



Jesus Endures the Cross

Matthew 27:27–66



LESSON GOAL

Students will worship Jesus Christ for dying for sin and giving access to God.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- Jesus was mocked.
- Jesus died on the cross.
- Jesus died for sinners.

KEY VERSE

“And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.” —*Matthew 27:50–51a*

APPLICATION

- Praise Jesus for suffering and dying for sin.
- Trust Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.
- Thank Jesus for making access to God.

NEXT WEEK

The Resurrection of Jesus Christ
Matthew 28

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul... you shall teach them to your children.” —Deuteronomy 11:18–19

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here that will aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Introduction

The nation of Israel had long awaited their promised Messiah and King. Christ was the fulfillment of that messianic prophecy. In chapters 21–23 of Matthew, Jesus is presented and rejected as the Messiah. In chapter 26, Matthew focuses on the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The religious leaders had rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the nation had rejected Him as their King, and even His disciples had abandoned Him. Chapter 27:26–56 is the culmination of God’s wrath being poured out on His Son for the sins of the world. In this chapter, three major events take place. Jesus is mocked; Jesus is crucified; and Jesus dies.

The events of the crucifixion occurred between the hours of 6:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M., climaxing with Christ’s death. At 6:00, on Friday morning, Jesus was bound and brought to the governor, Pilate, to be tried. Pilate tried Jesus but found no reason to sentence Him to death. Wanting to please the people, Pilate freed Barabbas, a man convicted of robbery and murder. Barabbas was an evil and dangerous thief, but thieves were not normally crucified. Crucifixion was saved for the very worst individuals. It is likely that the two criminals who were crucified with Jesus were cohorts of Barabbas.

The King’s Mocking (Matt. 27:26–31)

From 6:00 A.M. until 9:00 A.M. Jesus was scourged, mocked, beaten, and then taken to Golgotha. Scourging was the use of a whip made of braided leather strands. These strands contained pieces of sharp metal or bone. The person being scourged was tied to a post and struck with the whip. At times, scourging could expose the internal organs and the scourging alone could be fatal. Once this was completed to the satisfaction of the executioner, Jesus was taken to the Praetorium. This was where Pilate resided while in Jerusalem. During this time, Pilate was assigned a “garrison” of about 600 soldiers. While Jesus was in the Praetorium, the soldiers brought the garrison around to watch the mocking (Matt. 27:27). They stripped off His clothes and placed one of the guard’s purple/scarlet military cloaks on Him (27:28). They made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head and a reed in His hand. He was mocked, spat on, and then beaten. This was in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 50:6 that reads, “I gave My back to those who struck Me, and My cheeks to those who plucked out the beard; I did not hide My face from shame and spitting.”

The King’s Crucifixion (Matt. 27:31–44)

At about 9:00 A.M. He was led to Golgotha, the “Place of a Skull.” The word “Calvary” also comes from the word “Calvaria” in Latin, meaning “skull.” It is thought that Golgotha was a skull-shaped hill. Jesus could not carry His cross

(weighing in excess of 200 lbs.) all the way to Golgotha. Instead, the Roman soldiers forced a man named Simon, from Cyrene of Northern Africa, to carry the cross for Him. Upon reaching Golgotha, Jesus was offered wine containing myrrh. Myrrh was a narcotic that would deaden pain. Although He was thirsty, He did not drink it. He needed to be fully alert to complete His final work on the cross.

Jesus was then crucified. Crucifixion was a form of punishment that had been passed down to the Romans from the Persians, Phoenicians, and Carthaginians. The Romans had perfected this form of torture. Crucifixion was often lengthy, with the victim hanging on the cross for days before dying. They would also experience exhaustion, dehydration, traumatic fever, and then suffocation. Often the crucified person was attached to the cross with ropes, but in Jesus' case nails attached Him to the cross through the wrists and another through the instep or the Achilles tendon. It is estimated that the Romans crucified 30,000 men in Israel.

Christ's crucifixion took place from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.. Before noon those who were passing by mocked Jesus, as did the chief priests, scribes, and elders. They insulted Him by repeating what the false witnesses had said as He was on trial before the religious leaders and Caiaphas. It is likely that some of these people may have even followed Him, seeing His miracles and hearing His words. Now they hurled abuse at Him and wagged their heads in mockery. Although they had likely heard or even seen the miraculous things that He had done, they wanted Him to perform another miracle. They said, "If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross" (27:40). Although they said that they would believe that He was the Son of God if He came down from the cross, not even an amazing miracle like that would have changed their minds. They had seen Him heal the sick and even raise the dead. Their hearts were unwilling to believe the truth that God incarnate was in their presence.

The King's Death (Matt. 27:45–56)

Between noon and 3:00 P.M. there was darkness over the land. This could not have been an eclipse. The Jews used a lunar calendar and the Passover was always on a full moon. This was supernatural darkness. This darkness was a mark of divine judgment (Is. 5:30; 13:10–11; Joel 2:1,2; Amos 5:20; Zeph. 1:14,15; Matt. 8:12; 22:13; 25:30). At 3:00 Jesus called out, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" (Matt. 27:46). These words were the fulfillment of the prophecy written in Psalm 22:1 which reads, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning?" The wrath of God was being poured out on Christ as the sin-bearer. The eternal punishment of the wrath of God for all the sins of those who would believe were poured out onto Jesus Christ. Human minds cannot fathom the magnitude of this judgment. With His last breath Jesus cried out in a loud voice and voluntarily gave up His spirit.

Christ's death had earth-shaking results. Even in His death, nature groaned as the earth quaked and rocks split open. "Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many" (Matt. 27:51–53). The first miraculous event that occurred upon Christ's death was the veil of the temple being torn in two. Inside the temple there were two rooms. The first was the Holy Place, where the priests would enter and burn incense and place the showbread. The second room was called the Holy of Holies. A six-inch thick veil separated this place from the Holy Place. The priests could only enter this place once a year. In Solomon's time, this was the place where the presence of God dwelled. Only the high priest could enter this place. The tearing of the veil was a beautiful symbol, by God's hand that

showed that His presence was now open to all as a result of Christ's sacrificial death. Another result of Jesus' death was an earthquake where rocks split open. The earth itself was physically affected by this event. God's power over death was also visibly evident in the resurrection of saints. Men and women who had been dead came out of their tombs. These renowned people walked into Jerusalem and were a testimony to Christ's power in life and death.

Upon seeing these events, the centurion and those who stood by were amazed and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (Matt. 27:54). This man that they had likely beaten had died like no other individual they had ever seen. They had no doubt heard rumors of His claims, and because of the events that surrounded His death, they came to the right conclusion: that Jesus truly was the Son of God. Their response, confession, and fear were a profession of their faith.

The King's Burial (Matt. 27:57–66)

After Jesus' death it was required that He be taken down off the cross before 6:00 that night for the Passover. In order to end the life quickly of those who were still alive, the soldiers broke the legs of the two thieves on either side of Christ. When they came to Christ they realized that He was already dead. One of the soldiers pierced His heart with a spear. Out of the wound came both blood and water. This was a sign that Jesus' body was in fact dead. This was in fulfillment of Psalm 34:20, "He guards all his bones; not one of them is broken."

Isaiah 53:9 prophesied that the Messiah would die with the wicked but be buried with the rich in His death. In fulfillment of the prophecy a rich man named Joseph from Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. Pilate gave him permission and Joseph took Jesus' body and laid it in his own new tomb. Joseph rolled a large stone in front of the tomb to seal it.

Even after His death the religious leaders were afraid of what might come of Jesus. They said that they remembered Jesus' words that He would rise again on the third day. They then asked that Pilate might give them permission to secure the grave until after the third day. They were afraid that the disciples might come and take the body, making it look like Jesus' predictions of His resurrection were true, so they sealed the stone and set Roman guards to watch over the tomb.

Application

Jesus came to earth to save sinners. God planned that His Son would die to pay for sin. Jesus was tried, tortured, and killed. His divine power and authority were seen not only in His life but also in His death. Today, you have seen the King. You have seen that He loved the world enough to be mocked, tortured, and killed, "that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). Believe His words and actions. Receive the gift He offers.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

*"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."
—Psalm 78:1*

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Where did they take Jesus after they arrested Him?

They took Jesus to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest.

What did Peter do when Jesus was being taken away?

Peter ran away but then followed Jesus at a distance.

What were the Jewish leaders trying to do?

They tried to find someone who would lie about Jesus so that they could put Jesus to death.

What happened people accused Peter being a follower of Jesus?

Peter said that he did not know what they were talking about.

How many times did Peter deny Jesus?

Three times.

What happened after the third time?

The rooster crowed.

Where did the Jewish leaders take Jesus after the trial?

They took Him to Pilate.

What did the people say when Pilate asked, "What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?" (27:22)?

The people cried out "Let Him be crucified!"



Access to God, Part 1

Bring in a first aid kit or box of Band-Aids. Stand children in front of a locked door. Tell them that inside the door is a first aid kit. Have several of the children try to open the door. When a door is locked, a person needs a key to get in. Ask them what they would do if there was an emergency and they needed to get the first aid kit. They will likely say that they need a key. We all have an emergency. We are all sick with sin. Plus, our very sickness keeps us from getting to God. The good news is that Jesus' death paid for sin and gives a believer access to God. In today's lesson, we are going to see a great curtain ripped in the temple. This curtain separated man from God in the temple. Once this curtain ripped, it was a sign that all men could have access to God. Jesus' death is the key to our access to God.



Big Sin, Big Punishment: Why Jesus Had to Die

Guide students through the following discussion. If a man steals a car, what should happen to him? He should go to jail. If a man steals the president's car, what

should happen to him? He should go to jail even longer. The president is a very important man and has a very important job. If someone commits a crime against the president, he gets a very large punishment. If we try to steal something from God, what kind of punishment should we get? Answer: A huge punishment—even eternity in hell. When we sin, we are stealing glory from God to keep for ourselves. Because God is infinitely great and holy, any sin we commit is infinitely great. This is why Jesus needed to die for sin. Only God’s Son could pay a big enough penalty to cover our sin.



Sinfulness of Sin

In the past two lessons, we have seen many different people sin against Jesus. Ask children what sinful actions of Bible characters they remember from previous lessons. Examples might include the money changers in the temple, the priests and Pharisees rejecting Jesus, Judas betraying Jesus, Peter denying Jesus, and the disciples falling asleep and not praying with Jesus. Ask the children if those sins need to be punished. Today, we will learn about Jesus dying as punishment for sin.



News of the Cross

Materials: newspaper, construction paper, glue, scissors, hand wipes

Directions: Have each child cut strips of newspaper. Then, use them to form the shape of a cross on construction paper. Hands may get dirty from the newspaper print so be sure to distribute hand wipes afterward.



The Cross Wall Mural

Using butcher paper on the wall, outline a large cross on a hill. The students may decorate the butcher paper to look like Golgotha by using paints and other objects to cover the cross outline. Use this as a background during the lesson time to illustrate when Jesus was nailed to the cross. At the appropriate point in the lesson hang a sign over the top of the cross that reads, “This is Jesus, King of the Jews.” This illustration can also be used in next week’s lesson.



The Tomb Wall Mural

Using butcher paper, create a rocky mountain with a tomb opening. Children may create the mountain gluing crumpled paper bags, natural colored paper pieces or by using paint. During the lesson when Jesus is buried, “role” a large paper stone across the opening of the tomb. When setting up this mural for next weeks lesson “role” the stone away and leave it open to remind the students that Jesus is risen. This illustration can also be used in next week’s lesson.



Walking to Golgotha

Review last week’s lesson by using last week’s the props and murals. Walk the students from place to place that Jesus went the day of His death. After the review of the events studied last week, describe to the children the walk to Golgotha. Show them a crown of thorns and talk about how Jesus was mocked, beaten and a crown of thorns was placed on His head. If possible, walk by another teacher to play the role of Simon from Cyrene and have him join the walk.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done." —Psalm 78:4

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use alongside the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done right from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Last week we learned that one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, did not want to humble himself and become obedient to Jesus' plan. He betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver. This did not surprise Jesus. He knew all along that Judas would betray Him. Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and after this, the Roman soldiers arrested Jesus. Do you think Jesus could have stopped the soldiers from arresting Him? Jesus had all power, but He let the soldiers take Him away to the Jewish leaders who were looking for a reason to kill Him. In today's lesson, we will learn that Jesus willingly suffered and died on the cross to take the punishment for our sins.

While Jesus was being questioned by the Jewish leaders, they said to Him, "Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said, "Yes, I am, and one of these days, you will see Me sitting at the right hand of God, and coming back on the clouds."

That did it! The Jewish leaders were so angry that they tore their robes and shouted, "You have to die for saying that." They began spitting on Jesus and hitting Him. The temple leaders were not good men. They had hate in their hearts. They took Jesus to the Roman governor and said, "Crucify Jesus!"

Before long, all the people were shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" The Roman soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head and led Him away to the hill called Golgotha. There, they hung Jesus on a cross. It was a very sad day for the people who loved Jesus. How could the Son of God be hanging on a cross? This was hard for them to understand.

All of a sudden, at noon when the sun is brightest, the sky became dark as night. Everyone wondered what was happening. It stayed dark for a very long time, and then Jesus cried out in a loud voice. People wondered what He was saying. Jesus cried out again, and then He died on the cross.

The ground began to shake under their feet. There was an earthquake, and the rocks split open and moved around. The Roman soldiers who had been watching Jesus became very fearful when they saw the sun was dark and the earth was moving. The Roman centurion who was guarding Jesus said, "Jesus really was the Son of God."

Jesus really is the Son of God. He humbled Himself and took the punishment that you and I deserve for our sins. The punishment we deserve for our sins is eternity in hell, but because Jesus paid the price for sin, we can spend eternity with Him if we accept Him as Savior and Lord. Thank You, Jesus.



Lesson Questions

What happened to Jesus after He was tried?

The soldiers beat Jesus, put a robe and a crown of thorns on Him and mocked Him.

Where did they take Jesus after He was beaten and mocked?

They took Jesus to be crucified.

What did the guards do to Jesus?

They nailed Jesus to a cross.

What did the sign say that was placed over Jesus' head?

It said, "This is Jesus the King of the Jews."

What did the people say and do who were passing by Jesus?

They mocked Jesus.

What happened when Jesus died?

Jesus cried out in a loud voice and died. Then the veil in the temple tore in two from top to bottom. The earth began to quake, rocks were split opened

What did the centurion say when he saw this?

He said, "Truly this was the Son of God!" (27:54).

Who buried Jesus?

A man named Joseph who was from Arimathea put Jesus' body in his own new tomb and rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards®

Use appropriate A Beka Book® Flash-A-Cards® with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannel Graph

Use appropriate flannel graph pieces with the lesson.



The Events of the Crucifixion

Visual props can be very effective in helping communicate and concrete the various events of Jesus' death. Set up three areas in your classroom with different teaching aids. Divide the children into groups, and have each group spend some time being taught at each setup. Some examples include:

Table 1: Lay out a whip, purple/scarlet fabric, long sharp thorns. Using these items, tell the children the events recorded in Matthew 27:26–31.

Table 2: Vinegar, garments of clothing, long spikes, pictures of criminals, and a cross can all help illustrate the events of Matthew 27:32–44.

Table 3: If possible, take the second group into a separate room and switch off the lights for part of the story-telling time. You can also have a cup of vinegar, torn purple cloth and small rock available to complete the story as in Matthew 27:45–54.



Praising or Mocking

Make two signs before the lesson. One saying “Mocking” and the other saying “Praising”. Before the lesson define what these words mean, especially in regards to God and Jesus. Throughout the lesson, ask children to identify whether people are praising or mocking Jesus (note: there is no one who praises Him in the lesson today). Did Jesus deserving praising or mocking?



Access to God, Part 2

Put up two large sheets across a door in the classroom. Have them meet in the middle. Tell students as you begin the lesson that these represent the veil in the temple. The veil inside the temple separated the priests from the presence of God in a room called the Holy of Holies. The high priest could go into the Holy of Holies only once a year. No one but the priests could go into the Holy of Holies. The veil in the temple was 6 inches thick and was 30 feet wide. The veil was a visible symbol that man was separated from God. The moment Jesus died, there was a great earthquake. God split the curtain of the temple right down the middle. At the appropriate time in the lesson, split the two sheets like God did in the temple. This symbolized that all people now had access to God, not just priests.

Praise and Worship

Jesus Paid It All

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Lord, I Lift Your Name on High



Jesus' Death

Today we'll hear how Jesus died,
(hold hand to ear)

Mocked and beaten, crucified.
(shake head back and forth, then make a cross with fingers)

But Jesus was not just killed by men,
(point up and shake head back and forth)

He gave his life to pay for sin.
(hold hands at chest, then stretch forward)

Now you and I can be with God,
(point toward children, then at self, then up)

With righteousness from Jesus blood.
(fold hands and bow head)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments.” —Psalm 78:7

Choose ideas from this section that review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Making a Cross

Materials: craft sticks, brown markers or crayons, glue

Directions: Have the students use brown markers or crayons to color two crafts. Help them glue the sticks together in the shape of a cross. Explain to the students what a cross is used for and why Jesus was hung on a cross.



“Jesus Died for Sin”

Materials: nine-inch paper plates, brown construction paper, green and red tissue paper, glue, scissors

Using a nine-inch paper plate, cut halfway around the inside rim of the paper plate. Fold this section forward. Write the title “Jesus Died For Sin” along the bottom rim of each plate. To make the crosses, provide children with brown construction paper strips, three-fourths of an inch wide and four inches long for the upright strip, and two and a half inches for the cross bar. They will need three of each size (for three crosses). Attach the two-and-a-half-inch strip perpendicular over the four-inch strip to form a cross. Glue the crosses to the plate as shown in the “Jesus Died for Sin” example page. With green tissue paper, cut or tear pieces to glue on for grass on inside center of the plate. Tear red paper and glue to the middle cross. Talk about Jesus dying on the cross to take the punishment for our sins.



Treasure Hunt Review

Hide pictures representing parts of today’s Bible lesson around the room (soldier, sad face, crown of thorns, three crosses, empty tomb, and the heavenly kingdom). Add to them enough papers with “memory verse” written on them so that there is one paper hidden for each child in the class. Once they have found a “treasure,” they can sit on their chairs. Ask the child with the picture of a soldier to stand. He gets to tell what the soldier had to do with the lesson today. Occasionally, ask those with a “verse” card to stand, and everyone gets to say the verse with them. Continue doing this until the whole lesson has been reviewed and the verse said several times.

Coloring Pages

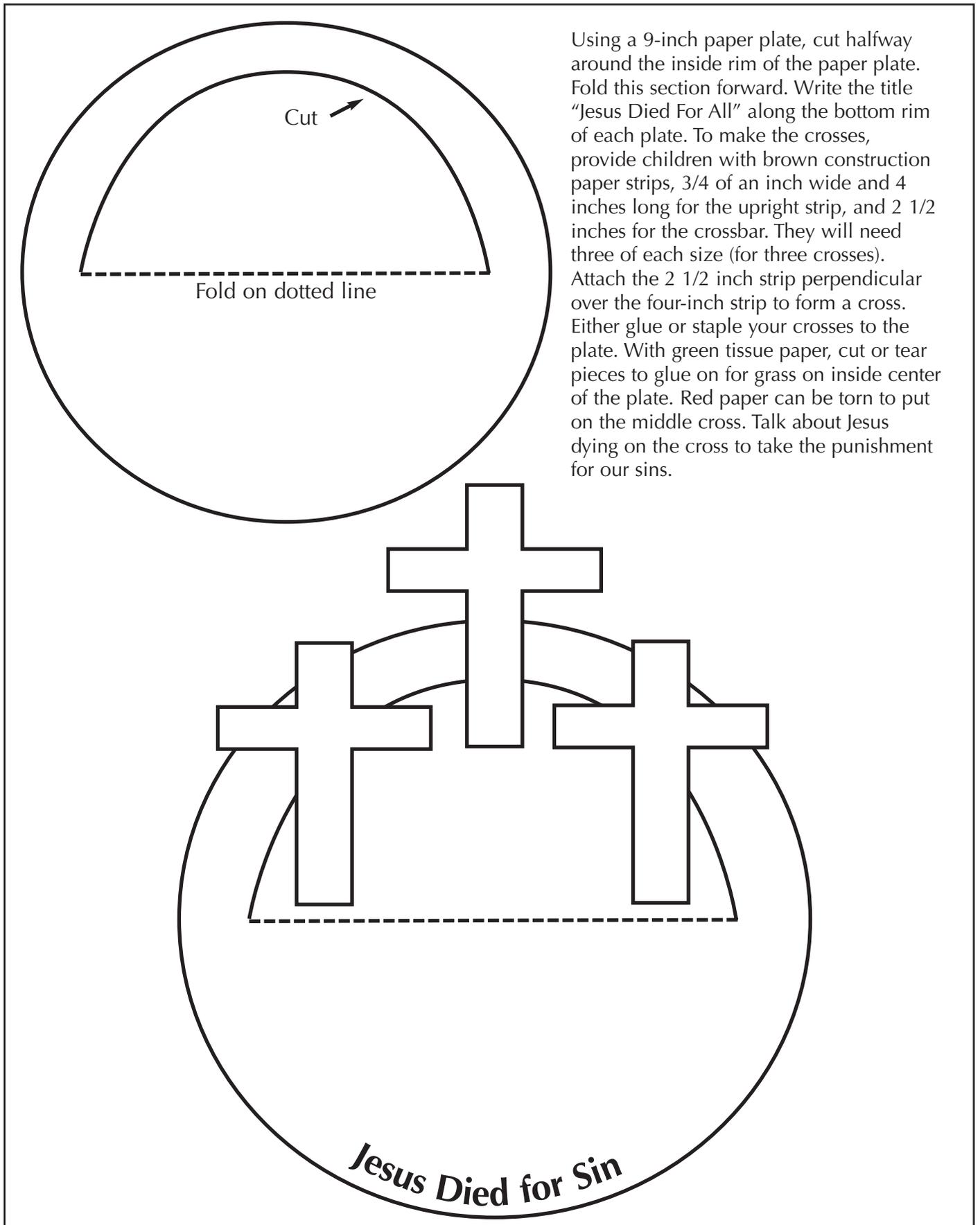
Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. He or she can color the pages in class or take them home to color.

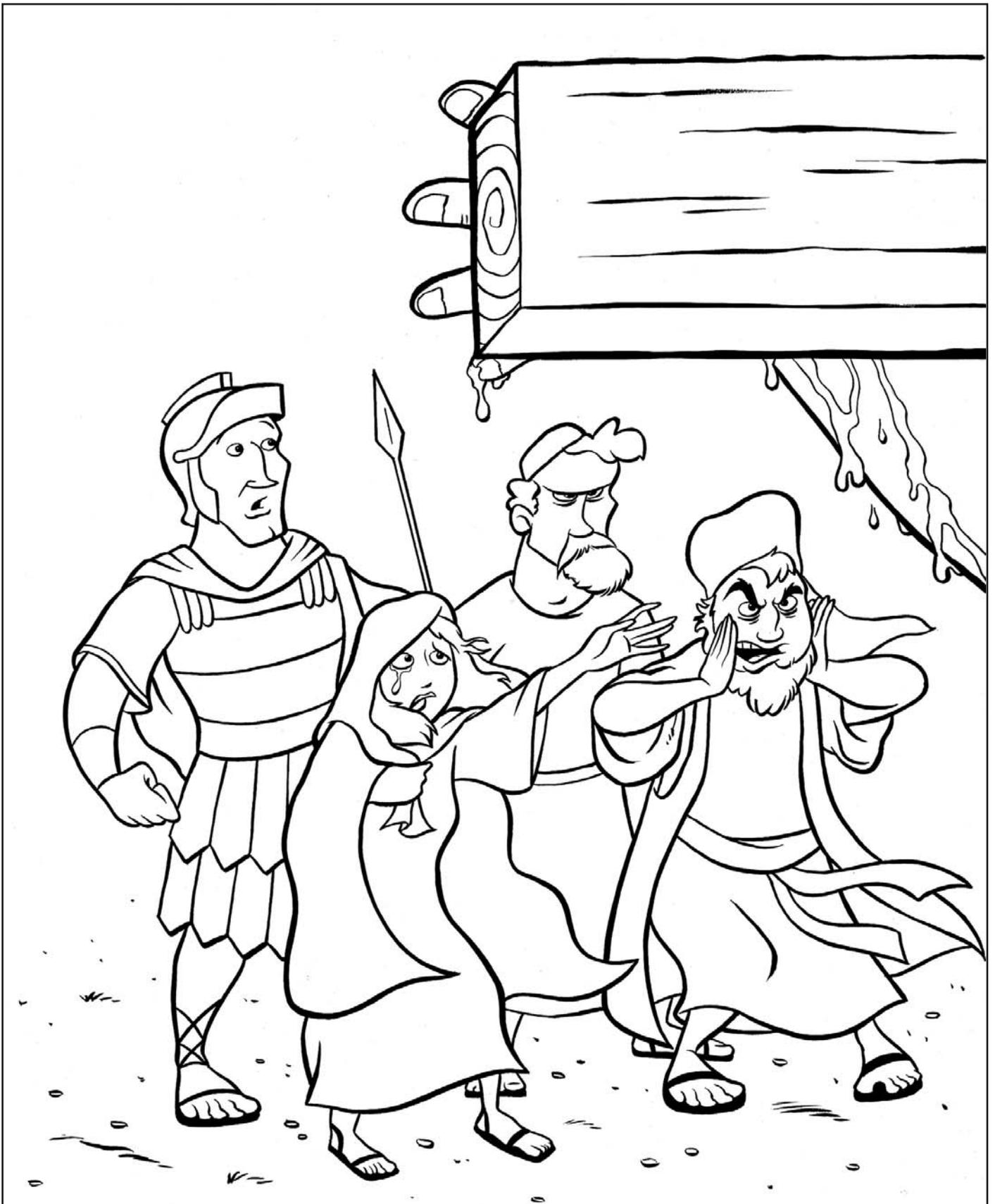


MEMORY VERSE

“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” —Romans 5:8

Jesus Died for Sin





“Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, ‘He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.’” —Matthew 27:41–42

