



Themes:

- Jesus displays the greatness and worth of God
- Jesus was obedient to the will of His Father
- Jesus is sovereign over the actions of all people
- Jesus willingly gave up His life for sinful people

Scripture:

Matthew 27:11-54

Memory verse:

But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8

Materials and Visuals:

Lesson:

Scraps of paper

Waste paper basket

"No" and "Yes" signs (Resource Pack: 33 A,B)

Wooden spoon

***Cross -Make as large as possible using cardboard or other sturdy material**

Large nails and hammer

***Save these visuals for future lessons**

Background Information for the Teacher:

Children have an acute sense of fairness, especially as it pertains to their own wellbeing. For example, to ask them to accept the consequences of a sibling's wrong doings will bring an immediate and strong negative response: "*But that's not fair!*" Now picture the narrative of Isaiah 53. The vision of a suffering servant -- a quiet and perfect lamb -- despised, rejected, pierced, crushed, and punished to death. Willingly, He goes to the cross to bear not His own sin, but the sin of others. That vision is Jesus. Jesus came to save sinners. All the events of His life led to this moment in history. Every moment leading to Jesus' death -- the trial, the floggings and beatings, the nails, the mocking crowds -- were all part of God's glorious plan. Jesus never cried out, "*But it's not fair.*" Instead Jesus cried out, "*It's finished.*" Jesus said yes to the will of the Father in order to show the greatness and worth of God in saving unrighteous sinners.

Planning Ahead:

Before class time, take the scraps of paper and scatter them on the floor in the front of the classroom.

Lesson Presentation:

When you come up front to begin the lesson make the following comments:

Look at all of these scraps of paper on the floor. What a mess! Let's pretend for a moment that (child's name) came in the room and made this mess. Was that a good thing for her/him to do? No, of course not. Now suppose that I told (another child) to pick up (child's name) mess. What would your answer be? (hold up YES and NO signs)

Give the "innocent" child a chance to respond. If they respond, NO, ask the children if it was fair to ask one child to pick up another child's mess. Emphasize that the child who made the mess deserves the consequence of picking the mess up. If the child responds, YES, ask them if they think it's fair that you have asked them to clean up the mess. Ask the child if he/she is happy to do it, or doing it just because you, the teacher, told the child to do it.

What if I also decided that (child's name) deserved some kind of punishment for messing up the room. (Hold the wooden spoon in your hand and look again to the second child.) How would you feel about taking (child's name) punishment for him/her? Would you be willing to do that for (child's name)? Would that be fair?

Emphasize that there is a limit to how much we will do for another person, especially when the consequences are very painful. There is a point at which we say: "NO, it isn't fair!"

Explain that today's Bible story tells us about someone who was treated unfairly by everyone. Someone who could have said, "No, I won't do it. It's not fair." But instead said, "Yes, I'll do it. I'll be happy to do it!"

STORY: THE CRUCIFIXION OF JESUS Matthew 27: 11-54

This narrative is long, so it will be necessary to carefully summarize the story. This lesson is focused on the actual events leading to the death of Jesus, especially His unfair treatment and His absolute willingness to fulfill His goal and die for sinners.

[Note: the theology of redemption will be explained in the next lesson.]

Use the YES and NO signs, and other pictures and visuals at the appropriate time in the lesson. Points to emphasize:

- After Jesus was arrested, He was put on trial. A trial is where someone decides whether or not someone has done something wrong and what their punishment should be.
- The priests and teachers made up lies about Jesus. Do you think Jesus would answer and say, *Those are lies. It's not true!*? (hold up NO sign)
- Jesus would not answer back. He was saying, *Yes, I will let them tell lies about Me.* (YES sign)
- The people decided that Jesus was guilty, and had done wrong things. They said Jesus was a criminal. The crowd wanted Jesus punished to death. "**Crucify Him! Crucify Him!**" they shouted.
- Ask:** *Who is Jesus?* Jesus is God! Jesus never sinned! He never did anything wrong! Jesus didn't deserve to die. Is Jesus more powerful than the crowd? Yes, He is all-powerful. He could say "*NO, I won't let you kill me.*" But Jesus said, *Yes, I will let them kill Me.* (YES sign)
- Jesus was whipped. He could have stopped them, but Jesus said, *Yes, I will let them whip Me.* (YES sign)
- The soldiers took off Jesus' clothes, and dressed Him up like a pretend king with a robe and crown made of thorns. They made fun of Him. They did not understand that Jesus is the greatest King of all. They shouldn't have made fun of Him. But Jesus said, *Yes, I will let them make fun of Me.* (YES sign)

NOTES

-The soldiers spit on Jesus and hit Him on the head over and over again. Would that hurt? Yes, Jesus was human. It hurt Him a lot. Couldn't Jesus say, *No, you can't do that. It's not fair. I'm God!* ? Jesus is God. He could have said "No!" and made the soldiers stop. But Jesus said, *Yes, I will let you spit on Me and hit Me.* (YES sign.)

-The soldiers placed Jesus on a cross and hammered nails through His feet and hands. The very hands that healed people, and fed crowds, and calmed storms and loved sinners. It bled and hurt a lot! Jesus said, *Yes, I will let you hurt Me.* (YES sign)

-The crowd mocked Jesus saying, ***Save Yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!*** (Show the children the YES and NO signs) Ask the children: *How will Jesus answer? Jesus is God. Is He able to come down from the cross? Yes, He is.* But Jesus said, *NO, I will not save Myself.* (NO sign)

-Jesus chose to stay on the cross and slowly and painfully die. Jesus always obeyed God even to the point of dying on the cross. Just before He died He said, *Yes, "It is finished."* (YES sign)

Read John 15:13. Jesus said,

Greater love has no one than this, than he lay down his life for his friends.

Did Jesus really love His friends? YES! And so Jesus said YES to the cross and died. Because Jesus came to save sinners.

Additional Activities

Yes or No Game: Make small copies of the Yes and No signs from the resource pack for each child. If possible copy the Yes sign on green paper and the No sign on red paper. To make the signs more easy to handle, have the children cut out the sign along the lines. Review the questions or statements from the lesson presentation. Have the children respond to the questions or statements by raising the appropriate sign. You may want to include other additional statements such as: *Did Jesus always obey the commands of God? Did Jesus come to save sinners? Is Jesus the almighty God? Is anything too hard for Jesus to do? Is Jesus a faithful friend?*

NOTES

-Memory Verse: Have the children take their Yes sign from the previous activity and glue it to the top portion of a piece of paper. Underneath the sign, print today's memory verse from Romans 5:8.