



LIFE & MINISTRY OF JESUS

Unit 9 • Jesus' Suffering and Victory

UNIT DESCRIPTION

This unit encompasses the focus and the climax of Jesus' life on earth. While one major function of the incarnation of Jesus was to demonstrate God's character to mankind in a tangible way, the major reason for His incarnation was to make atonement for the sins of mankind (Mark 10:45). This purpose was accomplished in two steps: suffering and victory.

The suffering was accomplished by His death on the cross. The resurrection is proof that Jesus' death did indeed guarantee victory over the power of sin in this life and for eternity. Because Jesus was victorious over sin, God is able to reward those who seek Him.



THE GREATEST SACRIFICE

Life & Ministry of Jesus • U9#1 1st-3rd Grade • Mar.24, 2024

Concept

Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate example of self-sacrifice and love.

Goal

Students will learn the meaning of sacrifice by better understanding the crucifixion. They will be encouraged to follow Jesus' example of sacrifice by choosing to be sacrificial instead of selfish.

Passage

Matthew 27:32-56

Key Verse: "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters."

1 John 3:16 (NIV)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Children's Guide to the Bible, Robert Willoughby</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>The Rainbow Fish, Marcus Pfister</i> <i>Rainbow Fish sandwich board</i> Peppermint patties, 1/student <i>Masking tape, 1 roll/room</i> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Bible (NIV or NLT)</i> <p>Extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Adam Raccoon at Forever Falls, Glen Keane</i> 	<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 8½" x 11" bright-colored, die-cut fish w/printed scales, 1/student Die-cut self-adhesive paper scales, 3/student [1] <p>[1] To make scales: Cut paper into 2" squares. Place the squares on the die over the curved center of the block letter "P" and cut. In this way scales are cut without wasting paper on the rest of the "P".</p>

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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The focus of this lesson is the suffering of Christ—namely, the cross. While this topic lends itself to many key and relevant issues, the one to be emphasized this week will be the idea of sacrifice. Jesus' death on the cross was the ultimate example of self-sacrifice.

Today's culture knows little or nothing of the notion of self-sacrifice. Not only does society discourage us from giving up anything for a cause greater than ourselves, but also actually teaches that we should, indeed must, work aggressively to protect our possessions, assert our rights, and pursue our personal goals and desires at any cost.

When considered against this backdrop of cultural hedonism, Christ's command to lose ourselves for His sake (Luke 9:24) can appear foolish, outdated, or fanatical. It is imperative that children learn early to develop biblical convictions and habits of self-sacrifice for Christ's sake in order to stand against their own fleshly desires and the tug of culture. As they learn about Jesus' example of sacrifice, the children will be challenged to believe that they can choose selfishness or sacrifice in every situation.

“There will always be mystery in the agony of Gethsemane. . . . There is no parallel between His sufferings and those of the martyrs who were often exultant as they approached the hour of martyrdom. But there was no vicarious element in their sufferings. They suffered and died after He had removed the guilt and exhausted the penalty of their sins. For them there was no hiding of the Father's face in prospect.” [1]

“He [Christ] drank a cup of wrath without mercy, that we might drink a cup of mercy without wrath.” [2]

[1] J. Oswald Sanders, *The Incomparable Christ*, ©1952, 1971, Moody Press, p. 131.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 132.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Before class: Use the masking tape to attach the peppermint patty “scales” (1/child, estimated) to the sandwich board costume.

Activity Stations:

• Craft – Giving Fish [1]

- **Instructions:** Give each child a fish and 3 self-adhesive paper scales. Pull the backing off the scales and stick them on the fish. As the children work on their fish, look up and read 2 or 3 of the verses on the printed scales and talk about their application. Verses on scales: Acts 20:35, Ephesians 5:2, Philippians 2:3-8, 1 John 4:19, Colossians 2:13b-14, 1 John 3:16, John 3:16, John 15:12-13, Matthew 16:24-25, 1 Peter 2:21.

Note: The fish will be used in the introduction so make sure they have their names on them.

- **Conversation:** Have you read the story, The Rainbow Fish? It’s a story about a selfish fish that learned how to sacrifice something very special. What does sacrifice mean? (It means to give up something at great cost to you for the sake of someone else.) Have you ever had to sacrifice (give up) anything? Was it easy to do? Jesus is the greatest example of giving. He loved us so much that He gave His life so that we can be God's children.

[1] Adapted from Rainbow Fish Story Activities,
http://www.accucut.com/Rainbow_Fish_Story_Activities-idea-craft-0-detail-1028-Search.html

Object Lesson – Sharing

Instructions: Have children exchange fish with each other. Each child should have ONE fish that is NOT his/her own. Then have the children sit down.

Debrief: Did you like giving away your fish? (I didn’t like it. I worked hard on it and wanted to keep it. I liked the scales I had. I liked giving it to my friend. I didn’t like giving it to someone I don’t know, etc.) What is the most important or special thing that you own? (Give the kids a chance to talk about what’s important to them.) Would it be hard for you to give away that special thing?

Listen while I read a story about a fish that found it hard to give away things that were important to him.

Story – The Rainbow Fish

Instructions: Put the “costume” on the teacher who will act out the story as you read, e.g., look proud, sad, happy, etc., and give out the “scales.” Read the book. When all the “scales” from the front have been given, turn the costume around. The teacher should hand out the “scales” until each student has one.

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Debrief: Why was the Rainbow fish sad when he still had all his important scales? (Because he wouldn't share them; he didn't have any friends. Having beauty/things didn't make him happy; we are often very lonely when we are selfish.) How did he feel after he gave away all but one of his precious scales? (He was happy.) Why? (Because he cared more about being a friend to the other fish than about how beautiful he was.)

The Rainbow Fish had a whole bunch of friends when he decided to share or sacrifice his shiny scales to the other fish. What does "sacrifice" mean? (It means to give up something at great cost to you for the sake of someone else.) (Talk about what the Rainbow fish gave up and what he received) God tells us in His Bible that we will always be more satisfied when we choose to give rather than receive (Acts 20:35).

Transition

This is just a make-believe story about a fish. But it helps us understand what sacrifice means. How many of you felt like you "sacrificed" the fish you made? When I asked you to give your fish to another person, I could tell you didn't really want to do that; you wanted to keep it for yourself. It's very normal for us to want to keep things for ourselves. Today we are going to learn about someone who made the greatest sacrifice EVER – greater than the Rainbow Fish.

Lesson Lg. Group

Introduction before reading the passage:

We're going to read about Jesus' crucifixion for our lesson today. What does crucifixion mean? (It means dying on the cross.) You will hear about people who are being very mean to Jesus, even though we know Jesus didn't do anything wrong! The soldiers were very cruel and Jesus went through a very horrible, painful death. As you listen, think about what happened to Jesus.

Read Matthew 27:32-56.

Debrief:

How did you feel as you heard about what happened to Jesus? Do you think anyone should ever be treated that way even if they deserve it? Tell me again: What does sacrifice mean? (Sacrifice means giving up something at great cost to you for the sake of someone else.) What did Jesus sacrifice? (He sacrificed His life.) Our key verse this week is, "We know what love is because Jesus gave his life for us" (1 John 3:16). Do you think it hurt Jesus to sacrifice His life? (Yes, He suffered terribly.) He knew all those things would happen before He came to earth, but He came anyway. Why do you think Jesus was willing to sacrifice His life? (He loves us so much and wants us to be God's children. The only way we can be a child of God is to ask for Jesus' death on the cross to pay for our sins.) Jesus died on the cross for sins He never committed. If Jesus never sinned, why did He have to die on the cross?

Lesson Continued

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

He didn't have to die, but He was willing to die on the cross so we can be God's children. He knew that, on our own, we cannot be God's children because we are all sinners, and God has to punish all sin. So when Jesus was on the cross, His own Father punished Him for every sin that every person has ever done or ever will do. If we ask Jesus to forgive all our sins, He will. He can forgive us because He took the punishment we deserve.

Let's get into small groups to talk and pray.

Discussion questions:

- What does it mean to sacrifice?
- Why is it hard to sacrifice something for someone else?
- Tell us about a time when you or someone you know gave up/sacrificed something for someone else. (Allow for responses.)
- What did Jesus give up? (He gave up everything, including His life and even His relationship with His own Father.) Why did He give all this up?

Mission Prayer: Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

Our key verse is, "We know what love is because Jesus gave his life for us" (1 John 3:16). Jesus sacrificed His life for us because He loves us so much. He wants us to be willing to sacrifice, or give up, things in our lives for the sake of others. But unless you know Jesus and have the help of the Holy Spirit you can't do that. First you need to accept the gift of forgiveness from Jesus. Once you are forgiven and a child of God, you can ask Him to show you ways you can sacrifice things for the sake of others. Think of it as being totally unselfish like the Rainbow fish was with his beautiful scales. Let's pray now and thank Jesus for sacrificing Himself for us and ask Him to show us how to we can sacrifice ourselves for the sake of others.

Game – People to People [1]

Instructions: Each player finds a partner and joins the group in a circle, except for the leader who stands in the center. The leader snaps his fingers, saying, "People to people," and the others join him. Whenever he desires, the leader changes his words to "hand to hand," or "toes to toes," etc. The players must then touch their partners' hands with their hands, or toes with their toes, etc. The leader goes through various body parts, and then shouts, "People to people!" This is the signal for everyone to find a new partner, including the leader. One player is left without a partner and becomes the new leader. Players try to have a different partner and a different leader each time. Make the game more challenging and more hysterical by naming two different body parts, for example, "hand to foot."

[1] Susan Butler, *Non-Competitive Games for People of All Ages*. © 1986 Susan Butler, Bethany House Publishers, p. 48.

Read Adam Raccoon at Forever Falls. Finish Giving Fish craft.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group