen, just like He said He would.”

The women left the tomb quickly. They ran to tell the disciples the good news. Just then Jesus greeted them. The women worshiped Him. “Don’t be afraid,” Jesus told them. “Tell My followers to go to Galilee. They will see Me there.”

Jesus appeared to Peter and then to the other disciples. Jesus also appeared to more than 500 people who followed Him. Many people witnessed that Jesus is alive!

Christ Connection: Jesus’ death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives hope and true joy to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Use a flannelgraph:** Use pictures on a board to tell the story. Find find pictures of the people and locations in the story. Move them around as you tell the story.
- **Enter the story:** Tell the Easter story as an eyewitness to the events, such as Mary Magdalene or Peter. Convey the emotions of sadness and excitement as you tell the story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection

BIBLE PASSAGE: Matthew 26–28; John 20

STORY POINT: Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 Chronicles 16:31

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share about a time they have been surprised. What happened?

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “The Word Alive” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “The Word Alive” on the activity page. Kids should use the letters from the word *RESURRECTION* to make other words. Let kids share their lists. Who came up with the most words? Who had the longest word?

SAY • Who can tell me what the word *resurrection* means?

[*Pause for kids to respond.*] *Resurrection* means “rising from the dead.” Today’s Bible story is about Jesus’ death on the cross—His crucifixion—and His rising from the dead—His resurrection. I can’t wait for you to hear more.

LOW PREP

- large piece of paper
- paper
- scissors
- tape
- blindfold

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Center of it all

Before meeting, use a large piece of paper to create a target

on the wall. Cut arrow shapes from paper, one per kid. Direct kids to form a line. Give the first kid a paper arrow with tape on the back. Blindfold her and direct her to stand directly in front of the target. Challenge her to place her arrow at the center of the target. Continue until all kids have had a chance to play.

SAY • Today, we will talk about an event that is the center of the gospel story: Jesus' death and resurrection. All of you tried to place your arrow at the center of the target, but that was difficult, wasn't it? Everyone kept missing the mark. The same is true when it comes to salvation. We could never save ourselves. We always miss the mark. That is why we need a Savior and what makes this story the center of it all.

OPTION 2: Broken to beautiful

Direct each kid to cut the corners off heavyweight paper to create a cross shape. Invite them to tear decorative paper into small pieces. Demonstrate how to use a foam brush to cover the cross shape with glue and put the decorative paper pieces on it. Kids should cover the paper with one final layer of glue. Set aside the art to dry.

- heavyweight paper
- decorative paper
- foam brushes
- scissors
- glue

SAY • There are times in life when it can feel like things are not turning out the way we hoped. It might feel like we have broken pieces in our life. In today's Bible story, we will learn how God takes things that are broken, confusing, and sad and turns them into joy.

Hang your cross art somewhere where you can see it often and remember the hope and joy you can have in Jesus.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters wearing business attire and a name tag.]

• leader attire

• Bible

• name tag

LEADER • Welcome back, everyone! Today is the last day of our model United Nations. We have learned that the United Nations is a place where countries work together. In order for countries to work well together, the United Nations developed international laws that all countries must follow.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Do you know there is a Bible verse that tells us something true about all people, from every nation, who have ever lived? Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” We are all sinners, and our sin demands a payment. Out of His love and mercy, God sent a Rescuer—His Son, Jesus—to pay the price for our sin.

Today, we will learn about Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. This story is the center of the gospel and is good news for sinners.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • For weeks, we have been thinking about the question, *What is the gospel?* By studying stories from the Bible, we have discovered that *the gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* This is exactly what we will see in today's story.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • Today's Bible story is called "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection." *Crucifixion* means "death on the cross" and *resurrection* means "one's rising from the dead." Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel story. All the stories in the Old Testament and most of the New Testament Gospels lead up to this event.

All the stories following Jesus' resurrection, like the stories we have studied about the early church, point back to Jesus' death and resurrection. When the early believers faced persecution and discouragement, they found hope in their Savior, Jesus. **Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers** and turns sadness into joy. Let's get started.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Matthew 26–28; John 20. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection."

LEADER • Jesus' death and resurrection are what makes

· Bibles
· "Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection" video
· Big Picture Question Poster
· Bible Story Picture Poster
· Story Point Poster

Christianity different from all other religions. While other religions may claim that Jesus was only a good teacher, Christians believe He is the Son of God. The Bible says everyone has sinned, and our sin separates us from God. God the Father sent Jesus to earth to rescue sinners. Jesus died on the cross and rose again on the third day, conquering sin and death.

On the cross, Jesus took on the sins of the world. Jesus took the punishment for sins and settled it once and for all. He acted as a substitute for every sinner who would trust in Him as Lord and Savior. When we turn from our sins and trust in Jesus, God forgives our sins and gives us eternal life. Can you believe it? That is good news!

Jesus' followers must have felt heartbroken and afraid as they watched their Lord be arrested, tried, beaten, and then crucified among criminals. However, on the third day, all their sadness turned to joy as Jesus walked out of the tomb alive as their risen Lord. **Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.**

Christ connection

LEADER • Jesus' death and resurrection is the center of the gospel. Jesus died to pay for our sins. Jesus is alive! God gives hope and true joy to everyone who trusts in Jesus. The story of Jesus' resurrection encourages believers to press on in their faith, even in hard times. It reminds Christians that Jesus has settled the payment for our sins and that He is preparing an eternal home for us. Believers can look ahead with hope for the future.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 81 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Easter, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about why Jesus’ enemies were able to kill Him. Guide them to discuss other times God has used something that seemed bad to bring about something good.

· “Easter, Session 2” questions from kids video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

Ask volunteers to read the Wiltons’ prayer requests. Show the photo of the Wilton family and direct kids’ attention to it while they listen to the requests. Pause after each request and ask for a different volunteer to say a short prayer.

· “Wilton Prayer Requests” printable

LEADER • The Wiltons believe that Jesus rose from the dead and that **Jesus’ resurrection gives true joy to believers**. They want to spread joy to others—and they believe that kids can do that, too! When we pray for missionaries, we are part of the mission of God.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 Chronicles 16:31.

· Key Passage Poster
· “Rejoice, Be Glad (1 Chronicles 16:31)” song

LEADER • The heavens, the earth, and all people from all nations rejoice that the Lord reigns! Because the Lord reigns, Christians can live with joy and confidence, knowing that God is in control of any situation we face. Nothing surprises Him because He knows everything. We can trust Him with any scary or sad situation, knowing that He has a plan for everyone who belongs to Him. We can also live in hope and true joy because Jesus is alive.

Lead kids to sing “Rejoice, Be Glad (1 Chronicles 16:31).”

- “Come, Ye Sinners,
Poor and Needy”
song
- Bible

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Philippians 4:4.

LEADER • God always keeps His promises. He fulfilled His promise to send a Savior to rescue people from their sins. Jesus’ resurrection gives us joy and a reason to celebrate! He is alive! Let’s rejoice in our risen Savior! Sing together “Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, thank You for sending Your only Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for sin in our place. Because of His resurrection, we can experience true joy and hope—even in hard times. Help us point others to You by the way we live our lives and how we share the gospel with them. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- foam cups, 10 per group

Before the session, stack 10 foam cups inside one another. Write the key passage and reference as phrases on the rims of the cups so the words are visible when the cups are stacked. Prepare one set for each group of four or five kids.

Display the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Chronicles 16:31 together. Mix up the key passage cups and challenge kids to work together to stack the cups in the correct order, from top to bottom. Finish by practicing the key passage together. Repeat the activity if time allows.

SAY • Easter is a wonderful time to celebrate the truth that our key passage reminds us of: the Lord reigns!

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Matthew 28. Explain that the Book of Matthew is found in the New Testament division called the Gospels.

Challenge kids to name the Gospels. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) Remind them that these books tell us about Jesus' life and ministry. Choose a kid to read Matthew 28:6 aloud.

SAY • Jesus did not stay in the tomb! He is alive!

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did the angel tell the women to not be afraid?

Help kids recognize that the women and Jesus' disciples were probably very sad and confused. Seeing an angel would be very shocking. Seeing Jesus' tomb open and empty would have been very upsetting. They had not understood what Jesus had said about His death and resurrection.

(Option: Choose a kid to read Matt. 20:17-19.)

2. How does Jesus' death and resurrection give believers hope? *Lead kids to recall that because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we can become children of God and inherit eternal life with Him. This allows believers to live with unshakable hope for the future.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Pet. 1:3-4.)

3. How can we share the good news that Jesus is alive?

Help kids recognize that it is our job and our joy to share the good news with others. We can do this simply by telling the story we heard today. The bad news is that we are all sinners, and the punishment for sin is death. Jesus took the punishment we deserve by dying on the cross, and He conquered death by rising on the third day. He offers salvation to everyone who trusts Him as Lord and Savior.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 61:1.)

SAY • The good news of the gospel is that Jesus made the way for people to be free from sin and experience forgiveness and hope as children of God. **Jesus' resurrection gives true joy to believers.**

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- foam ball
- music

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

- scratch art paper and pointed sticks, 1 set per kid

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Hot potato

Instruct kids to sit in a circle and play a simple game of hot potato. Direct kids to pass the ball around the circle as you play music.

Randomly pause the music. Invite the kid with the ball to share one fact she has learned about missions in this unit or share one way that she can be on mission in her school or community. Play several rounds as time allows.

SAY • Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we have a wonderful message to tell others. *What is the gospel? The gospel is the good news that God sent His Son, Jesus, into the world to rescue sinners.* Sharing the gospel is an important part of being the church. And you are an important part of our church!

OPTION 2: From sadness to joy

Give each kid a sheet of scratch art paper. Challenge kids to use the pointed stick to etch a drawing of today's Bible story on the paper. Offer some suggestions as to what to draw, such as the scene at the cross or the empty tomb.

Allow time for kids to share their drawings with the rest of the group. Encourage them to use their drawings to share the story of Easter with someone this week.

SAY • This paper was dark, but once you started to scratch off the surface, you revealed something beautiful. God did something similar with Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. He took something very sad—Jesus' death—and gave us hope and eternal life through Jesus' resurrection. God gives hope and true joy to everyone who trusts in Jesus.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, thanking God for the gift of eternal life we have in Jesus and the hope that gives us to persevere in this world.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "The Perfect Fit" on the activity page. Kids should circle the word that belongs in each sentence.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- "The Perfect Fit" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.