

Lesson 12:

Jesus Trial and Crucifixion

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Matthew 26:47-27:61; Mark 14:43-15:47; Luke 22:54-23:49; John 18:1-19:42

MEMORY WORK:

Luke 19:10

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Jesus died for me.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION:

Review last week's lesson.

Review with children many of the “good” things Jesus did while on Earth (healing, teaching, etc.). Even though Jesus did so many good things, His main purpose in coming to Earth was to die for us. Today we will talk about some sad things that happened to Jesus.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

NOTE: Use as much of the information about Jesus' trial and death from this lesson and the Scriptures as you think is appropriate for your class. The gruesome details of the crucifixion can terrify and overwhelm many adults; our purpose is not to terrify or overwhelm the children! The main emphasis should be that He suffered a great deal, and did so willingly, because of His great love for us.

1. After Jesus finished praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, He told the 11 remaining apostles that “the hour” had come; He knew that terrible things would soon happen to Him. Jesus had hardly said those words when Judas, the disciple who decided to betray Jesus to the Jews for 30 pieces of silver, brought a large crowd to the Garden to arrest Jesus. Judas knew the place well because Jesus and the apostles often went to the Garden to pray. There were also the chief priests, officers of the Temple guard, and some of the “elders” of the Jewish people. Many in the crowd came with torches and lanterns; a number of them were armed with swords and clubs as if they were going after someone very dangerous.
2. Judas came up to Jesus and kissed Him on the cheek to show the soldiers who they were supposed to arrest. The apostles were naturally very afraid. Peter pulled out a sword, and, in a feeble attempt to defend Jesus, reached out and cut off the ear of a man named Malchus, a servant of the high priest. Jesus scolded Peter, telling him to put away his weapon. Then Jesus performed His last miracle before His death: He put the man's ear back on! But even after they saw this miracle, right there in front of them, the soldiers

still arrested Jesus and took Him away. Most of the frightened apostles ran away, leaving Jesus alone. Peter and John followed at a distance.

3. Jesus was first taken to Annas, a former **high priest** who obviously still had a lot of influence among the Jews. He was then taken to Caiaphas, the current high priest. “Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council [or **Sanhedrin**, according to the Greek] sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death” (Matthew 26:59). His hands were tied like He was a criminal, and He was slapped by a Jewish official. He was blindfolded, insulted, and made fun of. By daybreak (sunrise the next day), the Jews thought they finally had enough information to take the next step.

NOTE: There were three stages of Jesus’ Jewish “trial”: one before Annas, one before the Sanhedrin with Caiaphas presiding, then another before the Sanhedrin after dawn. Only Luke records the third trial. The **high priest** was the chief religious official for the Jews, the man who was supposed to be the mediator between God and the Jews, under Mosaic Law. The **Sanhedrin** was the governing body (court) of the Jews. The 70 men of this special court could make decisions and judgments for the Jews on religious and moral matters, but, as subjects of the Roman Empire, they did not have the authority to condemn someone to death.

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Kangaroo Court](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the illegality of Jesus’ trial, and the article “[Does the Bible Contradict Itself Regarding the Day of the Crucifixion?](#)” by Jeff Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about an alleged biblical contradiction regarding when the Last Supper took place in comparison to the crucifixion.

4. The Jews sent Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor (procurator) over Palestine, to have Him officially condemned and executed by the Roman government. After Pilate questioned Jesus, he couldn’t find enough evidence to convict Him of anything criminal, so he sent Jesus to Herod (the ruler/tetrarch of Galilee at the time), to try to “pass the buck.” Herod “hoped to see some miracle done by Him” (Luke 23:8). When Jesus would not perform a miracle or defend Himself in any way, Herod and his soldiers made fun of Him. Then Herod sent Jesus back to Pilate, dressed in a special robe. After questioning Jesus again, Pilate tried to convince the Jews that Jesus should be released. The angry mob asked him to instead release a convicted murderer, robber, and insurrectionist named Barabbas.

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Pilate—Lost and Found](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the historicity of Pilate.

5. Pilate ordered that Jesus be beaten (**scourged**). A scarlet robe was laid across His bloody back and a crown of thorns was pushed down on His head. Pilate brought Jesus back in front of the Jews and tried to release Him again, but they continued to scream that He be crucified.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Discuss scourging as is age appropriate. Bible scholar J.W. McGarvey says, concerning **scourging**: “We learn from Josephus and others that the law required that those about to be crucified should first be scourged. But Pilate hoped that scourging would suffice [Luke 23:16]. He believed that the more moderate would take pity upon Jesus when they viewed his scourged body, for scourging was so cruel a punishment that the condemned person often died under its infliction. The scourge was made of thongs loaded at the extremity with pieces of bone or metal. The condemned person was stripped and fastened to a low post, this bending the back so as to stretch the skin. Blood spurted at the first blow” [*The Fourfold Gospel: or A Harmony of the Four Gospels* (1914), p. 719].

6. Roman soldiers led the badly wounded and exhausted Jesus to a hill not far outside of Jerusalem known as Golgotha, which means “the skull” to be crucified. There Jesus was nailed to the cross (or cross bar) which He (and Simon of Cyrene) had been forced to carry. He was nailed to the cross (10 feet or less above the ground) and left to die between two criminals (convicted of **insurrection** and murder—possibly co-conspirators of Barabbas). Over Jesus’ cross, Pilate ordered that a sign be posted in three languages stating what He was being crucified for (Mark 15:26), a sign which read “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” The chief priests wanted Pilate to change the sign to read, “**He said**, ‘I am the King of the Jews’” (John 19:21), but Pilate refused.

NOTE: Some commentaries say that condemned criminals normally carried the horizontal beam for their own cross—not the upright stake itself, which was left standing and used over and over.

Insurrection: A rebellion, often against the government or persons in authority

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Antisemitism and the Crucifixion of Christ: Who Murdered Jesus?](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about whether the Jews and/or the Romans were responsible for Jesus’ death.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Discuss the crucifixion as is appropriate for the age group. There were different forms of crucifixion. “T” and “X” shapes were used, and in some cases the crucified was hung upside down. In some instances, the arms were tied to the cross, while in others, the wrists were nailed to the cross. The cross of Jesus is understood to have been of the “T” shape, and His wrists and feet were nailed to the cross, likely before the cross was dropped into the hole that would hold it over the following six hours. One nail went through both feet at the base of the cross. The torn flesh on the individual’s back (from the scourging) was left to rub against the rough, splintered wood of the cross. In spite of the loss of blood from these practices, crucifixion sometimes lasted for days before death came. Death generally occurred due to suffocation from not being able to position oneself to breathe due to fatigue, rather than from blood loss. In order to speed up the process, the legs of the crucified could be broken, causing rapid suffocation.

7. As Jesus was suffering on the cross, four Roman soldiers were on duty (John 19:23), gambling for Jesus’ clothing. (This was a common practice at executions, but it was also a fulfillment of prophecy about the Messiah—Psalm 22:18.) The soldiers, and many passersby, made fun of Jesus, challenging Him to save Himself (to come down off the cross), to prove that He really was the Son of God as He claimed. Apparently, only one of the apostles, John, was at the cross, but several women who had followed Jesus during His ministry were there, as well as His mother, Mary.
8. Some unusual things happened during the time that Jesus was on the cross:
 - three hours of darkness in the afternoon
 - an earthquake
 - tombs were opened and many saints (i.e., “holy people”) came back to life
 - the curtain of the Temple (between the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place) was suddenly ripped from top to bottom

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[At What Hour was Jesus Crucified?](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to an alleged discrepancy regarding the time of Jesus’ crucifixion.

HISTORICAL NOTE: Jewish time was reckoned based on sunrise and sunset. So the exact hours varied according to the actual time of sunrise, which would have changed according to the season of the year. Jesus died about 3 p.m. (in the Spring), which would have been the time of the evening offering in the Temple. It was not uncommon for death by crucifixion to last for several days, especially if the one convicted was bound by ropes instead of having both hands nailed to the cross. If both hands and feet were nailed to the cross, death could occur more quickly because of the increased difficulty breathing. The actual cause of death was usually suffocation.

9. Jesus suffered on the cross for about six hours [from the “third hour” of the daytime period, according to Jewish time (Mark 15:25), or about 9 a.m. until about 3 p.m., according to our time].
10. It was common for the soldiers to break the legs of one hanging on a cross to speed up his death. The soldiers broke the legs of the two criminals on either side of Jesus, but seeing that Jesus was already dead, they did not break His legs (another fulfillment of prophecy—cf. John 19:30-33,36; Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20). One of the soldiers put his spear through Jesus’ side (apparently puncturing the sac around His heart).
11. Two Jewish leaders who believed in Jesus, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, asked Pilate for permission to take Jesus’ body and prepare it for burial. The body was placed in Joseph’s own tomb (burial cave).
12. Jesus **could have** saved Himself; He certainly had the power to come down from the cross. When the mob came to take Jesus while the apostles and He were in the Garden, Jesus even told Peter, “Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?” (Matthew 26:53). Why didn’t He? Because He was willing to be the final sacrifice so that all people everywhere could be forgiven of their sins—including me! No longer would men need to offer animal sacrifices to God. He loves us enough to be the ultimate sacrifice—to pay the ultimate price—so that we can be forgiven (Romans 5:6-9).

SEVEN WAYS TO REMEMBER JESUS’ DEATH:

1. **ONE** man helped Jesus carry His cross (Simon of Cyrene)
2. **TWO** thieves were crucified with Jesus
3. **THREE** languages were on the sign over Jesus’ head: Latin, Greek, Hebrew
4. **FOUR** soldiers gambled at the foot of the cross
5. **FIVE** wounds on His body apart from His scourging: one on each hand, one on each foot, and the cut on His side from the soldier’s spear
6. **SIX** hours on the cross
7. **SEVEN** sayings from the cross [We don’t know how many times Jesus actually spoke from the cross, but seven are recorded for us: three before the darkness fell and four during the last three hours of His life. He spoke to God (three times—Matthew 27:46; Luke 23:34; Luke 23:46), one of the thieves beside Him (Luke 23:43), His mother and John (John 19:26-27), to the soldiers (for drink; John 19:28), and to the world at large (John 19:30).]

RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[The Predicted Messiah](#)” by Kyle Butt on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the fulfilled predictions about Jesus from the Old Testament, and “[Questions and Answers: The Passion of the Christ—Biblically Accurate?](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the accuracy of that film.

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (note disclaimers):

- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;) Include visuals of OT animal sacrifices and discuss how Jesus was our sacrifice.
- Free Bible Images – Saved on flash drive. Can be presented on classroom tv. Script included in lesson file. This lesson has three files: 12A (Trial), 12 B (Crucifixion), 12 C (Burial)

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS:

“Jesus Loves Me”

(Author: Anna B. Warner)

Jesus loves me this I know.
For the Bible tells me so.
Little ones to Him belong.
They are weak but He is strong.

CHORUS:

Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
Yes Jesus loves me.
The Bible tells me so.

Jesus love me when I'm good.
When I do the things I should.
Jesus loves me when I'm bad,
Though it make Him very sad.

(CHORUS)

SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Sticker Scene – Refer to the master copy in the classroom NT Binder. Save the sticker scenes to be laminated and added to their NT Binder.
- Sacrifice Discussion – Review OT sacrifices and their purpose. Point out that blood was always required to take away sin, but in the OT this had to be done over and over. Only a perfect sacrifice would take away sin forever. In the lesson file is a stick figure person. Cover this person with the black paper pieces (sins). Name the sins as you cover the person. Then use the blood to wash away the sins. Explain that people come in contact with Jesus blood through baptism. This is an abstract thought and likely a hard concept for 5 year olds to understand. Be sure no one thinks there is literal blood in the baptistery. But, it is good for them to be introduced to the concept.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday's lesson. (See Review Questions for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

- Make a crown of thorns. This is probably a better activity for the classroom and not a takes home since the students could injure themselves. Show students how to roll play doh into a coil. Cut the coil in half then twist around each other. Form it into a circle and pinch the ends together. Stick toothpicks into the crown. Discuss how this was a crown to make fun of Jesus, not to honor him. Discuss how the toothpicks are pointy and sharp. Thorns would have been much worse.



- Bible Verse Toss: Go over the memory verse several times. Have the children stand or sit in a circle. Say the first word or two of the verse and then toss a beanbag to one of the children, asking him to say the next word of the verse. Play continues with each child throwing or rolling the ball to another child who should say the next word in the verse. (If children have trouble saying one word at a time, toss the ball to a child and have him/her say the whole verse before tossing the ball to you. Teacher should toss the ball or beanbag to each child until all have said the verse.)

Review Questions

1. What happened after Jesus finished praying?
 - a. Judas and a multitude came to meet Him.
2. Who were following Judas to meet Jesus?
 - a. Chief priests and armed soldiers
3. What sign did Judas use to show Who Jesus was?
 - a. A kiss
4. What did Peter do when they tried to arrest Jesus?
 - a. Drew a sword and cut off the ear of Malchus
5. Who was Malchus?
 - a. The servant of the high priest
6. What happened to the disciples?
 - a. All of them ran away.
7. Who was the Roman governor to whom Jesus was taken who condemned Him to death?
 - a. Pontius Pilate
8. Where was Jesus taken to be crucified?
 - a. Golgotha or "Place of the skull"
9. What were some of the strange things that happened when Jesus died?
 - a. Three hours of darkness, an earthquake, tombs were opened, and many of the dead arose
10. How long was Jesus on the cross before He died?
 - a. About six hours

