

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

- | | |
|--|------------|
| • Welcome Question: What does your family do for Easter? | preservice |
| • Curiosity Questions | preservice |
| • Word of Wonder: Psalm 77:12 | 2 min |
| • Word of Wonder Activity | 7–8 min |
| • Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids | 10 min |
| • Small Group Prayer Time | 5 min |
| • LARGE GROUP | 30 min |
| • Responding in Worship: Story Stones | 10 min |



Schedule:

Pre-service Activities: 10 min before service

Small Group: 20-25 minutes

Large Group: 30-35 minutes

Small Group Response Activity: 5-10 min



[Connected Easter Elem Spotify playlist](#)

INVITATION

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

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WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 77:12

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.

Small Group

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

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

SCRIPTURE: John 12–13; 19

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 77:12

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: Coloring Page, whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have play stations with various board games, activities, or use games from the extra Games & Activities Guide to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them!

Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Allow quieter kids who don't engage with the board games to color. Involve them in the curiosity questions.

As kids arrive..

Invite them to write/draw the answer to the Welcome Question: on the designated board:

“What does your family do for Easter?” Set out sheets of paper and colored pencils.

While kids are playing in their opening activity groups..

Pose the following “I’m curious” questions. Say “I’m curious...” before each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

- **What is something you’ve looked forward to?**
- **Did it happen in the way that you thought it would? If not, what was different?**

Leader Tip: There may be kids in your ministry from families who are unable to or simply don’t celebrate Easter or do anything special to honor the holiday. Be sensitive to this fact, and if you know this is the case for some kids, invite everyone to answer a more general question, such as “What is your favorite thing to do during springtime?”

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

WORD OF WONDER

I will spend time thinking about everything you have done. I will consider all your mighty acts.

—Psalm 77:12 (NIV)

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

The Word of Wonder for the Connected Easter series is Psalm 77:12. Today we've heard how Jesus loves us and gave His life for us. This isn't the end of the story, and our Word of Wonder points us to God's amazing power. Let's read the Word of Wonder together!"

Have kids open their Bibles to Psalm 77:12. Read the verse several times together. Consider splitting the group in half and having one group read the first sentence and the other group the second. Then encourage the first group to read in a different voice (an accent, whisper, like a whale, etc.) and have the second group copy them.

Talk about these questions:

- **What mighty acts of God do you know about?**
- **How are we following the Word of Wonder right now?**

Word of Wonder Activity

SUPPLIES: small prizes (optional)

Help kids form groups of three. Explain that as a group, they'll work together to create motions to the verse. Give the groups three minutes to work together and practice their motions. Bring the groups back together and give each group a chance to present/teach their motions to the rest of the kids. If time permits (and if desired), consider awarding small prizes to each group. Awards could be for the most complicated verse motions, the easiest to follow, the silliest, the most synchronized group, etc.

Leader Tip: For Younger Kids. If your group includes a lot of younger kids, consider working together with the kids to create motions. Invite kids to suggest motion ideas for every word or phrase, and demonstrate the new motions as kids follow.

Small Group Discussion: Younger Kids

SUPPLIES: Bibles perkid Bible Story Picture /SG

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Exodus. Introduce today's true story from the Bible. Today in God's Big Story we will hear about God rescuing His people.

Read from **John 12:12–13; 13:5–8; 18:1, 12; 19:14–18, 28–30**. Consider highlighting the verses ahead of time to make it easier to move easily from one section to the next. Invite kids to follow along in their Bibles or to simply listen carefully with their Bibles open in front of them to the book of John. Encourage them to put their hands on their hearts every time Jesus speaks in the passage. Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the Notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and write the Scripture and any words that stand out to them.

- **When Jesus came into the city on Palm Sunday, what did the people call Him?** Israel's King and Savior
- **Jesus washed His friends' feet. Who usually did that job?** A servant **Would you let Jesus wash your feet? Why or why not?**
- **When Jesus died on the cross, what did the leaders say He did wrong?** They said He lied about being God's Son.
- **During Holy Week, Jesus was treated like a king, then acted like a helper, and later people were mean to Him and hurt Him. How do you think people thought a Savior should act? Do you think they were surprised that Jesus died? Why?**
- **Jesus loves you so much that He gave His life for you. Is that easy or hard to believe? Why do you think that?**

"Today we've heard about a lot of things that happened during Holy Week. Most importantly, we've heard how Jesus showed His love for us and gave His life to free us from sin. And while it seems sad, this isn't the end of the story. Jesus rose three days later—He is alive! Let's spend some time talking to Jesus together."

Prayer Time: Younger Kids

Invite kids to share something they would like to pray for, whether these are praises for something great that's happened or requests for God to help in some way. Close the time by praying aloud on behalf of the group, stating that Holy Week happened because Jesus loves us!

Small Group Discussion: Older Kids

SUPPLIES: Bibles per kid , Bible Story Picture /SG

Help kids use the table of contents in their Bibles to find Exodus. Introduce today's true story from the Bible. Today in God's Big Story we will hear about God rescuing His people.

Turn to Page 3 of this guide and help kids understand the context of this passage.

Read from John 12:12–13; 13:5–8; 18:1, 12; 19:14–18, 28–30. Consider highlighting the verses ahead of time to make it easier to move easily from one section to the next. Invite kids to follow along in their Bibles or to simply listen carefully with their Bibles open in front of them to the book of John. Encourage them to put their hands on their hearts every time Jesus speaks in the passage. Then discuss the following:

Notes! Have kids turn to the notes Pages on the back of the Coloring Sheet and write the Scripture and any words that stand out to them.

- **Jesus came to save people—but not everyone understood that. Do you think the disciples, the crowds, or the religious leaders believed Jesus was really the Savior? Why do you think some people believed and others didn't?**
- **Jesus did amazing miracles and fulfilled promises from long ago. Why do you think some people were still looking for a different kind of Savior—like a powerful king or a warrior?**
- **During the week before He died, Jesus did some surprising things, like washing His friends' feet. What do these things show you about what kind of person Jesus is? Would you have let Jesus wash your feet? How would that feel?**
- **When Jesus died on the cross, some people thought God's plan had failed. But we know that wasn't the end—Jesus came back to life! How do you feel knowing that even when things don't go the way we expect, God's plan is still good and true?**

"Today we've heard about a lot of things that happened during Holy Week. Most importantly, we've heard how Jesus showed His love for us and gave His life to free us from sin. And while it seems sad, this isn't the end of the story. Let's spend some time talking to God together."

Prayer Time: Older Kids

Invite kids to share some things they would like to pray for, whether these are praises for something great that's happened or requests for God to help in some way. Give kids a chance to pray for one another; close by praying aloud on behalf of the group, stating that Holy Week happened because Jesus loves us!

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: Story Stones

SUPPLIES: glue sticks, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Story Stones Sheet](#) per kid, [back of coloring page](#), [Story Stones Pictures](#) for every 2 kids, small plastic baggies optional, songs from the [Connected Easter Elementart Spotify playlist](#)

Print the Story Stones Sheet and the Story Stones Pictures. Cut out the Story Stones Pictures and separate into baggies. 1 set per kid.

"Jesus loves us and gave His life for us! Let's spend some time responding to Jesus together. We are going to make some shapes out of play dough to remind us how much Jesus loves us.

Let's think about the start of Holy Week. Each year, on your birthday, you can 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.

Did you know that the Bible tells us that God's people sometimes used stones to remember the times God helped or saved them? They would pile up the stones and say, "Remember? This is where God helped us!" Today we're going to use story stones to remember what happened to Jesus during Holy Week. Pass out the Story Stones Sheet flip over Coloring Page, Story Stones Pictures, and glue sticks. Remembering the events of Holy Week reminds us that Jesus loves us and gave His life for us. Let's cut out the picture of a palm branch and glue it on your first stone. Doing this will help us remember how Jesus was welcomed to Jerusalem as King.

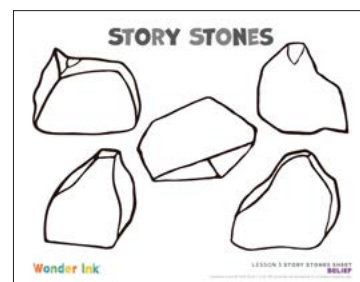
Give kids time to find the picture of the palm branch and glue it on a paper stone. Play worship music as kids work.

Our next picture is of a loaf of bread. Let's cut out the loaf of bread and glue it on our next stone as we remember the dinner Jesus had with His friends.

Give kids time to find the picture of the bread and glue it on a paper stone.

Our next picture is of soap bubbles. This picture helps us remember that Jesus washed His friends' feet. Let's cut out the picture of the soap bubbles and glue it on our next stone as we remember how Jesus washed His friends' feet.

Give kids time to find the picture of the soap bubbles and glue it on either a paper stone.



Our last picture is of a cross. This picture helps us remember that Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for us on the cross. Let's cut out the picture of a cross and glue it on our last stone as we remember how Jesus showed He loves us by dying on the cross. He was perfect and didn't deserve to die.

Give kids time to find the picture of the cross and glue it on a paper stone.

We have one more stone left—but there are no more pictures to cut out and glue. This empty stone reminds us that Jesus' death was not the end of the story! We'll learn more about that next week when we hear about the empty tomb.

You can take these stones home to help you remember that Jesus loves you and gave His life for you! And you can use them to share that news with other people as well!"