



LESSON 3
THE CRUCIFIXION

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus is crucified on a cross to defeat sin and fix the relationship between people and God. His sacrifice demonstrates His amazing love for us!

WORD OF WONDER: Jesus makes us new. —from 2 Corinthians 5:17

- Welcome Question: How would you fill in the blank? I love _____ so much!
- Curiosity Questions
- Curiosity Activity: Love in Action
- Word of Wonder: From 2 Corinthians 5:17
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions
- LARGE GROUP
- Craft: Cross Collage
- Game: Find the Heart



INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Have you ever been wrongfully accused? Perhaps someone spread false gossip about you, or maybe someone took something you said out of context.

When living in a fallen world of nearly eight billion imperfect humans, we're bound to face difficult things and difficult people. It's easy to develop a jaded view of humanity. And no one understands the imperfection of humans better than God, yet still He loves us.

Take some time to read Matthew 27:32–56.

Have you ever wondered why Jesus chose to die such an excruciating death? He had every right to show His power and put humans in their rightful place. Yet He chose to submit himself, facing the humiliation of being put on trial. Even the earthly authorities couldn't find anything illegal or evil about Him. He was innocent, yet His love for us is so great that He chose to die on the cross. Jesus showed His love by dying for us.

Does knowing what Jesus did for us give you the strength to face the evil in the world? Take some time to dwell in God's wonderful love. May it inspire you to show grace to those who might not deserve it but need it.

—Catherine Hwang-Jin

Children's Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The climax (and turning point) of God’s big story is the death and resurrection of Jesus, God’s Son. Jesus became nothing and took on the nature of a servant, humbling Himself to death on a cross (Philippians 2:6–8).

WHAT?

Crucifixion was a horrible and painful process—a form of slow torture as the recipient suffocated to death. Jesus willingly went to the cross, submitting Himself to “the joy set before Him” as He endured the cross, so we could be restored to right relationship with God (Hebrews 12:2 NIV).

WHERE?

The crucifixion of Jesus took place outside the city gates of Jerusalem on a hill called Golgotha. Jesus would have been exposed up on that hill as He suffered. Jews from all over would have been in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover.

WHEN?

It is no coincidence that Jesus died at Passover—the time when all of God’s people remembered God’s salvation in the Exodus. Jesus died as a sacrificial lamb, ushering in a new and better exodus event: freedom from our slavery to sin and death.

CONNECTING TO GOD’S BIG STORY:

Jesus died to fix the relationship between God and people, making the way for us to be with God. Jesus fulfills the promise God made after the first sin in Genesis 3, reversing the curse of sin. Jesus is the only One who can defeat sin and death!

LESSON 3 EARLY ELEMENTARY

Large Group or Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Showed His Love by Dying for Us

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 27

WORD OF WONDER: From 2 Corinthians 5:17

Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

[Games & Activities Guide](#)

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready 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!

As kids arrive ...

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

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious"

questions to engage kids. Say "I'm **curious..**" before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering 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.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **What do you think the word *love* means?**
- **What do you think the word *relationship* means? Who are some people you have relationships with?**



Small Group Begins

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

Curiosity Activity: Love in Action

We're going to play a fun guessing game. We're going to act out some things, and you can guess what the actors are acting out.

Invite one or two kids to act out the Love in Action scenarios in the list below. Encourage the other kids to guess what's happening in each scenario that's being acted out. The goal is for the kids to see situations with people showing love in action.

Whisper the scenarios to one or two kids and help them act out each scenario while the other kids guess.

Use the following scenarios:

- Helping a hurt friend
- Hugs or high fives
- Giving a gift
- Reading a book to someone
- Playing with someone
- Cooking a meal for someone
- Tucking in a child at night
- Taking care of someone who is sick
- Praying with someone

Wow! You did great guessing what we were doing! Now let's think about all those things you guessed. What did those actions show? Allow the kids an opportunity to guess. You may have to remind them of the scenarios as they are guessing. **Love! That's it! All those things that we were doing are ways we show love to someone. Today we're going to hear about a very special way Jesus showed love to us.**

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

WORD OF WONDER

Jesus makes us new.

—from 2 Corinthians 5:17

Our Word of Wonder for the Created New series is from 2 Corinthians 5:17. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **JESUS**—Point fingers from left hand into right palm, then right hand into left palm (sign language for "Jesus").
- **MAKES US**—Both hands over your heart.
- **NEW**—Bring both arms out in front of you and down to your sides.
- **FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

We're learning about how Jesus makes us new. When we trust Jesus and follow Him, He makes us new! That means the old part of us that is full of sin and bad choices changes because of Jesus. We have new hearts that are filled with I ve and His Spirit! Let's play a game to help us remember what Jesus has done for us!

Let's sit in a circle and play a game of Popcorn. One person will pop up and say the fi st word: Jesus.

Then the person beside that person will pop up and say the next word in the verse: makes. The next person will say the third word: us. The next person will say the last word: new. Then we'll start over! Make sure to pop up like a popcorn kernel popping.

We'll keep going through our verse with each person in the circle saying the next word in our verse.

Repeat the verse as many times as you'd like. To add a little extra challenge and fun, have them do the motions as they say the word.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **What did Jesus do for us so we can become new?** (died on the cross)
- **What part of us do you think Jesus makes new?** (our heart; the sinful part)

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: My First Hands On Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

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 hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Matthew in the Bible.

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Open a Bible and show them where the story is found in the book of Matthew.

Read pages 344-349 in the My First Hands On Bible.

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: paper hearts in various colors (at least 1 per kid)

Ahead of time, prepare at least one paper heart for each kid in various colors.

Gather the kids to sit in a circle with the paper hearts in the middle. **In today's God's big story, we learned that Jesus loves us so much that He died on the cross for us. We're going to do an activity to think about how much Jesus loves us. When I say, "Go," everyone will pick up a heart, then I'll call out a color. If you're holding the heart that's the color I say, you'll answer a question.** Say, "Go," and invite all of the kids to pick up a heart, then choose a color. If multiple kids have that color, they can all answer the question (or you can just choose one kid to answer each question).

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **What did Jesus do first when He was in the garden after the meal with His disciples?** (He prayed.)
- **What happened to Jesus in the garden after He prayed?** (He was arrested.)
- **Had Jesus done anything wrong?** (no)
- **What happened to Jesus, even though He hadn't done anything wrong?** (He died on a cross.)
- **Why do you think Jesus was willing to die even though He didn't deserve it?** (If kids need help, offer ideas such as: Because He loves us; so we can be saved.)
- **How can you thank Jesus for His love and for dying on the cross?** (If kids need help, offer ideas such as: praying and telling Him we love Him; telling God, "Thank You.")
- **How do you feel knowing Jesus loves you so much He chose to die to rescue and forgive you?**

Jesus chose to die on the cross because He loves us and knew that's what it would take for us to be able to know God as a friend and be in His family. Let's take a moment to pray to God and thank Jesus for being willing to die for our sins.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for loving us and sending Jesus for us. God hears all our prayers!

Head to Large Group!

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

Craft: Cross Collage

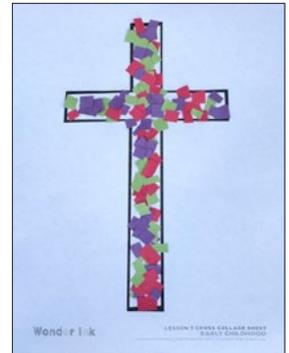
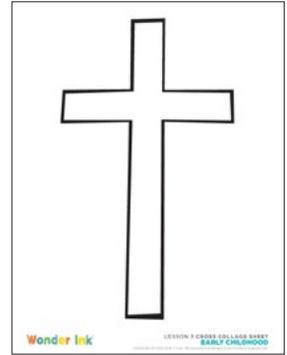
SUPPLIES: heart-shaped stickers or confetti, glue (optional) coloring utensils (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Cross Collage Sheet (1 per kid)

Before the kids arrive, make one copy per kid of the Cross Collage Sheet. Set out heart-shaped stickers or confetti. You may need some glue as well if not using items that are self-adhesive.

In our story today, we learned about how Jesus died on the cross. Why do you think He did that? Allow the kids to answer. Jesus showed His love for us by dying on the cross. What do hearts make us think of? Allow kids to answer. Yes, love!

We're going to make a cross collage to help us remember that Jesus showed His love on the cross by placing hearts all over our crosses. Encourage the kids to put heart-shaped stickers or confetti on their crosses, then set them aside to dry. You can also let the kids color their pictures with coloring utensils. **You can take your pictures home to remind you of the amazing love Jesus showed when He died so we can be forgiven!**



Game: Find the Heart

SUPPLIES: paper, scissors (prep only)

Ahead of time, prepare one paper heart.

What did Jesus do in today's story to show His love for us? Allow the kids to respond. That's right—He died on the cross so we can be saved and forgiven for our sins. That was one big way to show how much He loves us! Let's remember His love by looking for the heart. I'll give it to one person, and you'll all pass it around the room while you all walk around. When I say, "Freeze," everyone will sit down on the ground. The person with the heart will quickly sit on the heart before anyone sees, then we'll try to guess who is sitting on the heart.

Give the paper heart to one kid. Then tell all the kids to walk around the room and pass the heart from kid-to-kid without others noticing. Periodically call out, "Freeze" and encourage all the kids to sit down immediately. The one with the paper heart should discreetly sit on the heart. Then ask the kids to guess who has hidden the heart. When they find it, the kids can shout, "Jesus showed His love by dying for us!" Play several rounds.