



Jesus Endures the Cross

Matthew 27



LESSON GOAL

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

BIBLE TRUTHS

- The soldiers and Jewish leaders mocked Jesus.
- Jesus was killed on a cross.
- When Jesus died, many miraculous signs occurred.
- Jesus died to pay for sin and allow people to come to God.

KEY VERSE

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

APPLICATION

- Praise Jesus for suffering and dying for sin.
- Trust Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.
- Thank Jesus for allowing us to come to God.

NEXT WEEK

Jesus Rises from the Dead
Read Matthew 28.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

Teacher Planning Sheet

PREPARE

Objectives/Truths to cover this week

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Personal Application

As a result of my study in this passage, God wants me to

- _____
- _____
- _____

Three ways students need to apply this passage are

- _____
- _____
- _____

Materials Needed

POINT

Choose from various ideas to point students to the coming Bible lesson.

- _____
- _____

PROCLAIM

Choose from various ideas to proclaim the Bible lesson.

Presentation Ideas

- _____
- _____

Praise/Music Ideas

- _____
- _____
- _____

PRACTICE

Choose ideas to help review and apply today's lesson.

- _____
- _____

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 to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

Matthew wrote his gospel to show that Jesus Christ was Israel’s long-awaited King and Messiah. He began his book by establishing a foundation of Christ being the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. In chapters 21–23, Jesus is presented and rejected as the Messiah. In chapter 26, Matthew focused on the rejection of Jesus as the Messiah. The religious leaders rejected Jesus as the Messiah, the nation rejected Him as their King, and even His disciples abandoned Him. In 27:26–55 we see 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 not a “normal” thief. 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 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. The scourging alone could be fatal. Once this was completed to the satisfaction of the executioner, Jesus was taken to the Praetorium. This is 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. They stripped off His clothes and placed one of the guard’s purple or scarlet military cloaks on Him. They made a crown of thorns and placed it on His head and put a reed in His hand. He was mocked, spat on, and then beaten. That was in fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 50:6, which 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., Jesus was led to Golgotha, the “Place of a Skull.” (The word “Calvary” comes from the Latin word *Calvaria*, meaning “skull.”) It is thought that Golgotha was a skull-shaped hill. Jesus could not carry His cross to Golgotha. (The crossbeam sometimes weighed 200 pounds.) Instead, they forced a man named Simon, from Cyrene in Northern Africa, to carry the cross for Him. Upon reaching

Additional Reference Materials

The Murder of Jesus by John MacArthur

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

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 often took days; people would hang in anguish on the cross before dying. They would also experience exhaustion, dehydration, traumatic fever, and then suffocation. A nail through the wrists and another through the instep or the Achilles tendon attached the person to the cross. Christ's crucifixion took place from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

The King's Death (Matt. 27:45–55)

Between noon and 3:00 p.m., there was darkness everywhere. This was a very unusual thing to happen. 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, a mark of divine judgment (Isa. 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 p.m., Jesus called out "*Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.*" These words were the fulfillment of the prophecy 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. Jesus then cried out in a loud voice and voluntarily gave up His spirit.

The effect of Christ's death had earth-shaking results. Even in death Jesus exercised power over nature. "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 veil of the temple was torn in two. Inside the temple were two rooms. The first was the Holy Place. This is 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. In Solomon's time, this was the place where the presence of God dwelt. Only the high priest could enter the Holy of Holies. The tearing of the veil was a beautiful symbolic act showing that God's presence was now open to all through Christ's sacrificial death. Another result of Jesus' death was an earthquake in which rocks split open. The earth was physically affected by these events. Christ'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.

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 offered.

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

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

Who decided to kill Jesus?
The Jewish religious leaders.

Which of Jesus’ disciples betrayed Him?
Judas.

How much money did the Jewish leaders give Judas to betray Jesus?
30 pieces of silver.

Did Jesus know that Judas would betray Him?
Yes.

What did it mean for Judas to betray Jesus?
It meant that Judas was rejecting Jesus as Lord.



Access to God, Part 1

Bring in a first-aid kit or box of adhesive bandages. Have a few students stand in front of a locked door. Tell them that inside the door is a first-aid kit. Have them 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 all are 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 two. 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.



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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? 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.



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Sinfulness of Sin

In the past two lessons, we have seen many different people sin against Jesus. Ask students 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 students whether those sins need to be punished. Today, we will learn about Jesus dying as punishment for sin.



Cross Center

Bring several different crosses to class. Talk about how people in Jesus' time were put on a cross to die. Usually, robbers and murderers were put on crosses as punishment. In today's Bible lesson, someone who did nothing wrong is put on the cross. Do you know who that is?



The Events of the Crucifixion

Visual props can be very effective in helping communicate the various events of Jesus' death. Set up three areas with different teaching aids. Divide the students 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, and long thorns. Using these items, tell the students 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 told in Matthew 27:45–54.

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 during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Last week we learned that one of Jesus' disciples, Judas Iscariot, did not want to humble himself and be 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."

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 is sin?

Anything we say or do that is not pleasing to God.

What is the punishment for sin?

Eternity in hell.

Why did Jesus die on the cross?

To pay for our sins and to make a way for people to live forever in heaven with Him.

How do we know that God loves us?

Because He sent His Son to die in our place.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

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



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



Access to God, Part 2

Put up two large sheets across a door in the classroom. Have them meet in the middle. As you begin the lesson, tell students 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 temple. The veil in the temple was six inches thick and 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 now all people, not just priests, had access to God.

Praise and Worship

ABCDEFGH (Jesus Died for You and Me)

Lord, I Lift Your Name on High

Nothing but the Blood of Jesus

Praise the Name of Jesus



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 He 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 know the Lord,
(Point toward students, then at self, then up.)

Enjoy a life with God, restored.
(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 to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Making a Cross

Using two craft sticks, let the students use brown markers or crayons to color them. Then let them glue them 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.



News of the Cross

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

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



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"Jesus Died for Sin"

Using a nine-inch paper plate, cut halfway around the inside rim of the plate. Fold this section forward. Write the title "Jesus Died for Sin" along the bottom rim. To make crosses, provide students with brown construction paper strips, one $\frac{3}{4}$ x 4 inches (for the upright beam) and one $\frac{3}{4}$ x 2- $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (for the cross bar). They will need three of each size (for three crosses). You may want to make the center cross from red construction paper. Glue or staple your crosses to the plate as shown in the "Jesus Died for Sin" example at the back of this lesson. Cut or tear pieces of green tissue paper to glue on for grass on the inside center of the plate. Red paper can be torn to put on the middle cross. Talk about Jesus dying on the cross to take the punishment for our sins.



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Coloring and Scratching

Use black crayons to make a sheet of paper totally black. Use the edge of a metal spoon or end of a wooden craft stick to scratch out the shape of a cross. When Jesus died on the cross, the sun stopped shining, and it was pitch black on the earth in the middle of the day.

Coloring Sheets

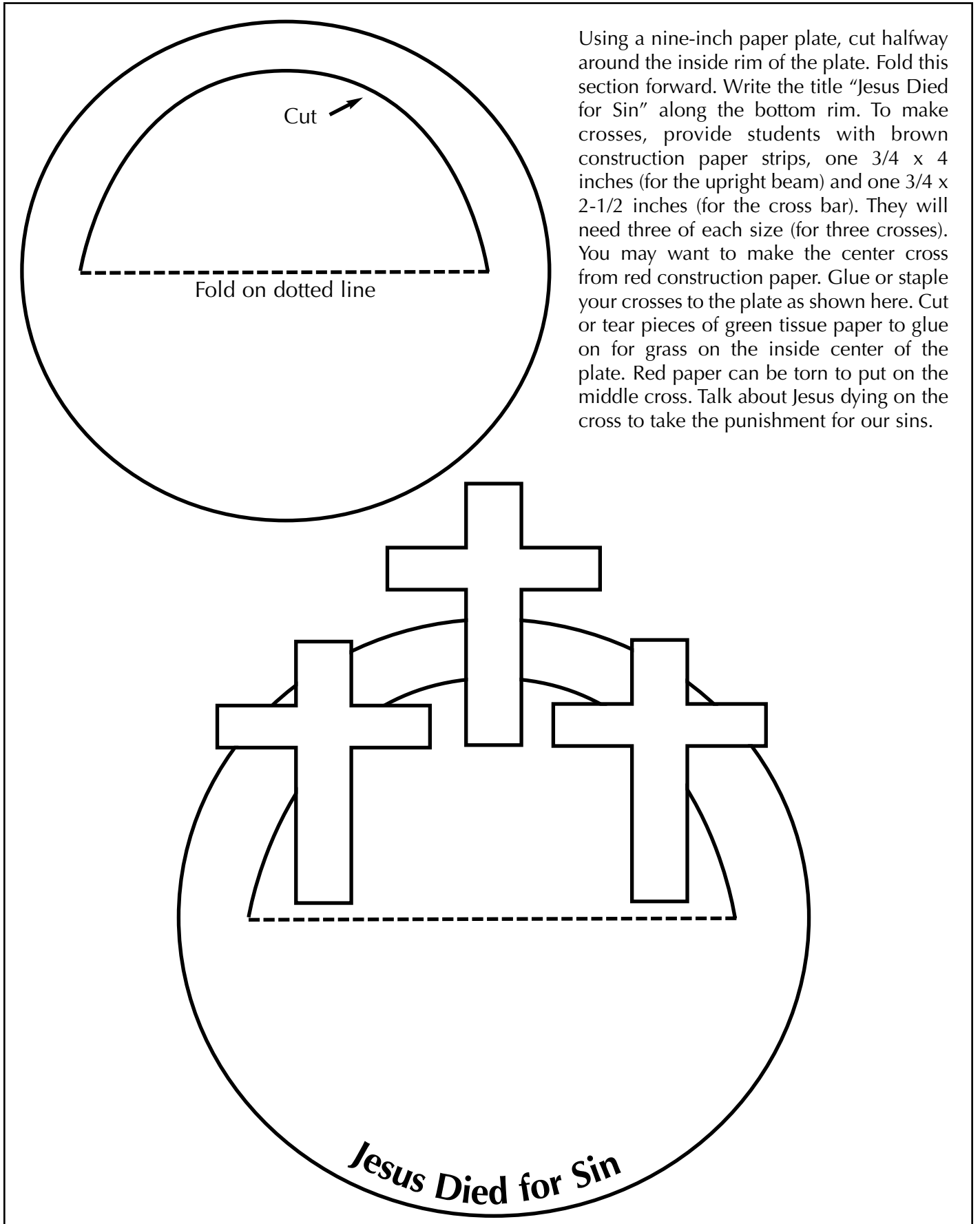
Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of this lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

"And that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Corinthians 15:4).

Jesus Died for Sin





“And when they [the priests] had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor” (Matthew 27:2).



“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).

