



**PRE-K
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. —Psalm 77:12

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Jesus Loves Me, God's Way
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



[Connected Easter Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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

SCRIPTURE: John 12–13; 19

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.

Including you.

—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.



LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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

SCRIPTURE: John 12–13; 19

WORD OF WONDER: Psalm 77:12

Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

For this section, you can use the cat picture provided, or a stuffed animal cat, or a cat hand puppet.

Leader: Hey, Tac! It's so good to see you today!

Tac the Cat: Hi, friends! I have only a few minutes because my mom just said we need to get ready to go see a parade.

Leader: Oh, I love parades! That sounds like fun!

Tac the Cat: Well, I was wondering what a parade is. I've never been to one before.

Leader: A parade is when lots of people line the streets and other people drive or walk down the middle of the road with their cars and trucks all decorated. Sometimes they even throw out candy!

Tac the Cat: Well, that does sound like fun! Do you think they might throw out cat treats?

Leader: Well, I can't say I've ever seen anyone throw cat treats out at a parade, but you never know. They might.

Tac the Cat: I love cat treats! But ... why do we have parades?

Leader: Sometimes there are parades to celebrate something—like a holiday. Other times they're used to welcome and celebrate people. Actually, that reminds me of a story in the Bible!

Tac the Cat: There was a parade in the Bible?

Leader: Sort of! There was someone important coming to town, and people lined the streets to celebrate Him.

Tac the Cat: Who was it they were so excited to see?

Leader: It was Jesus! People lined the streets to welcome Jesus to town and to celebrate Him. It was an exciting day for the people who got to see this Jesus they had been hearing so much about!

Tac the Cat: It would be exciting to have seen Jesus come to town! My parade might not be as exciting as Jesus coming to town, but it still sounds like fun! I better go, or I might miss it. See you later!

Leader: Bye, Tac. Have fun at the parade!

"Have you ever been curious about something? Let's take a moment and think: What would it be like to see Jesus come to town? Allow the kids to respond. Why do you think Jesus came to Jerusalem that day? Allow the kids to respond. We all see and hear things that make us curious. Did you ever stop to think about how Jesus loved us so much that He came to earth to die for us?"

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS LOVES US AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US**. Today we'll discover how much Jesus loves us!"

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Encourage the kids to repeat the statements after you and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

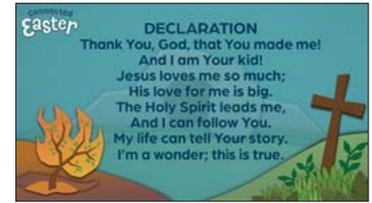
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your 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

"Today we'll learn about how Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to give His life for us. Let's sing about Jesus' love together!"

Play songs from the [Connected Easter Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them that today's story comes from the book of John in the Bible. Tell them that John is in the Gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament.

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

"Let's watch part of God's big story, a part that comes from the book of John in the Bible."

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, scissors (prep only), Easter eggs (4), permanent marker (prep only), coloring or writing utensils

RESOURCES: I Spy Sheet (1 per LG)

Before kids arrive, print a copy of the I Spy Sheet. Cut out the following pictures and put them inside Easter eggs with numbers written on the outside: palm branch—1, loaf of bread—2, soap bubbles—3, and cross—4. Set these eggs close by.

Before kids arrive, hide the eggs around the room .

"It was almost time for the Passover Feast. Passover is when God's people remember how God saved them long ago from being held captive in Egypt.

Jesus was going to do something even bigger and more special. Jesus was making the way for all people to be saved from sin! Choose 4 volunteers to come up front and help you tell the story.

Jesus came to Jerusalem for Passover. Have one volunteer hunt for egg #1, encourage other kids to help him/her find it. (From their seats). Have the child open the egg and take out the picture of the palm branch and hold it up for the kids.

A lot of people came to welcome Jesus as their king. They held palm branches like this one in our picture and shouted, "Hosanna!" (John 12:13). That means "Save us, please!" Jesus came to save people, but it was not how they thought.

Some people were very unhappy with Jesus. They wanted to put an end to Him! Jesus knew He was going to die soon.

Have the next volunteer hunt for egg #2, encourage other kids to help him/her find it. (From their seats). Have the child open the egg and take out the picture of the loaf of bread and show the kids.

When it was almost time for Passover, Jesus was eating with His disciples, His followers. One of them was named Judas. Jesus loved His disciples. And He knew He would have to leave His disciples soon.

Have the next volunteer hunt for egg #3, encourage other kids to help him/her find it. (From their seats). Have the child open the egg and take out the picture of the soap bubbles and show the kids.

Jesus got up during the meal and washed His disciples' dirty feet. Jesus served them to show He loved them.

At first, one disciple named Peter told Jesus not to wash his feet. But Jesus said, "Unless I wash you, you can't share life with me" (John 13:8). Jesus was not talking about washing dirt off a body. Jesus washed their feet to show how He cleans hearts from sin. Like dirt, sin is in us. Jesus died for us to make us clean from the wrong things we do. Peter needed Jesus to make him clean from sin. We do too!



Have the last volunteer hunt for egg #4 encourage other kids to help him/her find it. (From their seats). Have the child open the egg and take out the picture of the cross and show the kids.

After they ate, Judas left to turn in Jesus to the people who did not like Him. Those people arrested Jesus. They hurt Jesus and beat Him up. They nailed Him to a cross. It hurt Him a lot, and He died. But Jesus was going to show that death does not get to win! He made the way for people to be saved from sin. Jesus beat death because He loves us and gave His life for us."

Connecting the Wonder Truth

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

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

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

Holy Week, which is Jesus' last week on earth before He died, led up to the biggest moments 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. Now we can live with God in a kingdom that will never end."

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for sending Jesus to save us. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Father God, thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You were willing to die to save us. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. 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!