



## EASTER LESSON 2

*The Son of Man is crucified*

LUKE 22:47-53; 23:26-49



Jesus died as a righteous man in the place of sinners.



*“Now when the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God, saying, ‘Certainly this man was innocent!’” (Luke 23:47).*

## Supporting Truths

1. Jesus died in the place of sinners.
2. Jesus was a man.
3. Jesus was righteous.
4. Jesus forgives sinners who repent and believe.
5. Jesus’ death allows sinners to come to God.

## Objectives

1. State that the darkness was a sign of God’s judgment against sin.
2. Describe how Jesus was too weak to carry His cross.
3. List six ways Jesus was righteousness.
4. Use the criminal’s example to define true conversion.
5. Explain how the torn curtain showed that Christ’s death provides atonement.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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## Lesson Summary

As Jesus neared His death, He remained sinless. An armed mob came to arrest Him, but He responded peacefully. Peter denied Him, but He responded with faithful love. Israel's leaders illegally condemned Him, but He responded with truth. He grew weak, but He continued to have compassion on others. The people mocked Him, but He prayed for them and granted mercy to a criminal. Finally, after the sky darkened, He gave up His life, the temple curtain ripped, and the centurion declared His innocence.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

Because Jesus was righteous to the very end, He was able to be the perfect substitute sacrifice. He died as a righteous man in the place of the unrighteous, bearing God's wrath against sin. The Father immediately showed His approval by ripping the temple curtain. He accepted Christ's sinless sacrifice as sufficient to restore peace between God and man. Now any sinner who trusts in the sinless Savior can be clothed with His righteousness and enter God's holy presence.

LAST WEEK



The Son of Man  
anticipates His death  
*Luke 22:7-20, 39-46*

THIS WEEK



The Son of Man is  
crucified  
*Luke 22:47-53;  
23:26-49*

NEXT WEEK



The Son of Man is  
resurrected  
*Luke 23:50-24:53*

THE SON OF MAN REDEEMS

## Lesson Commentary

### *Jesus died as a righteous man in the place of sinners.*

The evening before His death, Jesus taught His disciples that He was the ultimate Passover Lamb. Since the Passover lamb had to be unblemished, Jesus had to be fully righteous. But to die as the Passover Lamb, He also had to be fully human. The final hours of Jesus' life show that both of these were true. Through the beatings and inward grief, Jesus grew weaker and weaker as a man, until He finally died. Yet even in His greatest weakness, He never sinned. In sharp contrast to those around Him, Jesus was perfectly righteous to the very end. And so He died, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring us to God.

### **Jesus was a righteous sufferer in His arrest and trial (22:47–23:25)**

First, Jesus was peaceful in His arrest. No one else was. Judas acted peaceful, but he was a traitor (Luke 22:47–48). The crowd, which included representatives from chief priests and scribes, as well as Roman soldiers (22:47; John 18:3), was cowardly, creeping into the secluded garden under the cover of darkness (Luke 22:53). But they were also violent, armed with swords and clubs; and they were unjust, treating an innocent man like a dangerous criminal (22:52). Even the disciples responded violently because they had failed to pray (22:49–50). In stark contrast, Jesus healed His enemy (22:51). He was

peaceful even when violently arrested.

Second, Jesus was faithful when Peter denied Him. Peter had boasted of his loyalty (22:33), but he was self-confident and prayerless (22:45). Peter was a mix

of good and bad. He lovingly and bravely followed Jesus to the high priest's house, but he fearfully followed at a distance (22:54). He denied his Master to save his own skin, but with bitter tears he showed that he still loved the One he denied (22:55–62). Yet Jesus prayed for prayerless Peter (22:32). Then

He stayed faithful to faithless Peter (22:61). With one look, one deep and meaningful look, Jesus put aside His own impending doom and restored Peter through the tears of repentance. Unlike Peter, Jesus was not a mix of good and bad. In His perfect faithfulness, Jesus was wholly good.

Third, Jesus was truthful when falsely condemned. Jesus was tried before the Sanhedrin, Israel's highest court (22:66). But this trial violated God's law because the witnesses did not agree (Mark 14:56; cf. Deut 19:15). It also violated the Jews' own laws for the Sanhedrin. Without an accusation from two agreeing witnesses, the members of the Sanhedrin were not allowed to bring their own accusation (Luke 22:71). Trials were not supposed to be at night, but the Sanhedrin avoided this rule by having a trial at dawn to validate the night trial (Luke 22:66; cf. John 18:13). Trials were not supposed to be on the day of preparation for the Sabbath (Luke 23:54), nor were they to be in private (22:54). Thus the setting of the trial was illegal.

The conduct of the trial was also illegal. The accused person was to be given a legitimate defense (22:67–68), and his own testimony could not be counted against him (22:71). When voting, the least senior member was to vote first, so that the high priest could not pressure other votes by his own (Matt 26:65–66). Even one found guilty was not to be struck (26:67). Then, after finding someone guilty of a capital crime, the Sanhedrin was supposed to wait until the third day before sentencing him (Luke 23:1). Even after sentencing, the one escorting the criminal to his death would repeatedly call for anyone to come forward if they had evidence in the criminal's defense (23:10). The trial was false from beginning to end, yet Jesus spoke only the truth (22:69–70; cf. Dan 7:13–14).

While two witnesses could not confirm an accusation, two witnesses did confirm Jesus' innocence. Even though neither Pilate nor Herod cared much for Jesus (Luke 13:31;



#### THINK ABOUT IT

If the chief of the apostles denied Christ three times, who are we to rely upon our own strength?

#### THINK ABOUT IT

We are like Barabbas, guilty and deserving of death. But the guiltless Man takes our place (1 Pet 3:18).



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23:11, 16), they both repeatedly said Jesus was innocent (23:4, 14, 15, 22). But His accusers drowned out the truth with lies (23:2) and shouting (23:23). So Pilate caved and condemned the righteous Jesus in the place of murderous Barabbas (23:24–25).

## Jesus was a righteous substitute on the cross (23:26–49)

Fourth, Jesus was compassionate when humanly weak. Weakened by His repeated beatings, Jesus was unable to carry His cross (Luke 23:26). Yet even in His very human weakness He never sinned (Heb 4:15). In fact, as He struggled towards His crucifixion, He was thinking of others, not of Himself (Luke 23:28). He knew that Israel was about to be punished for rejecting their Messiah (23:29–31; Isa 8:14–15). Judgment came about 40 years later when Judea rebelled against Rome, suffered a bitter war, and was brutally crushed in AD 70. Even this was but a preview of greater judgment to come (Rev 6:16–17). So Jesus was filled with compassion, and to the very end He loved the nation who rejected Him.

Fifth, Jesus was merciful when mercilessly mocked. They treated Him like a criminal even though He was innocent (Luke 23:32; Isa 53:9). They also mocked Him (23:35). But instead of retaliating, Jesus trusted God (1 Pet 2:23) and prayed that they would be forgiven (Luke 23:34). He knew they were ignorant of just how great a crime they were committing. Their ignorance was no excuse (which is why they still needed to be forgiven), but it did arouse Jesus' compassion. So He interceded for transgressors (Isa 53:12). His prayer resulted in the salvation of many who were there that day (Acts 2:41; 4:4; 6:7), and one day all Israel will repent (Zech 12:10).

In fact, some were saved that very day. One of the criminals shows us what true conversion looks like. He feared God (Luke 23:40), confessed his sin and guilt (23:41a), believed that Jesus was a sinless sacrifice (23:41b), submitted to Jesus as King (23:42), and trusted Jesus to save him (23:42). The criminal's faith is even more amazing since at that moment Jesus did not at all seem capable of saving anyone! The criminal

did nothing to make himself better—no good deeds, no baptism, no church attendance, no penance. But Christ's promise of instant Paradise (23:43) shows that salvation is by Christ alone through faith alone.

Sixth, Jesus was innocent while dying an unjust death. This was confirmed by another man who believed that day, the Roman centurion (Luke 23:47). In addition, two signs confirmed Christ's righteous death. The first sign, darkness (23:44), pictured God's wrath (Joel 2:2; Amos 5:20; Zeph 1:15). God was judging Jesus as a **substitute**, *one who takes the place of another*. Jesus bore the sins of others (1 Pet 2:24). He suffered punishment (Isa 53:5) and became a curse in their place (Gal 3:13). God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21). The second sign, the torn curtain (Luke 23:45), showed that Jesus provided **atonement**. By satisfying God's wrath as a pleasing sacrifice, Jesus was **making peace between God and man**. Previously, only the high priest could go past the curtain into the Holy of Holies, and he could only do that once a year after making sacrifices for atonement (Lev 16). But now anyone can come into God's presence if they come through Christ (Heb 10:19).

Jesus' final words of absolute trust in God show that He was righteous to the very end (Luke 23:46; Ps 31:5). About 35 years earlier angels had announced the birth of one born to bring peace (Luke 2:14). And about 23 years earlier twelve year-old Jesus had embraced His mission to be the great Passover Lamb. And one day earlier Jesus had confirmed that this was His purpose. Now He has done it. He died, a righteous man in the place of unrighteous people, in order to bring us to God (1 Pet 3:18). And how do we come to God? Through repentant faith like the criminal had, trusting in Christ alone to save us.

**THINK ABOUT IT**  
Salvation depends on faith alone so that it may rest on grace alone (Rom 4:16).



**THINK ABOUT IT**  
God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us (2 Cor 5:21).



# Lesson Outline

*Jesus died as a righteous man in the place of sinners.*



## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE

Trust Jesus' death for your sins because...

1. Jesus was a man (23:26–31).
2. Jesus forgives sinners (23:32–43).
3. Jesus was righteous (23:39–46).



## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE

1. Jesus was a righteous sufferer in His arrest and trial (22:47–23:25).
  - Jesus was peaceful when violently arrested (22:47–54a).
  - Jesus was faithful when faithlessly denied (22:54b–62).
  - Jesus was truthful when falsely condemned (22:63–23:25).
2. Jesus was a righteous substitute on the cross (23:26–49).
  - Jesus was compassionate when humanly weak (23:26–31).
  - Jesus was merciful when mercilessly mocked (23:32–43).
  - Jesus was innocent when unjustly dying (23:39–49).





## Lesson Questions

*Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.*



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why couldn't Jesus carry His cross?**  
Because He was too weak. He was really a human like us, able to die in our place.
- 2. What did the second criminal do to be saved?**  
He admitted he was a sinner and trusted Jesus alone to save him.
- 3. What happened to the curtain in the temple?**  
It split down the middle.
- 4. What did the centurion say?**  
He said Jesus was innocent (righteous).



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. How did Jesus respond when He was arrested?**  
Peacefully. He even healed the ear of one of His enemies.
- 2. How did Jesus respond when Peter denied Him?**  
Faithfully. He looked at Peter, showing that He cared for Peter even at this difficult time.
- 3. How did Jesus respond when the Jews, Pilate, and Herod tried Him?**  
He spoke only the truth, or He remained silent.
- 4. How did Jesus respond when He was too weak to carry His cross?**  
He had compassion for the people of Israel.
- 5. How did Jesus respond when people mocked Him as He suffered on the cross?**  
He prayed that they would be forgiven, and He forgave the criminal who believed.
- 6. How did Jesus respond when He was actually dying?**  
He trusted the Father to the very end and voluntarily gave up His life.
- 7. What did the darkness show about Jesus' death?**  
It shows that Jesus was a substitute sacrifice because He was suffering God's judgment for the sake of sinners.
- 8. What did the torn veil show about Jesus' death?**  
The Father was pleased and accepted His death. His death provided atonement, making peace between God and man so that sinners could enjoy friendship with God once again.

# Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

## WHAT IS A KISS?

Have the children point to their lips. Ask the children whom they kiss (parents and grandparents, for example). Why do they kiss someone? Explain that during Jesus' time, a kiss was a very special sign of affection. It was a way to show love. It was also a way that a student showed his dedication to his teacher. That is why Judas's kiss was so wrong. He used a kiss—meant to show love—to show betrayal and hate. He used a kiss in the opposite way it was meant to be used.

## SAVING FAITH

Bring a thick rope or chain to class. Ask for a volunteer to stand next to you. Have the class imagine the child is trapped on a cliff far below. Have the child grab the rope or chain and pretend to pull them up to safety. Use this illustration to introduce the concept of faith: the child simply held on, trusting the rope and the teacher (Deut 10:20). Tell the children that we'll learn more about this in today's lesson when we meet the thief on the cross.



ILLUSTRATE

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

As you talk about the events of Christ's trial and crucifixion, highlight various ways people responded to Christ by drawing various items and pictures from a bag. For instance, a theater mask could represent betrayal; a sword could depict defense or vengeance; a laughing face could represent mocking; an angry face or fists could represent hatred; a question mark or bored face could depict indifference; and a U-turn sign could indicate repentance. The children also could act out these various attitudes with their expressions and postures. Close the lesson by asking the children how they should respond to Jesus.

## TAKING HOME A LAMB, PART 2

(Continued from Easter Lesson 1.) Hopefully all of the children have brought their stuffed lambs back. You may want to have a few extra in case some forget. At the end of today's lesson, collect all of the lambs and place them in a sealed box. This box should be left until Resurrection Sunday. Explain to the children that after Jesus died, He was put into a tomb that was sealed for three days.



APPLY

## MAKING CROSSES

See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*.

**Materials:** Craft sheets, craft sticks, construction paper, scissors, glue, and brown markers or crayons.

**Directions:** Pre-cut the verse from the craft sheet. Have the children color six craft sticks brown. Use the craft sticks to form three crosses and glue them onto a sheet of construction paper. Glue the verse under the cross that is centered on the page.

*Making Crosses*  
See *Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2*



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## BETRAYED!

Betrayal is when someone who claims to be your friend shows himself to be an enemy. His actions are all the more hurtful because you trusted him as a friend. This can be vividly demonstrated with a series of skits. Here are some scenarios that teachers or children could act out for the class:

- A child is doing something he shouldn't, but when caught, he blames a friend.
- A child meets up with some other children and then completely ignores his friend and excludes him from their games.
- A child gets new glasses, and his friend makes fun of him and even recruits other children to join in the teasing.
- A child lends his favorite toy to a friend who, out of jealousy, purposefully breaks it.

## HOW DO YOU RESPOND?

What do you do when people treat you badly? When we respond badly, it is sin. That sin condemns us. Lots of people treated Jesus very badly. If Jesus had sinned, even a little, His sin would have condemned Him too, and He could not have been the sacrifice for our sins. But Jesus never sinned. He responded correctly every time.



ILLUSTRATE

## SINLESS SUBSTITUTE

Have you ever had a substitute teacher? Could your three-year old brother be your substitute teacher? What about your twelve-year old sister? No? Why not? Because neither are qualified to be a teacher. A substitute has to fit the qualifications for the job. So it is with Jesus. Only a human can be the substitute for humans. And only a sinless human can be the substitute for humans who failed to be sinless.

## THE REALITY OF CRUCIFIXION

While telling the story, use objects such as a torch, a whip (or whip-like object), crown of thorns, six-inch nails, and hammer. These objects will help the children see the reality of what happened.



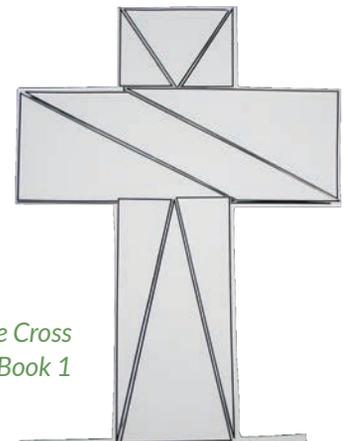
APPLY

## AT THE CROSS

*See Year 2 Craft Book, Book 2.*

**Materials:** Craft sheets, scissors, and glue.

**Directions:** Have children cut out the geometric shapes from the craft sheet. When arranged in the right order, the shapes will form a cross. Have the students put the shapes in order and glue the pieces over the black cross.



*At the Cross*  
*See Year 1 Craft Book, Book 1*

"And Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.' And they cast lots to divide his garments" (Luke 23:34).

AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

### **FORGIVENESS**

Ask the children if anyone has ever done something to hurt them. Did they react with hate or love? Did they want revenge, or did they seek to forgive? Tell the children that in today's lesson Jesus will show us the perfect way to forgive. When the thief asked Jesus to forgive him, Jesus said that the thief would be in heaven with Him that day. Jesus did not tell the thief that because of his sins and the timing of his repentance, it was too late. He did not tell the thief that he had to do good things before he could enter heaven. Instead, Jesus forgave the thief in that moment, and the forgiveness was total.

### **TAKING THE BLAME**

Ask the children if they ever have done something wrong and had their parents or another authority punish them. Have they ever had someone take the punishment for them, or have they ever taken the punishment for someone else? Explain that Jesus died for sinners. He took the punishment of all who would believe in Him and come to Him in repentant faith. In today's lesson we will learn about the day Jesus took that punishment.



ILLUSTRATE

### **CRUCIFIXION**

During a crucifixion, a criminal was given a cross to carry to his execution point. Then he was nailed or tied to the cross, with his arms outstretched. The cross was dropped into a hole so that it would stand upright, and this drop caused excruciating pain for the one being crucified. Crucifixion was viewed as a punishment of disgrace. It was the most painful death known to the Romans and was reserved for outlaws and slaves. In fact, it was thought to be so cruel and inhumane that, according to Roman law, it was illegal to crucify a Roman citizen.

### **SYMBOL OF YOUR FAITH**

Talk to the children about the various things that people use to symbolize their faith (WWJD bracelets, cross necklaces, nice Bibles, etc.). Ask the children whether carrying one of these symbols actually means that a person is saved. Many people wear symbols and say they are believers, but what do their actions show about their faith? Ask the children what the one true symbol of salvation is. It is Jesus in our lives! When other people observe our lives, they should see the fruit of our faith (Jas 2:18).



APPLY

### **RESPONSES, RESPONSES**

In today's lesson, we saw various responses people had to Jesus: betrayal, ridicule, awe, fear, anger, indifference, saving faith, etc. Write these various responses on strips of paper and place them in a bag. Ask a few children to draw a strip of paper from the bag and then act out the response. Another option is to give the children various scenarios and have them demonstrate how they would respond. The most important question is how they are responding to Christ—and how they should respond to Him.