



Easter

Five pre-school Bible sessions

JESUS
all about life



Easter

LESSONS 1 TO 5

Jesus showed God's love in His many interactions with a wide range of people. Why? Because everyone is precious to God. Jesus showed us that God loves us at Easter and showed us He has power over any scary thing, even death.

LESSONS

- 1. Jesus is celebrated as King** (John 12:12-19)
Palm Sunday is a celebration of Jesus and His Kingdom.
- 2. Jesus washed His disciples' feet** (John 13:3-17)
Jesus shows us how to serve each other.
- 3. Jesus is arrested even though He was innocent** (John 18)
Jesus was found innocent, but He was willing to die for us.
- 4. Jesus dies, and His followers are sad** (John 19:38—20:10)
Jesus' followers discover that Jesus may be alive again.
- 5. Jesus comes back to life and His followers are glad** (John 20:11-30)
Jesus appeared to many disciples to comfort them and bring them hope.

MEMORY VERSE

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. (John 3:16 CEV)

PREPARE

Things you will need to do each week:

Personal Preparation	Make sure you spend some time reflecting on the theme of the lesson and its application to you. You can only share with the children what you have learned yourself.
Learning Activities	Choose what activities you will use and gather the necessary materials – do activities in the order that makes the most sense for your group.
Bible Story and Interaction	Decide on your visual aids and practise telling the story with them. Use a familiar Children's Story Bible if you would prefer to tell the story that way.
Play	Select special and regular favourite activities to help children begin thinking about the themes of the story as they play individually or in small groups.
During the week	Look for ways to continue your contact with the children and their families. Also take time to reflect on how your times together are going and how you can improve them.

LEADER TIP FOR EASTER

Show love for the children and their families.

God designed babies to be born into the safe, protective environment of a loving home. As they are held and cared for, they thrive on that love. It is as necessary for their healthy development as food and cleanliness. Parents can do much to ensure their children's future by surrounding them with love and affection at this early stage.

Love continues to be a basic need for all of us throughout our lives. Too many children never experience the loving support they need so desperately. Living in this sinful world, many of their contacts with others are characterised by conditional acceptance at best. It is hard for them to conceive of, or trust in a God who loves them unconditionally.

Yet God does love them unconditionally and He calls His people to reflect that love. From the moment a child enters the church community, they should feel loved and accepted. As they experience our love, their hearts will be opened to the God who loves them. The provision of a loving, safe environment, staffed by adults who are willing to do whatever it takes to display unconditional love, should be the top priority of everything we do with young children.

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus showed God's love in His many interactions with a wide range of people. Many of those people were rejected by those around them. Yet Jesus still had time for them and cared for their needs. Why? Because everyone is precious to God.

This unit has one main point:

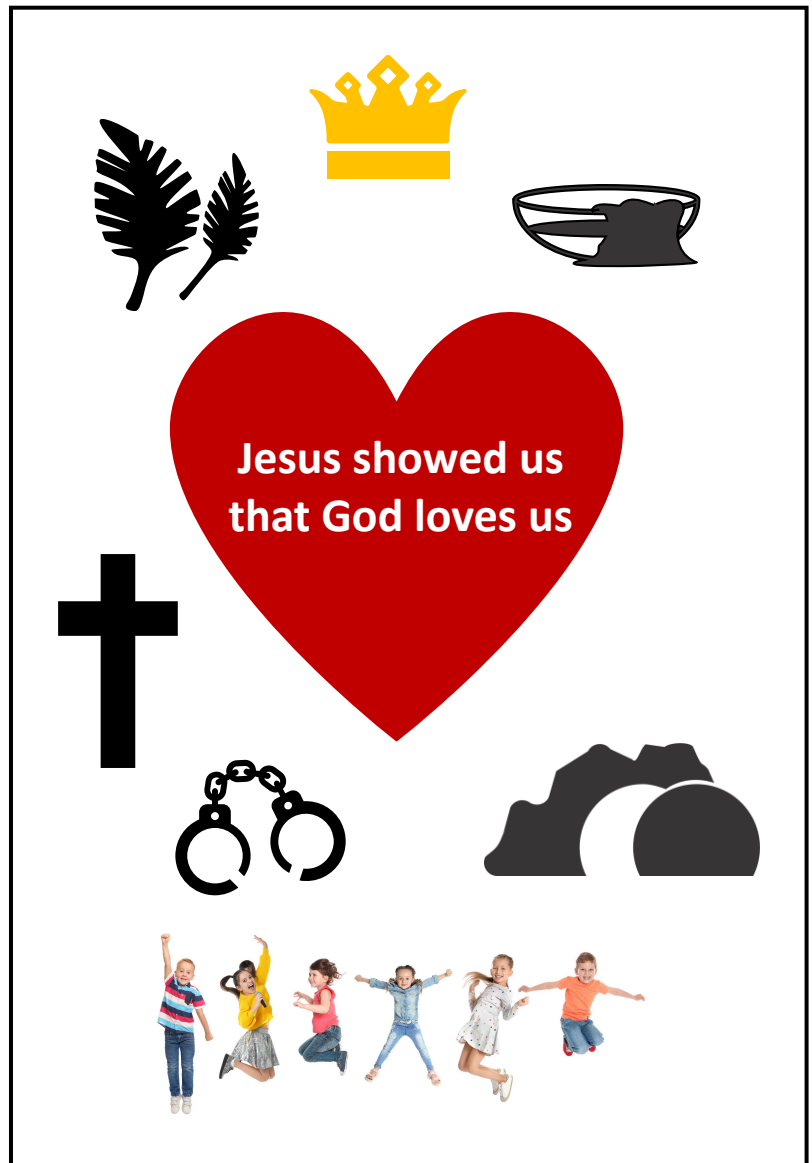
Jesus showed us that God loves us.

MAKE A HEART POSTER

To illustrate this, we suggest you make a poster with a big heart in the middle of it. At the top of the poster, add a crown to represent God. At the bottom, add a person (or several, or photographs of the children) to represent all of us.

Each lesson, draw or glue into the heart an illustration to help the children remember the different examples of God's love. Some possible illustrations are as follows:

- Palm branches
- A foot-washing bowl and towel
- Open handcuffs
- Cross
- Empty tomb



1. Jesus and Palm Sunday

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON		PERSONAL PREPARATION
Bible Passage	John 12:12-19	God loves us so much! The Bible tells us this over and over again. Sometimes in the ups and downs of life, we forget or doubt His love. That is when we cry out like the Psalmist – “Show us your constant love, O Lord, give us your saving help.” (Psalm 85:7) This week, be on the lookout for God’s love operating in your life. You can be sure that God is at work, active in His love for you!
Memory Verse	John 3:16	
Main Idea	Jesus comes from God.	
Teaching Point	God loves and cares for us. <i>(Heart)</i>	

THE LESSON PLAN

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Using play to explore ideas from the lesson

Individual Activities (including regular favourites)

Encourage your leaders and helpers to play dress ups with the children and think about celebrating the King!

Suggestions

- Dress up: in our times, the celebration of someone special may result in confetti, special lights, special clothes and red carpet. Have some dress ups available for everyone to enjoy.
- Art: Create a Welcome King Jesus Banner together – make it bright, cheerful and colourful.
- Make Happy/Angry faces.
- Colour the memory verse.

Group Activities

Bring the children together with some group activities.

Suggestion

Clap, clap, clap your hands

Clap, clap, clap your hands as slowly as you can. *(Say and do slowly)*

Clap, clap, clap your hands as quickly as you can. *(Say and do quickly)*

Children copy you and do the actions slowly and then quickly. Other actions: nod your head, stomp your feet, turn around, wave your palm branch, cheer and jump, sit down quietly etc.

- Practise using the happy/angry faces before the story.
- It's all about celebrating Palm Sunday. Do you have branches the children can wave safely?
- Favourite songs and games as appropriate.

BIBLE CONTENT

Discovering what the Bible can teach us

Visual Aids

One or more palm branches and bright fabric to use as cloaks. A sample of the craft – Happy/Angry Face. Heart poster.

Story Outline

Introduce the story. John 12:12-19 contains the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem just a few days before the Passover festival.

Introduction

Did you dress up and cheer during our dress up time? We are going to share a story about King Jesus and how He was welcomed in Jerusalem by the children and grown-ups.

Story

Jesus had been staying with His friends Mary, Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. The people who saw Him were many of the ones who saw Jesus raise Lazarus from the dead. The children started to call out "Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!" (*Happy Face*) They began to wave palm branches. People put branches and cloaks on the ground for the donkey to walk on. (*Happy Face*) They also called out "Blessed is the King of Israel!" (*Happy Face*)

Some of the leaders of the people were very angry about Jesus' power – the people seemed to love Jesus more than them! They began to plan for Jesus to be killed. (*Angry Face*) Even so, the children called out and praised God, just as they did when they called out in the Temple! (*Happy Face*)

Application

How do you think the children felt when they saw Jesus? Have you ever cheered for someone? What happened? Some people did not like the cheering for Jesus – what do you think they needed to know about Jesus that could have helped them?

(*Show Heart poster*) The Bible tells us that God loves us, and He sent Jesus to help us understand that. *Point to the heart symbol and add the palm branches.*

Memory Verse

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. (*John 3:16 CEV*)

Use symbols to introduce the first part of the verse (*see poster*).

Pray

Thank God for sending Jesus to be our King and care for us. Amen.



INTERACTION

Remembering and applying the lesson

In Class

- Draw faces on the (paper) plates – glue the wool or similar for hair on top.
- Dress up and play games of welcoming and cheering.
- Tell the story -using the Happy/Angry faces to show the mood of the crowd.
- Make a **Welcome King Jesus** banner – decorate the banner over the coming weeks.

Materials

- Dress up materials and outfits
- Paper plates
- Wool or similar
- Marker pens, crayons or pencils
- Glue, scissors

DURING THE WEEK

- Look for ways to interact with the children and their families during the week.
- Prepare for next week.
- Choose a couple of children in your group for whom to pray.

Time to Reflect

- How did you show love to the children today? How did they respond?

2. Jesus washed His disciples' feet

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON		PERSONAL PREPARATION
Bible Passage	John 13:3-17	Read John 13. Jesus demonstrated again that His role was of a Servant King. No king existed before Jesus with this attitude of service to those with less power. Consider His conversation with Peter. Reflect and start a list: How many ways has Jesus served me?
Memory Verse	John 3:16	
Main Idea	Jesus shows His disciples how to serve each other.	
Teaching Point	King Jesus served me by saving me.	

THE LESSON PLAN

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Using play to explore ideas from the lesson

Individual Activities

These activities help children begin thinking about the themes of the story as they play individually or in small groups. Discussion questions are suggested after each.

Suggestions

- Caring for dolls: Take care of the dolls the way that parents care for babies – e.g. feed them, dress them, love them, take them for a walk, put them to bed. *Babies are not very big. They can't do much yet, but people still care for them. Why? We care for them because we love them. That is why God cares for you!*
- Sharing a meal: During snack time, talk through all the jobs people do to help: setting up the space, preparing the snacks, putting them out, cleaning up any mess, washing up and tidying the space ... Who helped to serve us in snack time? Identify any helpers present and see if you can identify helpers who did something that the kids didn't see before the session such as baking or food preparation.

Group Activities

Bring the children together with some group activities.

Suggestion

- Stand up if __: Have the children sit on the ground in front of you. Then invite children to stand up if they meet the criteria you give. For instance: "Stand up if you are wearing blue" or "Stand up if you are 4 years

old" or "Stand up if you have a younger brother or sister at home." etc. When they stand up, observe if there are lots of children standing or only a few.

We are all different and yet we are all important! I am glad that all of you came to learn about Jesus today because He loves all of you!

- Clapping activity from Week 1. Include wash, wash, wash!

BIBLE CONTENT

Discovering what the Bible can teach us

Visual Aids

Large washing bowl or bucket, nice smelling soap, towel for drying.

Introduction

What chores or jobs do you have at home? What important jobs get done at home?

Story

One day Jesus planned a special meal with His disciples. When everyone was seated, Jesus took the lowest servant task to do at a special meal – He went and washed all His disciples' feet.

The disciples were very surprised! Why were they surprised? Because Jesus was their teacher and master. Washing the feet of diners at a banquet was the job of the lowest servant or slave. Not the teacher!

The disciple Peter was so shocked, he told Jesus not to wash his feet. Jesus reassured Peter that this was good and right to do. Then Jesus washed Peter's feet.

After Jesus had washed everyone's feet, He tidied himself up and sat down with them for the meal. He explained that He was setting an example for them to follow. They needed to follow the example of their teacher and master who became their servant. They had to learn how to serve each other, just as Jesus had served them.

Application

I am sure the disciples never forgot that day!

How do you think they felt when Jesus began to wash their feet?

Do you have any teachers or leaders or parents who serve you? What do they do for you?

We don't usually need to wash feet because ours are mostly in shoes. What are other ordinary ways we can serve?

Add a picture of a foot-washing bowl of water and towel to the heart poster.

Memory Verse

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. (*John 3:16 CEV*)

Use symbols to introduce the new parts of the verse (*see poster*).



Pray

Thank Jesus for serving us by caring for us.

INTERACTION

Remembering and applying the lesson

In Class

- Play with dolls by caring for them.
- Make surprised and happy faces for the story.
- Continue decorating the **Welcome King Jesus** banner.

DURING THE WEEK

- Look for ways interact with the children and their families during the week.
- Prepare for next week.
- Choose a couple of children in your group for whom to pray.

Time to Reflect

- How are your conversations with the children? Do you have time to talk with them during the activity or craft time or are you too busy with the programme?
- What could you change to make more time for conversations?

3. Jesus is arrested even though He was innocent

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON		PERSONAL PREPARATION
Bible Passage	John 18	Read John 18. Jesus was betrayed (by Judas and by Peter), He faced false accusations, but through every step, He cared for people, and kept heading towards the cross. Reflect: Jesus loves us so much! He was willing to die for us – and in John’s gospel we see His determination. He never falters when He follows that path for our salvation. God delights to show His mercy to us. Keep asking our good God for everything you need for life and forgiveness!
Memory Verse	John 3:16	
Main Idea	Jesus was found innocent, but the people wanted Him to be killed.	
Teaching Point	Jesus loves us so much He was willing to die for us.	

THE LESSON PLAN

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Using play to explore ideas from the lesson

Individual Activities

These activities help children begin thinking about the themes of the story as they play individually or in small groups. Discussion questions are suggested after each.

Suggestions

- **Obstacle course:** set up a course that goes around and under furniture, over cushions, etc. Children take turns being blindfolded and being lead around the course by hand and voice. *What would happen if you didn't have someone to help you?*
- **Mystery objects:** Place a collection of small, common objects (e.g. keys, crayon, apple, toy car) in a box or bag that can be closed so the children can't see inside. Children reach into the box/bag, feel an object and try to guess what it is. *Is it hard to recognize something if you can't see it? How do you know what you're touching?*

Group Activities

Bring the children together with some group activities.

Suggestion

- **I spy:** Hold up a coloured piece of paper. Ask the children to find things in the room of that colour.

Accept several suggestions. Do it again with a different colour. *We can see the colours because God gave us eyes to see.*

- What would it be like if you couldn't see colour?
- What would it be like if you couldn't see colours anymore?

BIBLE CONTENT

Discovering what the Bible can teach us

Visual Aids

Sheets of coloured paper: brown, blue, green, yellow, etc, the Heart Poster, open handcuffs.

Introduction

We're going to hear a story about when Jesus was arrested. Some people could see and hear the truth, but other people chose not to see or hear the truth about Jesus.

Story

After Jesus and His followers had a special meal (the one where Jesus washed their feet), they went out of the city and up into a beautiful garden to pray and talk. While they were in that garden, Jesus was arrested and taken away.

When His followers saw that Jesus was arrested, they were very afraid. They all ran away.

Jesus was brought before the Jewish leaders. They were worried because the people loved Jesus. The people were amazed by Jesus' signs, teaching and miracles. The Jewish leaders couldn't see how Jesus was bringing God's goodness to their people. They wanted to stop Jesus.

They said Jesus was speaking wrongly about Himself and God. They said Jesus was stirring up trouble. They sent Him to the Roman leader, Pilate, for execution.

The Roman leader interviewed Jesus about His claim to be the King of the Jews. Jesus told Pilate about His Kingdom. Pilate did not find Jesus guilty of anything. He wanted to release Jesus. But sadly, the people were so stirred up against Jesus that day, they called for His death.

Even though Pilate found Jesus innocent of breaking Roman law, he sentenced Jesus to death.

Application

We know how much it hurts when people don't believe us when we tell the truth. *(Show Heart poster)* Jesus knew that this would happen to Him and He still did what God wanted. Even though He was innocent *(show open handcuffs)* He still accepted the terrible sentence of death.

His followers were very afraid.

Attach the picture of the open handcuffs to the Heart Poster.

Memory Verse

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. *(John 3:16 CEV)*



Use symbols to introduce the new parts of the verse (*see poster*).

Pray

Thank Jesus for loving all of us, no matter how scared or naughty we are.

INTERACTION

Remembering and applying the lesson

In Class

- Use coloured sheets to play “True and Not True”. Designate one side of the play space as “true” and the other as “not true”. Hold up a paper colour and say “this is ____ [name of colour]”. If the colour name is true, the children run to True, if it isn’t, they run to “Not True”.
- Play with clay or modelling dough.

DURING THE WEEK

- Look for ways to interact with the children and their families during the week.
- Prepare for next week.
- Choose a couple of children in your group for whom to pray.

Time to Reflect

- What part of the lesson did the children respond to most? What can you do next week to build on this?

4. Jesus dies and His followers are sad

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON		PERSONAL PREPARATION
Bible Passage	John 19:38—20:10	Read John 19:38—20:10. Jesus really did die on the cross. His followers saw Him die. John tells that even Jesus' mother was there and other women (John 19:25-27). Two of Jesus' followers, Joseph and Nicodemus, helped take care of Jesus' body and bury Him. Joseph and Nicodemus both knew Jesus when He was alive. They are witnesses to His death because they cared for His body and arranged burial for Jesus. Reflect: What new insights have you discovered from this part of Jesus' story?
Memory Verse	John 3:16	
Main Idea	Jesus died on the cross and His followers buried Him.	
Teaching Point	Jesus really did die – His followers were sad, and they buried Him with care.	

THE LESSON PLAN

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Using play to explore ideas from the lesson

Individual Activities

These activities help children begin thinking about the themes of the story as they play individually or in small groups. Discussion questions are suggested after each.

Suggestions


- **Dead or Alive:** Bring a variety of items for the children to investigate. Some should be dead (dead flower, piece of wood, shell, butterfly) and some alive (potted plant, pet, ants). Allow the children to investigate the items with a magnifying glass, etc. and decide if they are dead or alive. *If something is dead, can you make it alive again?*
- **Art:** Children draw or paint pictures of things which make them happy and sad. *What do your parents do when you are sad? How do they help you feel better?*

Group Activities

Bring the children together with some group activities.

Suggestion

- Cooperative musical chairs - Place chairs back-to-back in a line with one less chair than there are



children playing the game. Play some music and have children walk around the chairs. When the music stops everyone sits in a chair. Chairs can be shared so that no-one is left out. The idea is to get everyone on a chair so that everyone wins. Remove a chair and try again. More and more children will have to share and help each other as the chairs continue to be removed.

BIBLE CONTENT

Discovering what the Bible can teach us

Visual Aids

Cloth for wrapping someone up, some “fake” spices that might have been used at Jesus’ burial, box of tissues, the cross picture that you’ll put on the Heart Poster.

Introduction

It’s another sad story today. Sometimes we feel sad when we say goodbye to friends and visitors, but it’s even sadder when we say goodbye to someone who has died. We’re learning today that Jesus died. Have you ever had a plant, or pet, or a special person die?

Story

When Jesus died on a cross, His follower Joseph of Arimathea, went to the Roman leader Pilate, and asked if he could take Jesus’ body and care for it.

The tradition then was to wrap a body gently and carefully and put it in a tomb with sweet smelling spices that were especially chosen for burial. Joseph, and another man who followed Jesus, Nicodemus, did this. Nicodemus brought about 34kg (or 75lb) of special spices called myrrh and aloes to wrap with Jesus’ body. It would cost more than Mum or Dad could earn in a whole year! It was a precious gift.

They laid Jesus’ body in Joseph’s tomb, another precious gift.

All of Jesus’ followers were very sad, and many were still very afraid.

On the Sunday morning, Mary went to Jesus’ tomb but Jesus’ body wasn’t there! She was shocked and told Peter and another disciple about it. They ran to the tomb and saw the cloths Jesus had been wrapped in — they were carefully folded.

Application

(Show heart poster) Jesus is God’s Son. He is the King – but He was willing to die for us so we could be friends with God forever.

Jesus loved us so much (just like we are learning in our memory verse), that He went to the cross *(show the cross picture)* to save us *(attach cross picture to the Heart Poster)*.

Memory Verse

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. *(John 3:16 CEV)*

Use symbols to introduce the new parts of the verse *(see poster)*.



Pray

Thank Jesus for loving and dying for us.

INTERACTION

Remembering and applying the lesson

MATERIALS

- Heart Poster
- Spices (if available).
- Cloth for wrapping
- Box of tissues
- Dead or Alive objects
- Coloured sheets of paper
- Modelling clay or play dough – make a sad face or a sad person.

REFLECTION

Jesus faced a very sad day so we could be friends with God forever.

DURING THE WEEK

- Look for ways to interact with the children and their families during the week.
- Prepare for next week.
- Choose a couple of children in your group for whom to pray.

Time to Reflect

- How do you react when children do the wrong thing in your class?
- What does this teach the children about God's love?

5. Jesus comes back to life and His followers are glad

OVERVIEW OF THE LESSON		PERSONAL PREPARATION
Bible Passage	John 20:11-30	Read John 20:11-30. Jesus did not stay dead – He showed Himself to those who believed and to those who struggled and doubted. Reflect: Re-read the reactions of those who saw Jesus after God raised Him to life. How do their reactions help you understand the miracle of Jesus’ resurrection?
Memory Verse	John 3:16	
Main Idea	Jesus showed He is King because He is alive again.	
Teaching Point	God raised Jesus to life and His followers saw Him.	

THE LESSON PLAN

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

Using play to explore ideas from the lesson

Individual Activities

These activities help children begin thinking about the themes of the story as they play individually or in small groups. Discussion questions are suggested after each.

Suggestions

- Buried treasure: bury some “treasures” such as buttons or stones; anything tiny and shiny that the children can find in your “dig site”. Children take turns trying to find the items. *Talk about a time when they lost something.*
- Party time: Children help you to prepare a special treat for everyone so you can have a celebration at the end of the lesson. *Why do we have parties? What do we celebrate?*

Group Activities

Bring the children together with some group activities.

Suggestion

- Have one leader who is at the gathering but not with the children yet. Say the leader is there, but no one can see them. Do we believe the leader is here?
- Find the Phone: Hide a cell phone in the room. Hide it well so it won’t be easy to find. When the

group time starts, 'discover' the phone is missing. Worriedly ask the children to help you find it. As the children look, keep telling them how important the phone is to you. When the children haven't been able to find it for a while, the missing leader calls the lost phone so it rings, helping the children to find it. *Talk about how good it feels to find something that is lost and briefly chat with the other "lost" leader on speaker. Invite them to come in and show themselves to the children.*

BIBLE CONTENT

Discovering what the Bible can teach us

Visual Aids

Heart Poster and **Welcome King Jesus** banner

Introduction

How would you feel if you lost something that was very precious to you? Has that ever happened to you? How did you feel when you found it again? (*Discuss*)

Story

When Jesus died, His followers were very sad. Some of them went to His tomb the Sunday after he died. The cloths used to wrap Jesus were there, neatly folded, but Jesus' body wasn't there. Where was Jesus?

In today's story, we pick it up where Mary is back at Jesus' empty tomb. She is so sad she is crying.

Do you know what job angels have? They announce things! Especially good news from God!

While she is crying, Mary notices two angels in the tomb where Jesus' body had been. And they announced VERY GOOD NEWS. Jesus is not here anymore. He isn't dead. He's alive!

After that Jesus saw all His followers and lots of people – about 500! He met with them many times and told them things about what they had to do. He gave them the gift of His Holy Spirit, and he especially reassured His followers who found it hard to believe He was alive.

Jesus wanted ALL of His followers to know He was alive, and that God had done what He planned to do.

Application

We've been discovering the stories of Jesus' death and being raised to life from the Gospel of John. In many Bibles the book is just called "John". At the end of the book, John says that he wrote all of this down so that we could be followers of Jesus and believe in Him too!

NOTE: If you made a special treat earlier, share it now to celebrate Jesus' love for us. Chat about following Jesus.

Memory Verse

God loved the people of this world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who has faith in him will have eternal life and never really die. (*John 3:16 CEV*)

Use symbols to introduce the new parts of the verse (*see poster*).



Pray

Thank Jesus for making sure we all know about life with Him, so that we can have faith in Him.

INTERACTION

Remembering and applying the lesson

PARTY!!

Materials

- Dig site (sand box, or soil or bucket) – prepared with treasures to dig up.
- Special treats
- Charge your phone!

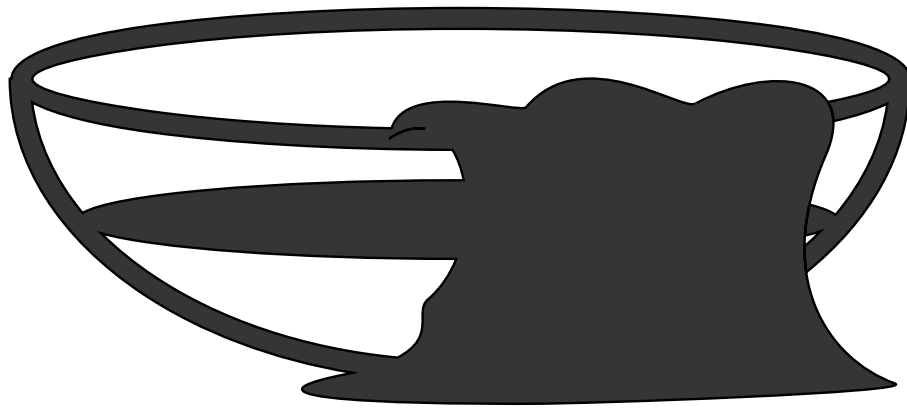
DURING THE WEEK

- Look for ways to interact with the children and their families during the week.
- Prepare for next week.
- Choose a couple of children in your group to pray for.

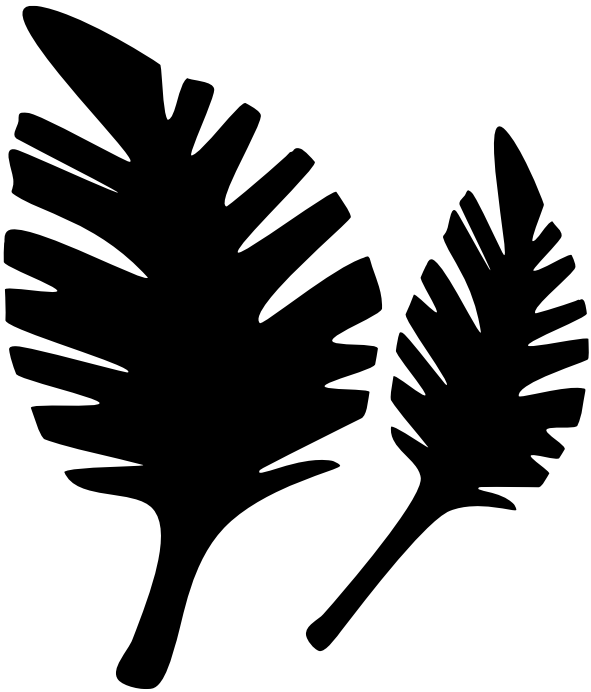
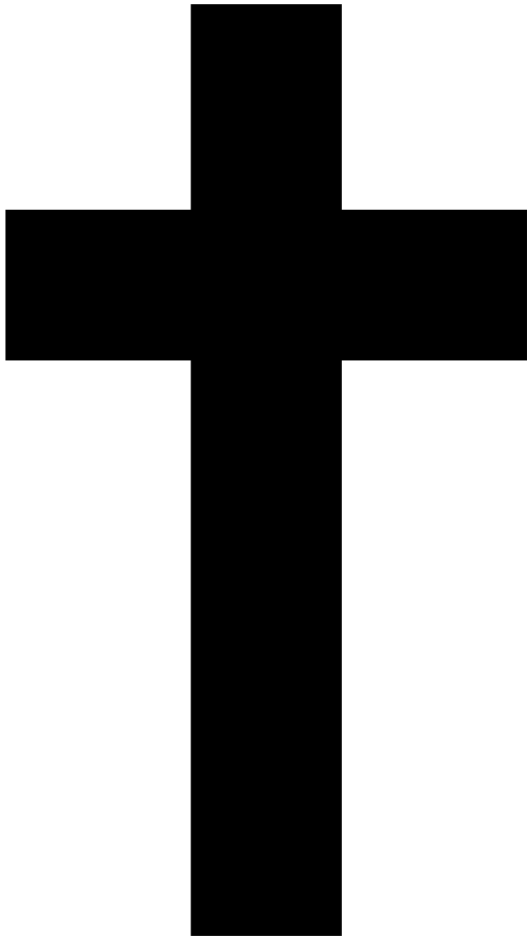
Time to Reflect

- Were there any parts of this unit that the children had difficulties understanding? What could you do differently next time?

VISUALS FOR THE HEART POSTER



VISUALS FOR THE HEART POSTER





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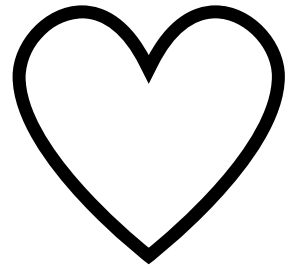


**Jesus showed
us that God
loves us**

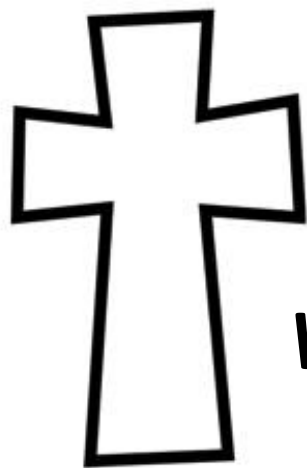
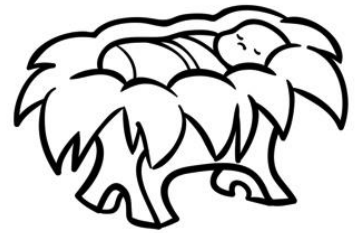
MEMORY VERSE



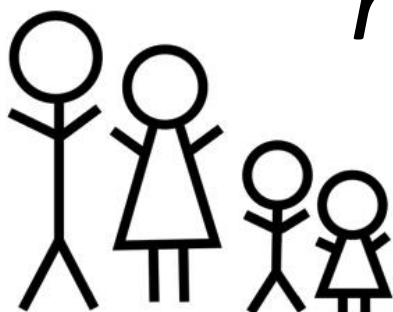
*God loved the
people of this
world so much*



*that He gave
His only son,
so that everyone*



*who has faith
in Him
will have eternal
life and never
really die.*



John 3:16 (CEV)

