

Luke's Holy Week

Grades
3-4

SUFFERING

LUKE 22:14-23; 23:26-56

What's happening in this story?

While the story of Jesus' crucifixion and death is covered in every gospel, Luke in particular emphasizes the physical and social reality of death on the cross. For instance, whereas John sometimes uses metaphorical terms to describe the crucifixion (Jesus is "lifted up"), Luke wants to emphasize that Jesus fully understands suffering, pain, mockery, and death. Simply put, there is nothing we can experience that is beyond the experience of God.

What does this story mean for kids?

Kids are likely to have a lot of questions: Why did God let this happen? Did Jesus really die? Is this a good or a bad story? Such questions have been asked since the crucifixion itself. Kids will likely be troubled by Jesus' suffering and may ask how suffering shows love. There are at least two ways in which you might respond: First, we learn that God's power and grace are bigger than anything that can happen in the world—even death. Second, we learn that Jesus understands our pain and suffering. This is bullying, abuse, teasing, betrayal, and loss taken to the greatest extreme. Kids need to know that Jesus intimately understands and can empathize with whatever pain they might go through.

Why this theme?

Jesus experienced deep, terrible suffering. He knows what it's like to suffer and can empathize with us when we go through tragedy or difficult times. Jesus' suffering was real, and it shows us God's great love for us.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids this age may not have experienced a death in the family. For this and other reasons, a crucifixion may be beyond their ability to comprehend. Focus discussion on Jesus' sacrifice of himself over the details of torture and death.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Pens
- Scissors

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Cardstock

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Provide markers, scissors, and cardstock. Invite kids to make bookmarks in the shape of a cross.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

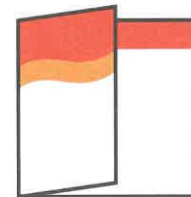
When have you chosen to do something you didn't want to do in order to help someone else? Discuss moments when kids have made a sacrifice in order to benefit another person—letting someone else choose the pizza topping or the movie, giving away the bigger piece of cake, shoveling snow for a neighbor instead of watching TV. **Today we are talking about Jesus saying good-bye to his friends and dying on the cross. While it's difficult to understand, Jesus' suffering on the cross saved us.**

Pray together: **Dear God, be with us as we try to understand Jesus' suffering and death. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Because today's text is long, it will be read in three sections—one now, one during Hear, and one during

Launch. **The first part of the story is The Last Supper. It's the last time Jesus ate with his disciples before his death. Think of a meal you'd like to share with a friend you know you won't see again for a long time. Draw that meal on the plate.** As kids draw, read Luke 22:14–23. When you are finished reading, ask kids how it feels to say good-bye to a friend, and invite them share their drawings. **What do you think Jesus' friends thought about the things he said and did at the last supper? How have you seen Holy Communion celebrated?**



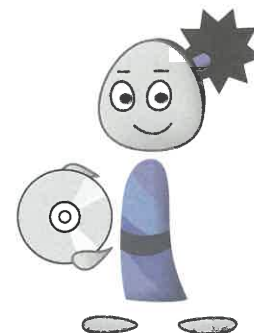
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Jesus' last few days before his death and resurrection were sad, painful, and difficult. In the video, Gabe has some questions about whether Jesus knew what was going to happen. Let's watch to see how he wrestles with this.

View Episode 6, "Conspiracy and Biscuits," on the Year Gold Spring Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Why does Gabe have a hard time accepting that Jesus died?**
- **What do you think about Gabe's "evidence" board? Do you think this is a good way to understand the Bible? Why or why not?**
- **Who do you go to when you have questions about a story in the Bible?**
- **What difference does it make that Jesus knew what was going to happen to him?**
- **How does our church remember Jesus' death?**



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is from the book of Luke. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Luke, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1225.



After the Last Supper, Jesus was betrayed, put on trial, found guilty, and sentenced to death on the cross. The next part of the story starts with Jesus being led to the cross.

Help kids find Luke 23:26-43 and read it in this creative way together: **Let's form the shape of a cross with our bodies.** Have kids lie down and form one big cross on the floor (or two if you have a large group). **Close your eyes and imagine yourself in the crowd at Jesus' crucifixion while I read.** Read the text aloud.

Invite kids to check out what Leo says about Luke 23:32-33.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How did you *feel* while this story was being read?
- What surprised you about the things Jesus said as he was being crucified?
- I wonder why the soldiers acted the way they did.
- Why do you think Jesus forgave the criminal?
- What role did the crowd play in this story?

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Suffering*. **The story of Jesus' suffering and death on the cross is sad. But it also reminds us of Jesus' love for us, which is a good thing. Jesus knows how we are feeling when we suffer, because he suffered too.** Invite kids to mark the chart by having them each draw a small cross in the box by *Suffering*.



BIBLE BIT

Crucifixion is a brutal death on a cross of wood. This execution style was used when Roman authorities wanted to send others a message—keep in line or suffer this kind of death.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to what Jamila liked about the service she'd just attended.

OUR CHURCH

Gabe had an interesting approach to understanding Jesus' death. Where in your church can you find help for questions? Pastor's office? Library? Bible study groups?

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. Look at the photos on your square. What do you feel when you look at these photos?
2. You may not have ever broken a window, but how do you feel when you've done something that may get you in trouble?
3. Have you ever felt alone? What does it feel like to be left out of a group?
4. Bruises, scrapes, and broken bones can hurt a lot. When have you been injured? How did it feel? Who helped you heal?
5. How does it feel when you have to meet with a parent and your teacher? Or right before you give your report card to your parents?
6. There's a circle in each photo. Which photo shows something you've experienced? Draw a cross in the circle on that photo. God was with you and knew your feelings. Which photo shows a situation where you could give another kid help or encouragement? Draw a heart in the circle on that photo. When you help others, you are sharing God's love.
7. Besides the cross you drew, where do you see a cross on the leaflet? (A hidden cross is created in the arrangement of the photos.) Jesus is with you in all these situations. Jesus knows your suffering because he suffered too.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Read Luke 23:44-56. **Do you know people today who are willing to risk their lives for others?** Take time to hear kids' responses. **Today, we talked about the amazing gift of Jesus' selflessness. He *always* put other people first—even at the cost of his own life.**

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens.

Silently remember a time when you were nervous. Who made you feel better? Remember another time when someone put your needs before their own needs. On the journal, write a note to God, giving thanks for help from family and friends.

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.