



Themes:

- All people are unrighteous sinners
- God hates sin and is right to punish sin
- Jesus is without sin- He is righteous
- Jesus willingly received the wrath and punishment of God on behalf of His sinful friends

Scripture:

Isaiah 46:9b; Psalm 16:11; Romans 1:18, 21; 3:23; 6:23; 5:19a; Matthew 25:46; Ephesians 2:8-9; Ezekiel 36:26a; John 1:1; Hebrews 4:15; Isaiah 53:6,12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24; Habakkuk 1:13; Isaiah 53:5,10; Romans 3:25-26

Memory verse:

He Himself bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. 1 Peter 2:24a

Materials and Visuals:

Lesson:

Small cup or pot, a few bean seeds, and potting soil

Paper plate

***Picture frame and Bible insert (from previous lessons)**

***Large shiny, darkened, and red hearts (from previous lessons)**

****“Death” and “Savior and Friend” signs (from previous lessons)**

Small wrapped gift box (from previous lessons)

***Cross (from previous lesson)**

***Save these visuals for future lessons**

Background Information for the Teacher:

In last week's lesson we related the story of the crucifixion of Jesus. From outward appearances, it didn't seem like Jesus had accomplished much on behalf of sinners. But unseen by any human eye, something extraordinary was happening. As Romans 3:25-26 explains, God would not compromise the value He places on His own righteousness. Therefore, sin must be punished. So God presented His own righteous Son as a perfect substitute and poured out on Him the punishment His sinful people deserved. It is important that children understand what the death of Jesus on the cross truly means. Jesus' death bore our sin and ultimately the terrible wrath of God.

Planning Ahead:

Four or five days before the lesson, plant a few of the bean seeds in the cup or pot. Water lightly and set in warm place. If on the day of the lesson the sprouts have broken through the soil, cover them with a little extra soil so that they are not visible.

Lesson Presentation:

Show the children some bean seeds. Ask them if, from the outside, the seeds look alive. Ask the children questions to direct their thinking, such as: *Can the seeds move? Do you see the seeds breathing? Do the seeds look alive? Do the seeds look like they're doing anything important right now?*

Next show the children the pot with the soil and planted seeds. Explain to them that you took and planted some of the seeds a few days ago. Have the children look carefully into the pot. Again ask them if they can see anything special happening to the seeds. Finally, carefully pour out the contents of the pot onto a paper plate. Sort through the soil and gently pick up one of the sprouted seeds. Hold up the sprouted seed for the children to see. Make the following comments:

Now does the seed look different? Has it moved? Does it look alive? Does it look like it's doing something special now? Sometimes there are important things happening that are hidden from our eyes. We couldn't see what was

happening under the dirt, but something important was happening. A new plant had come to life and was moving and growing.

Point out to the children that there are many important things that happen that we are not always able to see with our eyes. For example, we can't see the air that we need to breathe in order to stay alive. We can't see the insides of our bodies to see how our food is changed into energy to run and jump. And we can't see with our eyes one of the most important things that has ever happened.

Show the cross from last week's lesson. Ask the children:

What happened to Jesus in last week's Bible story? Yes, He died on a cross. What kinds of things did the people see happening in the story? They saw Jesus being beaten, whipped, and made fun of. They saw a crown of thorns on His head. They saw the soldiers put Jesus on a cross and hammer nails in His feet and hands. They saw Jesus slowly and painfully die. But there was something very special that they didn't see! Something very special happened that was hidden from their eyes. Where do you think we will find out about the special thing that happened? Yes, in the Bible.

Explain to the children that first you will be reviewing some of our previous lessons that lead up to Jesus death on the cross. Use the visuals and the following texts to slowly and clearly review the doctrine of God, man, sin, Jesus, and redemption. Use the following order and explanations:

-Bible insert- *Do you remember what these words in the picture frame are for? Yes, they are words taken from the Bible that tell us who God is and what God is like. God is the most special person of all. (Isaiah 46:9b)*

-Shiny heart - *Do you remember when God created Adam and Eve? God created them to show back to Him how special God is. God was their Creator, their God, and their Friend. God filled them with joy. (Psalm 16:11) Hold the shiny heart near the Bible insert. But what happened next?*

-Darkened heart- *Adam and Eve sinned against God and their hearts became dirty, darkened and sinful (Romans 1:21) Was God happy about their sin?*

-Death sign- *God is very angry with sin. God hates sin. God is right to punish sin. The right punishment for sin is death—experiencing God's anger forever in hell. (Romans 1:18, Romans 6:23, Matthew 25:46) Move the darkened heart and Death sign away from the Bible insert so that the children see that there is a separation.*

-Have a child come up front and give them the darkened heart and the Death sign to hold- *The Bible says that everyone of us is born with a sinful heart and we all deserve to be punished to death by God. (Romans 3:23, Romans 5:19a) Can any*

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of us be happy separated from God? No. So our sinful hearts are our biggest problem. Can we solve that problem by ourselves? No. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

-The gift box- But God is great! Nothing is too hard for Him to do. And God made a special promise to His people. He promised that He would send someone to save us. (Ezekiel 36:26a)

-Picture of Jesus- So God sent Jesus into the world. Does anyone remember what is so special about Jesus? Yes, Jesus is God! (John 1:1) Did Jesus ever sin? No.

-Shiny heart- Jesus is perfect. He never sinned. Jesus always said and did the right things. (Hebrews 4:15) He always showed that God is the most special person of all. Jesus came to say and do many wonderful things. Jesus loves sinners. He wants to be our Savior and Friend. Jesus is so great that He came to do something very special for us.

-Cross- Jesus came to save sinners by dying on the cross. Attach the shiny heart to the cross. Jesus always obeyed God even to the point of dying on the cross for sinners.

Ask the children: But how can dying on a cross save sinners? It didn't look like Jesus had done anything very special. He looked and acted just like a dead person, unable to do anything. But what did we learn from the seeds? Yes, there are some very special things that we can't always see with our eyes! When Jesus died on the cross, He did something very, very special!

-Take the darkened heart away from the child holding it and attach it over the shiny heart on the cross- Even though the people there couldn't see it with their eyes, God took the sins of all His people that He loved—Noah, Abraham and Sarah, Moses, David, Peter, John, and even you and me—and placed them on Jesus, His own Son (Isaiah 53:6,12; 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 2:24) There was Jesus on the cross, carrying many, many sins. What does God think about sin? Will God look at sin? No. (Habakkuk 1:13) What is the punishment for sin? Yes, death and God's anger. God's anger is the most scary and terrible thing of all.

-Attach the red heart over the darkened one on the cross. Take away the Death sign from the child and tape it above the red heart- So, even though no one could see it with their eyes, while Jesus hung on the cross and bled, God poured out His anger at sin on Jesus and punished Jesus to death. (Isaiah 53:5,10; Romans 3:25-26 Note: In Wayne Grudem's Systematic Theology, "propitiation" (from Romans 3:25) is defined in the following manner: "a sacrifice that bears God's wrath to the end and in so doing changes God's wrath toward us into favor." p. 575)

Emphasize that Jesus' death on the cross is not just a story about how mean the crowds were or how the soldiers made fun of Jesus and killed Him -- the things that

people could see with their eyes -- it is the story of how Jesus did the greatest thing of all for sinners. Jesus willingly took all the sins of all the people He loved and was punished by God in their place. Have the children notice that the child holding the darkened heart and the Death sign no longer has either. Now the people that Jesus loves no longer need to be afraid of God's punishment for their sin. Jesus has been punished for the sins of His friends!

Jesus is the greatest person of all! He is a great Savior and Friend!

Additional Activities:

-Bracelets: From a craft store purchase the following items: leather cord (about 9 inches for each child), silver, black and clear colored large plastic beads (1 of each per child), and red heart-shaped beads (1 per child). Cut out a 9 inch portion of cord for each child. About 4 inches from the left-hand end of the cord, tie a single knot. Have the children thread the beads in the order, black—red heart—silver, from the right-hand end of the cord and stopping at the knot. Tie another knot at the point of the silver bead. The bracelet should now look like this from left to right order: knot—black—red heart—silver—knot. Use the clear bead as a fastener to join the ends of the cord to the appropriate length for each child. Review with the children the significance of each color of bead (each represents one of the heart visuals from the lesson).

-Class Room Poster: Make a large cross out of tagboard or cardboard. Cut out two identical large red hearts. Glue these two hearts together, leaving the top open so that the hearts will form a large envelope. Attach the heart envelope to the center of the cross. Print today's memory verse on the heart. Make copies of one of the heart shapes from the resource pack. Have the children and teachers completely darken in a heart with markers or paint. Have the children and teachers write their name on the back of the heart. Have the children place their darkened hearts inside the red heart envelope. Review today's memory verse as they do so.