



# ELEMENTARY LARGE GROUP

## LESSON 3 HOLY WEEK

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Loves Us and Gave His Life for Us

**SCRIPTURE:** John 12–13; 19

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** After God's people waited many years for Him to rescue them from sin, Jesus shows God's great love by dying on the cross. His death brings life.

**WORD OF WONDER:** I will spend time thinking about everything you have done. I will consider all your mighty acts. —Psalm 77:12

### CURIOSITY

### BELIEF

### FAITH

- \*\*Pre-service: STEM Experiment: Amazing Pencil 8–10 min
- Welcome Question: What does your family do for Easter? 2 min
- SMALL GROUP 25 min
- Declaring God's Wonder 1–2 min
- Prayer of Invitation 1–2 min
- Worship: Love Come Down, Praise You Anywhere 8–10 min
- God's Big Story 5–6 min
- Connecting the Wonder Truth 1–2 min
- Responding in Worship: Jesus Paid It All 3–4 min
  - Baptism Video
- Blessing Your Kids 1–2 min
- SMALL GROUP: Responding in Worship Activity 5–10 min



#### Schedule:

**Pre-service Activities:** min before service

**Small Group:** minutes

**Large Group:** minutes

**Small Group Response Activity:** min



[Connected Easter Elem Spotify playlist](#)

### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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Last year I conducted an experiment.

I wish I hadn't.

As kids tumbled into our children's ministry one Sunday morning, I asked them why they liked Easter. Their answers ranged from candy to new shoes to candy to visiting cousins to egg hunts to candy.

Guess who didn't come up? Jesus.

Like you, we talk a lot about Jesus. He's front and center, week after week. It's our mission for kids to know, love, and follow Him. We want how kids feel about themselves and their world to be shaped by a deep awareness that Jesus loves them so dearly He literally died for them.

That's a message we share often—especially at Easter.

Yet, somehow, the reality of Jesus' love and sacrifice doesn't always sink beneath the surface, deep into kids' hearts and minds. And what's true for our kids is often true for us too.

So here's a challenge: As you prepare for this lesson, read John 12, 13, and 19. But don't just skim the words—pause often to let them speak to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to let those words change you. Ask the Spirit to cement in you this truth: Jesus loves you. He loves you right now, and He'll love you for eternity.

Make this Easter the one you see clearly: as a love story.

—Mikal Keefer

Children's Ministry Volunteer and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea. He presided over Jesus' trial, which involved discussion with the chief priests, who were members of the Jewish ruling council, or Sanhedrin. Pilate ultimately authorized Jesus' crucifixion, albeit reluctantly.

**WHAT?**

In the week leading up to His death, Jesus was anointed by Mary in Bethany and welcomed to Jerusalem as king. He predicted His death and washed His disciples' feet. He was betrayed by Judas, tried by Pilate, and crucified at Golgotha.

**WHERE?**

The events of Holy Week took place in and around Jerusalem. Bethany was about two miles east of Jerusalem. Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, was located outside the city gate of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12) somewhere near the city (John 19:20). The exact location is debated.

**WHEN?**

Jesus was crucified during the week of the Jewish Passover Feast while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (approximately AD 26–36). The exact date is debated, but biblical scholars often estimate Jesus' death to be between AD 30–33.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Holy Week led up to the climactic moment of God's big story. The death of Jesus made way for the defeat of death, the forgiveness of sins, and life forever with God in a kingdom that will never end.

### Large Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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### As kids arrive...

Around 20 minutes before service begins, display series theme loop. Play high-energy music in the background.

LG Leader walks around the room on mic and greets kids by name as they enter the room. Welcome kids by name and greet them with enthusiasm. Be extra intentional about hearing and responding

**SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP**

**VIDEO: COUNTDOWN** (2min OR 30sec) Start a countdown to begin game 10 minutes prior to service start)

### STEM Experiment: Amazing Pencil

8–10 MINUTES PRE-SERVICE

**SUPPLIES:** table, sandwich-size zip-top baggies (at least 2), sharpened pencil, pitcher of water, scissors or pen, large bowl, stool (optional), towels (optional)

**Leader Tip:** Consider practicing the amazing pencil experiment ahead of time!

### SLIDE: Amazing Pencil

Ahead of time, set the supplies on a table at the front of your teaching space.

Hold up an empty zip-top baggie. **Can this bag hold water?** Allow kids to answer. **Fill the bag with water and seal it. What**

**happens when it gets a hole?** Allow kids to answer. Use scissors or the tip of a pen to make a small hole in the corner of the bag and show kids how it drips into the large bowl. Set aside.

### Make It Inclusive!

Kids who are especially energetic, such as those with ADHD, often thrive when they get to help demonstrate STEM experiments. Consider inviting a couple kids to the front to help you perform the experiment.



Take out a new empty zip-top bag and fill it with water. Hold up a sharpened pencil. **I bet I can stick this pencil through this plastic bag without spilling a drop of water. If you believe me, walk to this side of the room.** Point to one side of the room. **If you don't believe me and think I'll make a big mess, walk to this side of the room.** Point to the other side of the room.

Once kids have traveled to one side of the room or the other, quickly stick the sharpened pencil straight through the plastic bag. If your group is especially adventurous, select a kid volunteer to sit on a stool.

Then stick the pencil through the bag as you suspend it over the volunteer's head.

Invite kids to sit back down. **Everyone on this side of the room** (the side that didn't believe), **were you surprised?** Allow responses. **Everyone on this side of the room** (the side that did believe), **can you explain why the water didn't spill?** Allow responses. **Sometimes things don't happen the way we think they will. During Holy Week, lots of things happened that showed people Jesus is God's Son and He came to free people from sin. But no one guessed how that would happen.**

### **SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH**



Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS LOVES US AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US.**"

## Welcome Question

**SUPPLIES:** paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

### **SLIDE: WELCOME QUESTION**

**At service start time,** draw kids' attention to the Welcome Question.

Invite kids to write answers on the poster board or whiteboard.

**What does your family do for Easter?**

**"Easter is such a fun holiday to spend with family! Did you know the Bible tells us about the very first Easter? Today we'll explore the events that happened leading up to that amazing day. But first, it's time for small group."**

## Small Group

Introduce small group time. While kids are in small group, consider sitting in the groups for a few minutes each. Engage and interact as is appropriate.

## Countdown

After about 15 minutes of small group, give a 5 minute warning and begin the countdown.

### **VIDEO: COUNTDOWN**

**"Hey everyone! Welcome to our Large Group Worship time! My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'm excited to take this time to worship God, review what we just read, and talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning about God! We are going to pray as we prepare our hearts to worship God!"**

## Declaring God's Wonder

### SLIDE: DECLARATION

Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

**Thank You, God, that You are good!** (Kids repeat.)

**You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** (Kids repeat.)

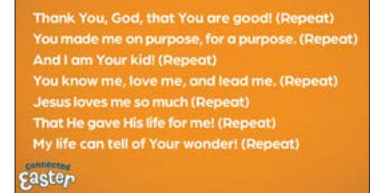
**And I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

**You know me, love me, and lead me.** (Kids repeat.)

**Jesus loves me so much** (Kids repeat.)

**That He gave His life for me!** (Kids repeat.)

**My life can tell of Your wonder!** (Kids repeat.)



## Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use our own words. Here is an example: **Father God, as we listen and learn about Holy Week, may Your Spirit teach us, lead us, and show us Your love and plan. Show us how Jesus loves us and gave His life for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

Consider sharing some about the songs you are going to sing. What they mean, why we sing them, why they are meaningful and important to you!

**"We're going to stand and sing together! One way that we show love to God is to worship through song! So stand up, sing loud, and join in the motions with us. God loves to hear us sing praises to Him! Let's stand together and sing!"**

**WORSHIP VIDEOS: Love Come Down, Praise You Anywhere**

## God's Big Story

### SLIDE: TITLE

"For a long time, God's people waited and hoped for someone who would rescue them from sin and make things right. God had a big plan, and at just the right time, He sent Jesus to show His great love. During Holy Week, we remember the most important part of God's plan—when Jesus gave His life for us on the cross. His death wasn't the end of the story—it was the way God brought new life to everyone who believes in Him! Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will watch and experience more of the story!"



**VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY**

## LESSON 3 HOLY WEEK

### EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** coloring utensils, clipboards (1 per kid, optional), Coloring Sheet, whiteboard, dry-erase markers

Invite kids to get their Coloring Sheet and a couple coloring utensils.

**"Each year, on your birthday, we remember and celebrate that you were born. Each year on Christmas, we remember and celebrate that Jesus was born. And each year during Holy Week—the week between Palm Sunday and Easter—we remember how Jesus died and came alive again. Remembering the events of Holy Week reminds us that Jesus loves us and gave His life for us.**

#### **SLIDE: HOLY WEEK 1 (parting seas)**

It was five days before the Passover Feast, the time when God's people remembered how He delivered the Israelites from slavery in Egypt.

Pause and look at the screen. They might have said, "Remember when God sent Moses, then the plagues, to make stubborn Pharaoh let us go?"

And, "Remember when we were stuck between Pharaoh's army and the sea, and God made a way for us to walk safely through?" Pause and look back at the kids. Now, in God's big story, Jesus was about to make the way for an even greater deliverance—from slavery to sin to freedom in God's presence. From death to life! Somewhere on your coloring sheet, write the word "Freedom." Write the word for kids on the marker board.



#### **SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 2 (a palm branch)**

When Jesus came to Jerusalem, a large crowd went out to welcome Him as their king—as Israel's Messiah! They carried palm branches to honor His arrival. The people shouted, "Hosanna!" (John 12:13), which means "Save us, please!" Jesus had indeed come to save people, but it wouldn't look like many expected. Invite the kids to write the word: Hosanna!" Maybe beside or inside the palm branch picture. Write on the board.

#### **SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 3 (earth)**

The chief priests and Pharisees were unhappy about the crowds following Jesus. They wanted to put an end to Jesus! Jesus knew He would soon die and that it would show the world how amazing God is and how generously He gives. Jesus told the crowds, "Now it is time for the world to be judged. Now the prince of this world will be thrown out" (John 12:31).

Jesus was talking about the devil and the world Satan had hurt. Jesus was going to defeat the devil and make the world new again. He would die on a cross and make the way for all people to be part of God's new world. But the crowds didn't understand. How could Jesus—the Messiah—die? Invite the kids to write the word "new" on or near the picture of the crosses.

#### **SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 4 (breaking bread)**

As the week went on, the time for the Passover Feast drew near. Jesus was sharing an evening meal with His disciples, including Judas, who was going to betray Jesus by handing Him over to His enemies. Jesus loved His disciples.

He knew He would be leaving them soon, so He got up during the meal and started washing their dusty feet. This was the job of a lowly servant, but Jesus did it for His disciples with a love that would give everything for their good. Peter, one of the disciples, protested. “ ‘No,’ said Peter. ‘You will never wash my feet.’ Jesus answered, ‘Unless I wash you, you can’t share life with me’ ” (John 13:8). Jesus was not talking about washing dirt off someone. Jesus was washing their feet as a picture of how He cleans hearts from sin.

**SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 5 (dirty hands)**

Point to the screen. Like dirt, sin clings to us, and sin makes us its slaves. King Jesus became like a servant, doing a job He shouldn’t have had to do. He died for us, making us clean from the wrong things we do.

**SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 6 (soap bubbles)**

Peter, like everyone else, needed Jesus to make him clean from sin, ready to live as part of God’s kingdom. Invite the kids to draw a heart with the word "clean" in the middle somewhere on their paper. Demonstrate on the board.

**SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 7 (crown of thorns)**

When the meal was over, Judas left to betray Jesus, who was later arrested and taken to Pilate, the Roman governor. Pilate’s soldiers beat Jesus and made fun of Him. Jewish people, including the religious leaders, gathered outside Pilate’s palace. They said Jesus had lied about being God’s Son. They wanted Pilate to crucify Jesus—to have Jesus nailed to a cross. “Should I crucify your king?” Pilate asked (John 19:15). But the chief priests told Pilate they had no king but the Roman emperor. Invite the kids to draw a picture of a crown they would give to King Jesus. Encourage simplicity. Demonstrate on the board.

**SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 8 (wood and nails)**

So, Pilate agreed to have Jesus crucified. Jesus was led outside the city and nailed to a cross. He bled. He suffered. He died. It was terrible. But the people who wanted Jesus to die would see how wrong they were. Invite the kids to write the word "Remember" somewhere on their paper. Demonstrate on the board.

We remember Jesus’ death, but it’s not the end of the story.

**SLIDE: Holy Week Slide 9 (the sea with sin and death)**

In a few days, Jesus would show the world that death could not defeat Him. He had made the way from slavery to freedom and from death to life because Jesus loves us and gave His life for us.



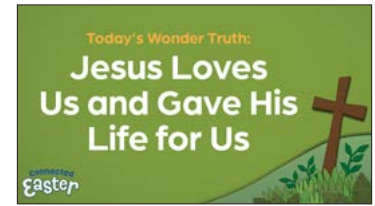
## Connecting the Wonder Truth

### SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

"Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS LOVES US AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

**Holy Week led up to the biggest moment of God's big story: the death and resurrection of Jesus! Jesus' death on the cross made the way for our sins to be forgiven and for us to live forever with God in a kingdom that will never end. "**

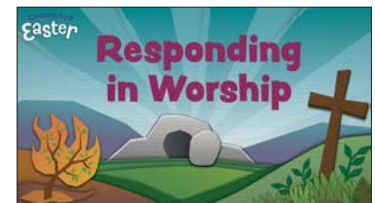


## Responding in Worship

### SLIDE: RESPONDING IN WORSHIP

Talk about ways we can respond to what we are learning with next steps such as tithing, prayer, asking questions, and worship. Encourage kids to ask their SG leaders any questions they were wondering during the lesson.

\*\*\*Introduce this next song and invite kids to respond and participate in worship. See the "Worship Posture Tutorial" on the RBKids Resource Page.



### VIDEO: BAPTISM

### WORSHIP VIDEO: Jesus Paid It All

## Blessing Your Kids

Speak a blessing over your kids Use your own words. Here is an example:

**Blessing:** May you know the deep, never-ending love of God—a love so great that Jesus gave His life for us. Now and always, may you live loved and free!

## Return to Small Group

Instruct Small Group Leaders to close out their time by completing the "Responding in Worship" Activity at the end of their SG Leader Guide.