

Luke's Holy Week

Grades
5-6

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

Many fifth and sixth graders experience difficult times, and some know true suffering. Provide a safe place to share their worries and challenges. Remind them that there are lots of people to help them, no matter what they are going through, and that God is always present, even in suffering.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pens
- Markers
- Glue
- Clear tape
- White paper
- Scrap paper

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Die
- Napkins
- Painter's tape
- Duct tape
- Chenille stems
- Beads
- Colorful chalk

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

On a piece of paper, write:

- 1-2. Who helps you when you are suffering?
- 3-4. What makes you happy when you're sad?
- 5-6. When have you felt that God is with you?

Invite kids to take turns rolling a die and responding to the corresponding question.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Have you ever experienced something that felt like terrible suffering while it was happening, but had a good outcome? Orthodontic braces, long music or sports practices, and intense study sessions are all things kids this age might have experienced that have positive results—straight teeth, better skills, a good grade. **Today we are talking about the events leading up to Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. Jesus knows what it's like when we experience suffering because he experienced suffering too. Through his suffering, Jesus saved us.**

Pray together: **Dear God, be with us and with everyone around the world who suffers this day and every day. Thank you for your great love for us! Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pens.

Divide kids into pairs or groups of three. **This quiz will show us how much you know about the events leading to Jesus' crucifixion. The leaflet shows six quotes from Jesus. Work in your group to try to number them in the correct order from memory.** Give kids a minute or two to work together. Come together and check answers. (C, F, D, A, E, B) **What kinds of feelings do these quotations evoke? How do you think the suffering that Jesus experienced resulted in something good?**



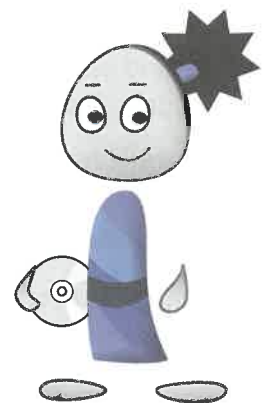
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The stories leading up to Jesus' crucifixion are filled with emotions, ranging from great joy when Jesus enters Jerusalem; to confusion and bewilderment during the Last Supper; to deep sadness and shock when Jesus dies. As you watch the video, pay attention to your own feelings.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Why did Gabe have a hard time believing that Jesus suffered and died?**
- **Do you identify more with Gabe or Jamila? Why?**
- **Imagine knowing what was going to happen to you later today or tomorrow. How would you handle that?**
- **Pastor Pete said, "There is nothing we experience that is outside the experience of God." What do you think and feel about that?**
- **What is Holy Week like at our church?**



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.



Make four signs on paper, and place them around the room: Upper Room, the road to the cross, The Place of the Skull, and the tomb.

The events leading to Jesus' crucifixion happen in several locations. The passages we'll read involve four of them: the Upper Room, which is the scene of the Last Supper; the road to the cross; the Place of the Skull, where Jesus was crucified; and Jesus' tomb.

Help kids find Luke 22:14-23; 23:26-56 and read it in this creative way together: Give kids a sense of the movement of this story by moving around the room as either you or volunteers read. When you reach Luke 23:50-56 (the tomb), invite all nonreaders to close their eyes and imagine the dark tomb.

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

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What did you learn about the Last Supper and Jesus' death that you didn't know before?**
- **Imagine yourself as one of Jesus' disciples at the Last Supper. What would you say? Do?**
- **Why do you think the criminal and centurion believed Jesus was innocent?**
- **How does knowing that Jesus suffered change how you think about God?**
- **What might you think about the next time you celebrate Holy Communion? How might you feel?**

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*. **Jesus suffered so that we would have new life.** Invite three kids to draw one cross each in the box by *Suffering* to represent the three crucifixions that day.



BIBLE BIT

Crucifixion was a form of execution imposed by the Roman government on non-Roman citizens. It is thought that death came by suffocation.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, imagine how you would preach about this text if you were Pastor Pete.

OUR CHURCH

Helping to serve communion is a responsibility many kids this age value. Give them the opportunity to practice what communion servers say when they give someone bread or wine.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out art supplies for making crosses (painter's tape and duct tape, chenille stems and beads, paper and colorful chalk, etc.).

Tear off leaflet square.

- 1. For people living in Jesus' time, the cross symbolized torture, suffering, and death. For Christians today, the cross still represents suffering, but it is also a symbol of new life, because Jesus died for our sins to give us new life. How amazing that Jesus turned a symbol of suffering into a symbol of hope!**
2. Look at the leaflet and explore the information about different types of crosses. **There are many, many more crosses, but these are a few common ones.**
3. Invite kids to circle the cross that most reminds them of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, and put a star nearest the cross they see most often in your community. Next, invite them to choose the cross shape they like the most and make it out of the art supplies available, or design their own cross.
4. Encourage kids to take their cross home and put it in a place where they will see it each day. If there is time to spare, encourage kids to make a second cross to give to someone as a reminder of Jesus' suffering and love.
- 5. During the Last Supper, Jesus asked his followers to remember him by taking communion. The crosses you made can also remind you of Jesus' life, suffering, death, and of the hope of resurrection.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

The stories of Jesus' suffering and death can be challenging for us to read and experience. Worshipping with the people in our congregation helps because we go through it together. Invite kids to reflect on their experiences today. **How did you feel, learning about all the ways Jesus suffered before his death? Why do you think he had to suffer like that?**

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pens, scrap paper, and glue.

Jesus knows suffering and pain, and through him, we have hope for new life. Write your sufferings on the leaflet, then tear them into tiny pieces and glue them to the leaflet panel.

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.