



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:** When anyone lives in Christ, the new creation has come. The old is gone! The new is here! —2 Corinthians 5:17

- PRE-SERVICE:
  - OPTION 1: Interactive Game: Who Loves What?
  - OPTION 2: Multisensory Activity: One Word Love
- Welcome Question: How would you fill in the blank? I love \_\_\_\_\_ so much!
- SMALL GROUP
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: You Have Overcome, Praise the Lord
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Responding in Worship: Worthy of it All
- Blessing Your Kids



### 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:** 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!

### Large 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:** 2 Corinthians 5:17

### 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. Be extra intentional about introducing yourself to new parents and kids.

**SLIDE: SERIES THEME LOOP**

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

## OPTION 1 Interactive Game: Who Loves What?

**SUPPLIES:** writing utensils (1 per kid)

**RESOURCES:** Who Loves What? Sheet (1 per kid) **\*\*BY REQUEST**

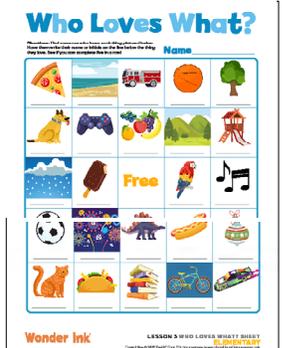
Ahead of time, print a copy of the Who Loves What? Sheet for each kid.

Display the Who Loves What? Slide and gather the kids.

**In the English language, the word love can mean many different things. You may love ice cream, and you may love your baby brother, but hopefully you don't love them the same way! Let's have a little fun finding out about the things each of us loves in the "ice cream" way!**

Give a Who Loves What? Sheet and a writing utensil to each kid. Invite them to write their names on the line at the top of the page. Explain to kids that their goal is to find people who love the things pictured on their sheets and to have them write their first name (or their initials) on the line directly below the thing they love. Their goal is to fill out five boxes in a row!

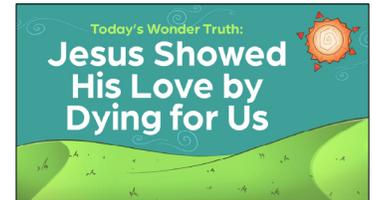
**Leader Tip:** The specific rules of the game will depend on the size of your group. If your group is large, consider requiring kids to find a different person to sign each box. If your group is small, consider allowing kids to have the same person sign 2-3 or more boxes.



**Make It Inclusive:** If any kids struggle to write their names, encourage them to write just one letter or another symbol (such as an “X”) to represent their name. Or consider pairing kids up and having them work together to fill out one Who Loves What? Sheet.

Give kids time to find people who love the different items on their sheets. If you want to structure the activity as a competition, then the first person to get five boxes in a row filled out wins! Otherwise, give all the kids several minutes to fill out their sheets. If time allows, challenge kids to fill out all their boxes! Participate alongside the kids with your own copy of the Who Loves What? Sheet!

After a few minutes, gather the kids together and invite them to hold up their sheets for everyone to see. **I love hearing about all the different things each of you loves! We often use the word love to describe how we feel about something or someone. But God’s love is more than a feeling. God’s love is shown through selfless actions that put others before ourselves. No one understood this better than Jesus, who showed us His love in a very powerful way.** Display the Crucifixion Wonder Truth Slide. **Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE BY DYING FOR US.**



## OPTION 2 Multisensory Activity: One Word Love

**RESOURCES:** “Your Love Never Fails” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Display the One Word Love Slide. **In the English language, the word love can mean many different things. In its original languages, the Bible uses different words for different types of love. God loves you! And the love He has for you is steadfast, which means it never changes. God’s love is more than a feeling. God’s love is shown through selfless actions that put others before ourselves. Let’s do an activity that lets us use words to express love and encouragement for others.**



Help kids form two circles, one inside the other and each with the same number of people in it. The kids in the outside circle can face those in the inside and vice versa. The person they are facing is their partner.

**When the music plays, everyone on the inside will turn to their left and walk in a circle.** Join the inside circle and demonstrate walking in a circle to the left. **Everyone on the outside will turn to their left and walk in a circle.** Join the outside circle and demonstrate walking in a circle to the left. (Because the two circles are facing each other, their “lefts” are different, and the two circles will move in opposite directions.) **When the music stops, you’ll stop where you are and face your new partner. Encouraging one another is a way we can show love, and you’ll encourage your partner with just one word. You can say something positive you’ve noticed about your partner, even if you don’t know her well. For example, if you’ve noticed her being kind to others, you might say “kind” as your one word.**

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**Start the music as two circles of kids begin moving.** Consider playing “Your Love Never Fails” from the [Created New Elementary Spotify playlist](#). After 10–15 seconds, stop the music. Encourage kids to face their new partners and say just one word of love and encouragement.

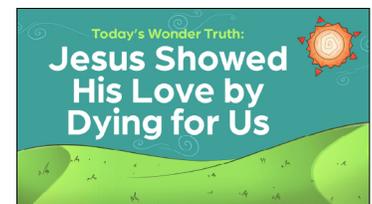
Start the music again and repeat the process several times, giving kids a chance to encourage different partners each time.

Gather the kids together and **display the Crucifixion Wonder Truth Slide.**

**What are some of the words your partners used to encourage you?**

Allow kids to share freely. **One way we can show love is through our words. And the words you used were very encouraging! Our actions are another powerful way to show someone you love them. Jesus**

**understood this! And He showed us His love in the most powerful way imaginable. Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE BY DYING FOR US.****



## Welcome Question

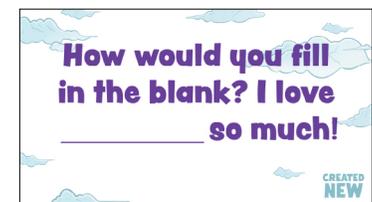
**SUPPLIES:** paper, coloring utensils, poster board OR , whiteboard, dry-erase markers (if needed)

### 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.

**In today's part of God's big story, we'll discover what God's favorite creation is of all that He made! 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

Display the [Crucifixion Declaration Slide](#). 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.)

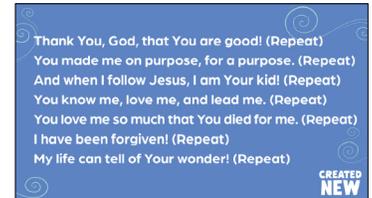
**And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

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

**You love me so much that You died for me.** (Kids repeat.)

**I have been forgiven!** (Kids repeat.)

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



## Prayer of Invitation

Lead kids in a prayer of invitation before entering into worship and God's big story: **God, thank You for loving us with a big, unchanging, everlasting love! Help us to hear the truth of Your Word today with our ears and with our hearts. Thank You most of all for Jesus, who loves us so much He was willing to die for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

## Worship

**Let's praise God together and thank Him for His never-ending love.** Play songs [You Have Overcome](#), [Praise the Lord](#) and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

## God's Big Story

Display the [Crucifixion Title Slide](#).

Explain to your kids that this part of God's big story can be read about in all four of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—but today we'll be reading from the book of Matthew.

**Today we are learning about the day Jesus showed the greatest love the world has ever seen. Watch how He went through something very hard to take the punishment for sin. As you watch, think about how Jesus' love is bigger than anything and what it means for us that He died to make a way for us to be close to God.**



### VIDEO: GOD'S BIG STORY

## LESSON 3 THE CRUCIFIXION

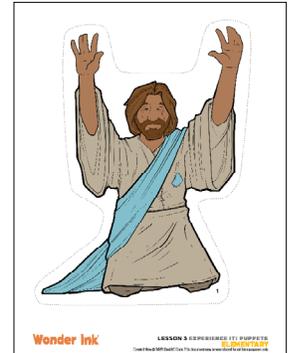
### EXPERIENCE IT! SCRIPT

**SUPPLIES:** white cardstock, scissors (prep only), roll of adhesive magnet material, magnetic whiteboard, dry-erase markers, black sheer fabric (1 yard), magnetic sheet pan (optional)

**RESOURCES:** [Experience It! Puppets \(1 set/LG\)](#)

**Make It Inclusive:** The Experience It! Script covers the difficult story of Jesus' crucifixion. Kids who have experienced trauma (or those who are very young) may struggle with the details. Be aware of the needs of your kids when deciding how much of the story to share.

Before kids arrive, print the Experience It! Puppets Full Page or Small Version on white cardstock and cut them out. Attach a large enough piece of adhesive magnet to the back of each puppet so the puppets stick to the surface of the magnetic whiteboard. Use dry-erase markers to draw trees on the whiteboard to indicate a garden. If you don't have a magnetic whiteboard, use a sheet pan instead and use the Experience It! Puppets Small Version. Before beginning, check to see if one side of the pan is more receptive to a dry-erase marker. Check that the sheet pan is magnetic. Arrange your puppets within easy reach and in order (the number at the bottom of each puppet indicates order of use).



**The time had finally arrived. The rescue plan God had hinted at with Adam and Eve in the garden had reached its most important moment. For three years, Jesus—the Rescuer—had been teaching and healing and showing people God's kingdom. And now, after sharing a final meal with His disciples, Jesus (place puppet 1 in middle of the garden) spent the night praying in a garden for strength because He knew that He must die for the sake of human beings. People do so many wrong and evil things called sins, and these sins separate people from God. To fix the broken relationship between humans and God, Jesus needed to die to defeat sin.**

**One of Jesus' disciples, Judas, betrayed Jesus and led the religious authorities and their armed guards to Jesus to arrest Him. Place puppet 2 in garden. Rather than fight the guards, Jesus went with them willingly, knowing that He would die.**

If using a whiteboard, stand in front of it for the explanation of the trials. If using a sheet pan, put it down and explain the trials. **Jesus was put on trial two times, yet the authorities could not find anything illegal or evil about His actions. Even still, the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, handed Jesus over to his soldiers to be beaten and nailed to a cross outside the city. This was called crucifixion, and it was a slow and painful way to die.**

The instructions for these puppets appear in the next paragraph.

**After Jesus had been beaten, He was forced to carry His heavy cross until He couldn't anymore, and the soldiers asked someone else in the crowd to do it. They arrived at a place called Golgotha, which means "the Place of the Skull" (Matthew 27:33). Place the first cross (puppet 3) in the center of the whiteboard or sheet pan. There the soldiers crucified Him, along with two men who had rebelled against the Roman rulers, one on each side of Jesus. Place the next two crosses (puppets 4 and 5) on each side of the cross in the center.**

The soldiers began mocking Jesus. They posted a sign above Jesus' head that said, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews" (Matthew 27:37). Place the sign (puppet 6) above the cross in the center. The Roman rulers didn't like when the people they ruled claimed to be kings. Even though Jesus did not call Himself a king, His disciples and other followers did, and as God's own Son, Jesus is King over the whole world.

The religious leaders and people passing by on the road also made fun of Jesus, telling Him to come down from the cross if He really was God's Son. While Jesus could have called on God to save Him, He knew that God wanted Him to die for all people so that they could be forgiven of their sins and have a new and whole relationship with God. Jesus loves people so much that He chose to stay on the cross to bring them into a new life with God.

Suddenly, in the middle of the afternoon, the entire land was covered in darkness. Drape black sheer fabric over the whiteboard or sheet pan. Jesus looked up to the skies, cried out loudly, and breathed His last breath. At that moment, the curtain in the temple, the place people worshiped God, tore in two, and the earth shook. What the people watching on that dark afternoon didn't realize was that this moment was not the end of the story. For three days later, Jesus would rise again, defeating sin and death.

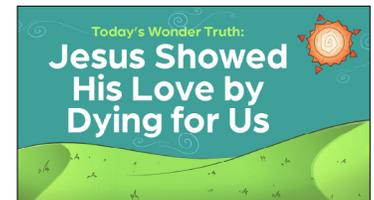
Stand in front of the whiteboard or sheet pan. Imagine the kind of love it would take for someone to willingly die such a painful and embarrassing death. But Jesus knew that the only way to defeat sin and to heal our relationship with God was for Him to die for us. Jesus showed His love by dying for us.

## Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Crucifixion Wonder Truth Slide.

Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS SHOWED HIS LOVE BY DYING FOR US**. Where did you see our Wonder Truth in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

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!



## In Awe of God's Wonder

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story.

**What does this story show us about what God is like? Based on this story, how do you think God feels about you?** Allow kids a moment to process and discuss what they're feeling.

**What do you wonder about in this story?** Allow kids time to think and share their answers. You might consider sharing an answer of your own!

## 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.



### WORSHIP VIDEO: WORTHY OF IT ALL

## Blessing Your Kids

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

**Blessing:** Because of Jesus, your sins are forgiven, and you can have a relationship with God ... forever! May you always remember that Jesus showed His great love by dying for you, and in Him, you are made new!