Jesus Died for Us • Lesson 4

Bible Point

Jesus died for our sins.

Bible Verse

“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy” (Titus 3:5a).

Growing Closer to Jesus

Children will
- discover that Jesus is God’s greatest treasure,
- find out that Jesus carried everyone’s sins when he died,
- learn that they can start living for good because of Jesus’ death, and
- see that Jesus created a bridge to heaven by dying for their sins.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis

- Jesus died for us.

Mark 15:15-39

The cruelty of a Roman flogging and crucifixion is hard to fathom. Worse, Pilate handed Jesus over to the cruelty of a Roman flogging and crucifixion even though he had found no reason to do so. Jesus was innocent, yet he was treated like a criminal.

Flogging often preceded execution. The whips Romans used for flogging were made of leather but had bits of lead or bone attached at the ends in order to tear the victim’s flesh. People often died from the flogging itself. It is therefore understandable that Jesus, after undergoing a cruel flogging and further beating as the Roman soldiers mocked him, was unable to carry his own cross beam very far afterward (Mark 15:21).

Death by crucifixion was a slow, painful, public death. Victims often were naked and could survive for days in agony before dying. Usually the victim suffocated, utterly exhausted and no longer able to thrust his body up and down to get a breath. The Romans often broke the legs of victims to hasten death.

Remarkably, though, Jesus refused anything that might deaden the pain. At Golgotha Jesus was offered “wine drugged with myrrh.” An ancient Roman physician noted the narcotic qualities of the spice myrrh, and Jewish tradition indicates that Jewish women used to prepare a painkilling drink for those about to be crucified.

Jesus, however, chose to bear the full brunt of humanity’s cruelty and God’s wrath without deadening his senses. Because of Jesus’ great sacrifice, we never need fear him turning his back on us in wrath.

Prayer

- Read 1 Peter 2:24.
- According to this verse, in what sense is our life “healed” when we believe in Jesus?
- What are some ways young children can “live for what is right”?
- Pray: Lord, help me live my life in a way that honors Jesus’ sacrifice for me. Help the children I teach learn how even they can honor Jesus by…
## Before the Lesson

- Collect items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed in the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your children.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction in teaching the lesson.

## This Lesson at a Glance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Classroom Supplies</th>
<th>Learning Lab Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome</strong>&lt;br&gt;Welcome!—Receive a warm welcome from the teacher, and make name tags.</td>
<td>“New Life Name Tags” (p. 24), scissors, markers, tape or safety pins</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attention Grabber</strong>&lt;br&gt;Greatest Treasure—Draw pictures of their greatest treasures, and discover that Jesus is God’s greatest treasure.</td>
<td>Paper, markers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Bible Exploration &amp; Application</strong>&lt;br&gt;Jesus Dies—Listen to the story of Jesus’ crucifixion as recorded in Mark 15:15-39, and make stamps around a symbol of Jesus to show that he carried our sins.</td>
<td>Bible, paper, marker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stop and Start—Play a stop-and-start game, hear 1 Peter 2:24, and talk about how Jesus came so that they would start living for God.</td>
<td>Bible</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heaven Gained—Learn from Isaiah 59:2 how sin separates them from heaven but Jesus’ death forms a bridge back to God; then read Colossians 1:20-22.</td>
<td>Bible, candy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Closing</strong>&lt;br&gt;Form That Object—Form objects that remind them that Jesus died for their sins, and learn that they are God’s treasure.</td>
<td>Bible, pictures from “Greatest Treasure” activity, crayons, CD player</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Welcome

**SUPPLIES:** “New Life Name Tags” (p. 24), scissors, markers, tape or safety pins

- Greet each child individually with an enthusiastic smile.
- Thank each child for coming to class today.
- As children arrive, ask them about last week’s lesson and “Growing Together” activities. Use questions such as “What did you do to walk in Jesus’ footsteps last week?” and “How did you resist temptation last week?”
- Say: Today we’re going to learn that Jesus died for our sins.
- Hand out the name tags children made during Lesson 1, and help them attach the name tags to their clothing. If some of the name tags were damaged, or if children weren’t in class that week, have them make new name tags using the photocopiable handout.
- Tell children that the signal you’ll use during this lesson is clapping your hands three times. Ask children to respond by clapping their hands three times as they stop talking and focus their attention on you. Rehearse the signal with the children, telling them to respond quickly so they’ll have plenty of time for all the fun activities planned for this lesson.

Attention Grabber

### Greatest Treasure

**SUPPLIES:** paper, markers

Give each child a half sheet of paper. Set out markers or crayons. Say: A treasure is something we have that is really special. It might be big or little, but it’s so important to us that we might not even want to share it with anyone. We hold it close to us, like this. Hug yourself. Have the children each draw their greatest treasure on the paper. Then have them fold their papers and put them in the treasure chest.

Ask: • What did you draw a picture of? (I drew my dog; I drew my baseball-card collection; I drew my mom and dad.)

• Why is your treasure special to you? (My baseball cards are worth a lot of money; my parents are special because they take care of me and love me; my dog is special because I love him.)

• Pretend that someone wanted your treasure. Would you give it away? Why or why not? (No, I won’t ever give my treasure away; maybe, but only if they asked me nicely and told me why they wanted it.)

Say: Treasures are special and important; they mean a lot to us. God also has a special treasure: Jesus, his Son. Today we’re going to find out what happened when God gave away his greatest treasure. That happened when Jesus died for our sins. We are going to put away the treasure chest and what’s inside it right now, but we’ll get it out again later today.

Set the treasure chest and its contents aside for use in the Closing activity.
Jesus Dies

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, paper, marker

Have the children sit in a circle. Draw a cross on a piece of paper, and place it on the floor in the middle of the circle. Say: **Today’s story is about Jesus. We’ll pretend that Jesus is the cross on the piece of paper. Listen to what the Bible says about what Jesus did for us. Read Isaiah 53:12b.** Say: Jesus carried our sins with him to the cross. Open your Bible to Mark 15:15-39, and show the passage to the children. In the story, people did a lot of bad things to Jesus. A bad thing is called a sin. As I tell the story, listen for bad things that hurt Jesus. For each bad thing, we’ll use the stamper to make a mark just above the cross.

Give the stamper to the child on your left, and begin the story. When you read the first bad thing that someone did to Jesus, stop and let the child put a stamp above the cross. Then have the child give the stamper to the next child.

Say: The soldiers put a purple robe on Jesus, and they made a crown out of thorny branches and put it on Jesus’ head. Prompt the child with the stamper to make a mark above the cross and pass it to the next child. Pause, and then ask:

• How do you think Jesus felt wearing thorns on his head? (It hurt a lot; he probably wanted to cry.)

Say: Then the soldiers started to tease Jesus. They didn’t really believe that he was God’s Son or a king, but they pretended to bow to him, and they laughed as they said, “Hail, King of the Jews!” Have the child with the stamper make a mark on the paper and then pass along the stamper. Pause, and then ask:

• Has anyone ever teased you? How did you feel? (I felt bad; I wanted to get even; I wanted to run away.)

Say: Then the soldiers hit Jesus with a stick (pause and let the child make a mark with the stamper and then pass it on), and then they spat on him. Pause. Let the next child make a mark and then pass on the stamper. Then they took him to the place where he would be killed.

The place was called Golgotha, which means “the place of the skull.” There they gave him something bitter to drink (pause while the child with the stamper makes a mark), but Jesus wouldn’t drink it. Then the soldiers took away Jesus’ clothes and played a game to see who would win them. Pause. Have the next child make a mark.

Then they put Jesus on the cross, and they killed him. Pause. Have the next child make a mark. As Jesus was dying, people walked by and insulted him. They said, “If you’re so great, come down from that cross and save yourself!” Pause. Prompt the child with the stamper to make a mark. Even the priests and the teachers of the Law were making fun of Jesus. They said, “He may have saved other people, but he can’t save himself. If he really were God’s Son, he could come down from the cross.” Pause. Instruct the next child to make a mark. But they didn’t understand that Jesus was dying in order to take away their sins.

At noon everything became as dark as it is at night. And the darkness lasted for three hours. Then Jesus died. Pause. Have the next child make a mark with the stamper.
When people do wrong things, we call the bad things sins. Look at all the sins that are by the cross. These are all the sins Jesus carried. And these are only a few of the sins that happened on one day. Jesus was willing to carry the sins and to die on the cross so people who believe in him could be forgiven for their sins. When Jesus died, he carried all the sins anyone ever committed. He even carried the sins we’ve committed. But something happened to those sins when Jesus died. Watch.

Crumple the picture of the cross, and throw it away. Say: \textbf{Jesus died for our sins.} That means all the wrong things we have done and will ever do can be forgiven and thrown away for good. We’ll never see those sins again, and we won’t have to take God’s punishment for those sins because Jesus already did that. Let’s read our key Bible verse for today, Titus 3:5a: \textit{“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”} We believe in Jesus, and that means we’ll be able to live with God forever. Let’s find out what else Jesus’ death means for us.

Return the \textit{stamper} to the Learning Lab.

\section*{HANDS-ON BIBLE}

Give each student a rectangle of light-colored cloth, about 12x4 inches. Set out permanent markers, quilt batting or tissues, and colorful electrical tape for the children to share. Say: \textit{Jesus saved us from drowning in our sins, the way a life preserver can help a person from drowning in the ocean. Let’s make our own life preservers to remind us of what Jesus did for us.} Please open your \textit{Hands-On Bible} to Titus 3, and we’ll work together on the activity called \textit{“Life Preserver.”}

Help your students locate Titus 3 in their \textit{Hands-On Bibles}, and assist them in creating their “life preservers.” When kids have finished their crafts, have them form a circle, and pray: \textit{Dear God, thank you for allowing Jesus to die on the cross for our sins so we wouldn’t have to. Thank you for making Jesus our life preserver to help us keep our heads above water even when it gets hard. And thank you for your mercy. Amen.}

Ask: • \textit{How is Jesus like a life preserver?} (He saves people from drowning; he helps them when they really need it.)

• \textit{Who can you tell this week that Jesus is our life preserver?} (I can tell my mom; I can visit my grandma and tell other old people about Jesus.)

\section*{Stop and Start}

\textit{SUPPLIES: Bible}

Play this game in a long hallway, in a fellowship hall, or outside if possible.

Have the children line up on one side of the room. Choose one child to be the leader, and have him or her stand on the opposite side of the room, facing away from the other children and holding the \textit{twirly bird ring} over his or her head.
While the twirly bird ring is raised in the air, the other children will walk quickly toward the leader, putting one foot directly in front of the other as if walking on a tightrope. Then the leader will lower the twirly bird ring and quickly turn around.

When the ring is lowered, everyone must immediately stop moving. Anyone the leader sees moving has to return to the starting place. Then the leader will turn away from the other children and raise the ring again. The first child to cross the room and tag the leader becomes the new leader for a second round. Play for about five minutes; then gather the children. Return the twirly bird ring to the Learning Lab, and ask:

- What did you do when the leader lowered the ring and turned around? (I tried to stop; I held my breath so she wouldn’t see me move.)
- Was it easy to stop quickly? Why or why not? (Yes, because I watched carefully; no, I kept losing my balance and moving.)

Say: The Bible talks about stopping one thing and starting something else. Listen to what it says, and be ready to tell me what we should stop doing and what we should start doing. Read 1 Peter 2:24.

Ask: • What should we stop doing? (Living for sin; sinning; doing wrong.)
• What should we start doing? (Living for what is right; doing good.)
• What kinds of things can you start doing to live for what is right? (I can pray more; I can be nice to others; I can help take care of my little sister; I can obey my parents without being reminded.)

Say: Jesus died for our sins so we can begin to live a new life. We can start doing right and stop living for the wrong things. Sometimes it’s not easy to stop, just as it was hard to stop quickly in our game. But God gave his greatest treasure, Jesus, so we could stop doing wrong and start living a brand-new life. It pleases God when we try our best to do right. Let’s find out what will happen in the new life that we have because of Jesus.

**Heaven Gained**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, candy

Put a bag of candy on a table next to a wall.

Have the children stand next to the table of treats. Say: Let’s pretend that this table is heaven. Heaven is filled with wonderful things, just as this table is filled with sweet treats. Everyone is happy in heaven because there is no sorrow, sickness, crying, or hunger. But we can’t get to heaven on our own, no matter how good we are. I’ll show you what I mean.

Ask: • Have you ever told a lie, even a little one?
• Have you ever disobeyed your parents or done anything wrong behind their backs?
• Have you ever cheated while playing a game?
• Have you ever thought anything mean about your friends or family members?
• Have you ever gotten mad and hit someone?

Say: Think for a minute about those questions. Have you ever told a lie, disobeyed, cheated, had unkind thoughts, or hit someone in anger? If so, follow me.
Lead all the children to the opposite side of the room. Say: Look how far away we are from heaven. Listen to what the Bible says. Read Isaiah 59:2. All the things we’ve done wrong have separated us from God and heaven, and there’s only one way to get there. Listen to what the Bible says, and be ready to tell me how we can get to heaven.

Read Colossians 1:20-22.
Ask: • What happened that will allow us to go to heaven? (Jesus died; God made us his friends again when Jesus died.)
Say: Because Jesus died, all our sins can be forgiven and we can be brought back to God. Once we were far from God, but now we are friends with Jesus. Let’s make a bridge that will carry us back to God.

Have the children form two lines, facing each other. Have children join hands with the children facing them and lift their hands above their heads to form an arch.

Starting with the two children at one end of the line, have one child walk through the archway while the class sings the following song to the tune of “London Bridge.” As each child walks through, insert his or her name in the song.

God loved us,
So he sent his Son,
Who came to die
And rose again.
He built a bridge
From [child’s name] to God.
Thank you, Jesus.

After the first child emerges from the archway, have him or her stand at the head of the line as his or her partner comes through. Continue until each child has walked through the archway. The archway will travel toward the table of treats as children walk through it and take new places at the other end. Continue until the children arrive at the table of treats.

Give each child a treat. While kids are enjoying the treats, say: We can enjoy the good and sweet things of heaven because Jesus died for our sins. That’s cause for celebration. The Bible says we can be Jesus’ friends now. Let’s thank God for sending Jesus to die for us.

Understanding the way your first- and second-graders develop spiritually will help you communicate with them effectively about what it means to believe in Jesus Christ and develop a personal friendship with Jesus. They understand God’s love and God’s world through personal experience. They don’t comprehend the spiritual nature of God, but rather, they think of God as a giant, a magician, or an invisible man. They don’t comprehend the Bible’s chronology except that the Old Testament came before Jesus and the New Testament talks about Jesus. They have a literal and concrete understanding of Bible stories and biblical truths. They don’t comprehend abstract ideas such as the Trinity.
Lesson 4

Closing

Form That Object

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, pictures from “Greatest Treasure” activity, crayons, CD player

Form groups of four to six children. If you have 10 or fewer children in your class, do this activity in one big group.

Say: **Let’s have fun remembering what we learned today. I’ll call out an object, and your group will form your bodies into that object. Ready? Form a treasure chest.**

Give children a minute to form a treasure chest. Be prepared to help children if they have trouble. In a four-person group, you might have two children face each other, kneel, and hold both hands to form the box of the chest. The other two children could lean over the box with their arms extended to form the lid.

When all the groups have formed a treasure chest, ask:

- **What did you learn about treasures?** (I learned that Jesus was God’s treasure; that God gave away his greatest treasure for us.)

Say: **God gave his greatest treasure for us so we can have a way to heaven. But God treasures us, too. We are all God’s treasures because God created each one of us.**

Have one group stay in a treasure-chest position. Have each child take a turn getting inside the treasure chest. For each child, have the class say, “[Child’s name] is one of God’s treasures.” Have the child who took a turn inside the chest replace one of the children forming the chest so that each child will have an opportunity to be inside the treasure chest. Then re-form the small groups.

Say: **Now form a cross.** Give groups a minute to form crosses, and then ask:

- **What did you learn about a cross?** (That Jesus died on a cross; that Jesus was nailed to a cross.)

Say: **Jesus was nailed to a cross and died there so we could begin a brand-new life. Now form a bridge.** Give groups a minute to form bridges. In each group, children could stand opposite each other in two lines and hold their hands over their heads to form an arch similar to the one they formed in the “Heaven Gained” activity.

Ask: **What did you learn about a bridge?** (I learned that Jesus is the bridge that lets us go to heaven; I learned that Jesus made a bridge that we could walk over to be with God in heaven.)

Have the children sit in a circle with you. Say: **Today we learned that Jesus died for our sins. God sent his treasure, Jesus, to die on the cross for us—to make a bridge from us to heaven. Let’s thank God.**

Show children the key Bible verse, Titus 3:5a, in your Bible and read it once again:

**“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.”** Pray: God, we thank you for giving away your most precious treasure so we can live with you forever. Thank you for your love and mercy. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Open the treasure chest, and give children their treasure pictures. Have the children draw a picture of God’s treasures—Jesus and themselves—on the back of their papers.

Then play “Because of His Mercy” (Titus 3:5a) (track 3) on the CD. Repeat the song, encouraging the children to sing along. The lyrics are at the back of this book.

When the song has ended, return the CD to the Learning Lab.
Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Growing Together” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your children. Encourage children and parents to use the handout to plan meaningful activities on this week’s topic. Follow up the “Growing Together” activities next week by asking children what their families did together.
Thank You, Jesus

Decorate your home for Easter with these easy decorations. First, talk about how even though Jesus’ death was sad, it brought us happiness because now we can live with God forever and our sins can be forgiven. Then gather sheets of colored paper. Cut each sheet of paper lengthwise; then make cuts about a quarter of an inch apart as indicated by the drawing.

As you cut, talk about the things that hurt Jesus, and then unravel the paper and admire the streamer. Talk about the new life that we find because of Jesus’ death. Hang the streamers.

Precious Treasures

Create a treasure jar. Find an empty jar, and scrub the label off. Gather small items to decorate the jar, such as stickers, ribbon scraps, lace scraps, and buttons. Have your child glue the items to the jar and lid. Discuss the fact that Jesus is God’s greatest treasure, yet God sent Jesus to die for us. Have your child fill the treasure jar with small treasures.

Fragrant Offering

Read Ephesians 5:2, and talk about what it means to be a fragrant offering. Then set out cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves, and orange peel or other aromatic spices. Help your child use glue to draw a picture on a piece of paper and sprinkle the spices on the glue. When the glue has dried, put the spice picture near your child’s bed, where the scent will remind him or her of Jesus’ sacrifice.

Easter Fun

Poke holes in both ends of raw eggs, and gently blow the insides into a bowl. Gently wash the eggshells. Put tape over one hole in each egg. Mix up your family’s favorite gelatin. Use a funnel to carefully pour the gelatin into the eggs. Set the eggs upright in the refrigerator for several hours until the gelatin has set. Remove the shells from the eggs and serve. Explain how because we believe in Jesus, we are forgiven for our sins. And just as we can remove the shell from the egg and find a tasty treat inside, Jesus removes the bad things from our lives and makes us better on the inside.

Today your child learned that God gave his greatest treasure so we can live with God forever. The children learned that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins and to bridge the gap between us and God. Use these ideas at home to teach your child about Jesus’ sacrifice.

Bible Verse

“He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy.” (Titus 3:5a).