

## How to Teach the Crucifixion to Kids

**E**ven if you agree that teaching the crucifixion to children of all ages is paramount, that doesn't make it any less of a daunting task. Let me offer these suggestions as you prepare:

- 1. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you.** As a believer, you have the very Spirit of God in you! Rely on this gift! Ask the Holy Spirit to take over as you teach kids the pinnacle of the redemption story. Ask Him for words and wisdom to communicate the crucifixion story to your kids in a way that makes Jesus more glorious to them.
- 2. Know your kids.** Forming community with the youngest of God's image bearers is one of the beautiful things about serving children in the local church. You know Olivia is headed straight to the crafts table when she walks in. You know which gluten-free cookie is Luke's favorite. Keep your particular group of children in mind as you prepare to teach. Speak at a level they can understand. Preschoolers don't need you to bring in a life-sized replica of the nails used to put Jesus on the cross, but maybe that is something that would fascinate your sixth graders.
- 3. Give them the facts.** Jesus hung on a cross, bled, and died. He who knew no sin became sin for us. You don't have to give them every gruesome detail, but the fact is that the evil deeds of the sinners you teach is why Jesus hung on the cross. And just so no one is off the hook, that goes for you and me, too. Seeing our sin and understanding the cost of our redemption is a lesson for all ages.
- 4. Don't be afraid of emotion.** A wise counselor friend once said to me, "Health is feeling all your emotions." Feeling emotions is one of the ways we humans bear the image of God. The crucifixion was a sad and scary event. It is OK to feel sad or scared. But that sadness won't turn into despair because we know that Jesus rose again and is coming back for us. That fear won't paralyze us because we know Jesus defeated death once and for all.
- 5. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know."** The children in your class will have questions. Answer as best you can, and don't be afraid to say when you don't know the answer. Also be careful to simply answer the questions kids ask. Sometimes we adults think we need to give a theological discourse when a kid is actually just asking us if the nails hurt Jesus' hands. The answer is simply, "yes."
- 6. Leave them with hope.** He is risen! We are redeemed! We don't have to fear God's judgment! When God looks at us, He sees the righteousness of His Son! This is the hope of the gospel and it is GOOD NEWS!

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