

LIFE OF CHRIST
from the gospel of
Matthew

LESSON 13

THE CROSS

**MATTHEW 26:47-68;
27:11-56**

Life of Christ

The Cross

Matthew 26:47-68; 27:11-56

Younger Verse

God showed his great love for us by sending Christ. Romans 5:8

Older Verse

God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. Romans 5:8

Lesson Goals

Learn that Jesus suffered and died on a cross
Understand why Jesus died on the cross

Welcome Time

Does your Mom or Dad ever say, “I love you THIS much,” and stretch out their arms as far as they can? Well, God did that for us when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. We will talk about the cross and what it means today.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

In our last lesson, Jesus was praying in a garden. While He was there, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, came to Jesus with a group of people. They carried swords and clubs with them! They arrested Jesus and took Him to the religious leaders.

The leaders were waiting for Jesus at the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. Jesus’ friend, Peter, waited anxiously outside in the courtyard.

Inside, the leaders asked people to speak lies about Jesus to get Him in trouble, but Jesus did not try to defend Himself. Then Caiaphas asked Jesus if He was the Son of God. Jesus answered, “Yes.” This made the leaders angry! They shouted at Jesus, hit Him, and spit at Him. They decided that Jesus must be killed.

Early Friday morning, all the leaders took Jesus to the Roman governor named Pilate. They wanted to persuade Pilate that Jesus deserved to die. Pilate asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus answered that He was. Then the religious leaders spoke lies about Jesus again. And Jesus remained silent, not speaking out in His defense. This surprised Pilate.

Each year the governor freed one prisoner during the Passover holiday. Pilate asked the people who they should free— Barabbas, a thief and murderer, or Jesus, who is called the Christ.

The crowd cheered for Pilate to free Barabbas! So Pilate asked the crowd what he should do with Jesus. The crowd yelled, “Crucify him! Crucify him!” Pilate asked the people why they wanted Jesus to die, since He had done nothing wrong. But they just kept shouting for Jesus to be crucified.

Ask: What does it mean for someone to be crucified? The Roman people had a way of punishing people that made them hurt a lot. They put nails through their hands and feet and hung them to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross. The person would not die immediately; they would be in pain for a long time first.

Pilate sent Jesus away to be whipped and then crucified. So the soldiers whipped Jesus. They put a red robe on Jesus to mock Him. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and shoved it on Jesus' head. The sharp points pierced Jesus' head and made Him bleed. The soldiers spit on Him and made fun of Him, saying, "Hail! King of the Jews!" They did not believe Jesus was a king. After this, they led Him out of the city to be killed.

Outside the city, the soldiers nailed Jesus to a cross. They put a sign above Jesus' head which said, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews." Two robbers were nailed to crosses beside Jesus, one on the right and the other on the left. After the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, they rolled dice to see who would get His clothes.

Even though it was the middle of the day, darkness came over all the land. Jesus cried out. Finally, after much pain and suffering, Jesus died. Then, an earthquake rumbled across the land.

The army officer and soldiers guarding Jesus saw everything that happened. They were very frightened and said, "He really was the Son of God!"

Ask: Do you believe Jesus is the Son of God? Even though it is hard to understand why God would let His Son die on a horrible cross, He did it for us! He took our sins on Him when He was on the cross. That way we can be forgiven of our sins. We can be grateful that Jesus loved us enough to go through the cross for us. There is no greater love anywhere!

Review Questions

1. What does it mean for someone to be crucified? (Their hands and feet are nailed to two pieces of wood in the shape of a cross)
2. What did the soldiers do to Jesus? (Whipped Him; put a red robe on Him; put a crown of thorns on His head; mocked Him by saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!")
3. What did the guards say after Jesus died? (He really was the Son of God!)
4. Why did God allow Jesus to die on the cross? (to pay the price for our sins)

Prayer Time

Thank God for sending His Son, Jesus, to die for us.

Life Application

Ask: Did Jesus have to die? Could He have come down from the cross?

In John 10:18, Jesus stated that no one took His life from Him. He said that He gave His life of His own free will, and that He had the power to do so.

In Philippians 2:8, it says that Jesus became "obedient unto death." That means that He *obeyed* God by dying on the cross. Jesus' death on the cross was God's plan. God sent Jesus to earth save us from our sins. And it was God's will for Jesus to suffer and die, to take the punishment for our sins.

Planning for Next Lesson
Jesus Is Alive!
Matthew 27:57—28:10

Preschool Lesson For The Cross

Does your Mom or Dad ever say, “I love you THIS much,” and stretch out their arms as far as they can? Well, God did that for us when He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross. We will talk about the cross and what it means today.

In our last lesson, Jesus was praying in a garden. While He was there, Judas, one of the twelve disciples, came to Jesus with a group of people. They carried swords and clubs with them! They arrested Jesus and took Him to the religious leaders.

These religious leaders did not like Jesus. They did not believe He was God’s Son. They wanted to get Him in trouble! So they made up stories that weren’t true about Jesus. But Jesus did not say anything! He did not tell them they were lying.

Jesus knew that God had a plan. So He let the people say mean things about Him. Then the governor, Pilate, talked to Jesus. He couldn’t find anything bad about Jesus. But all the people wanted Jesus to die!

So the Roman soldiers hit Jesus. Then they made a crown out of thorny branches and put it on Jesus’ head. They led Jesus to a hill. There they put Jesus on a cross, using nails for His hands and feet.

Jesus’ cross was between two other crosses. The people beside Him had done bad things and were being punished. But Jesus had done nothing wrong. Instead, He was taking OUR punishment!

Sometimes, we do bad things. That makes our heart dirty. But Jesus died on the cross so we could have clean hearts!

Thank Jesus for loving us. That is why He died on the cross!

Hands-on Activities For The Cross

Crosses are easy to make using popsicle sticks. Just glue two together, and have the kids take them home as a reminder of Jesus' great love for us. You can add ribbon, flowers, or other decorations. Other types of sticks, such as cinnamon sticks, would work also.

To help the kids have a small idea of the suffering Jesus went through, let them hold several pieces of ice in their hands. Put a paper towel under each person's hands to catch the water. Share from the Bible how Jesus was flogged (whipped), beaten, crowned with a thorny wreath, and nailed to a cross. Now, let the kids share how the cold ice felt in their hands and contrast it to Jesus' suffering. Take time to pray, thanking Jesus for suffering and dying for us.

Bring a long spike/nail to show the kids. Remind them of the nails they used to put in Jesus feet and hands. You can also bring a thornbush (made into a crown of thorns) to illustrate the crown of thorns Jesus wore.

Bring the Resurrection Eggs and teach the children about all that Jesus went through before and during the cross.

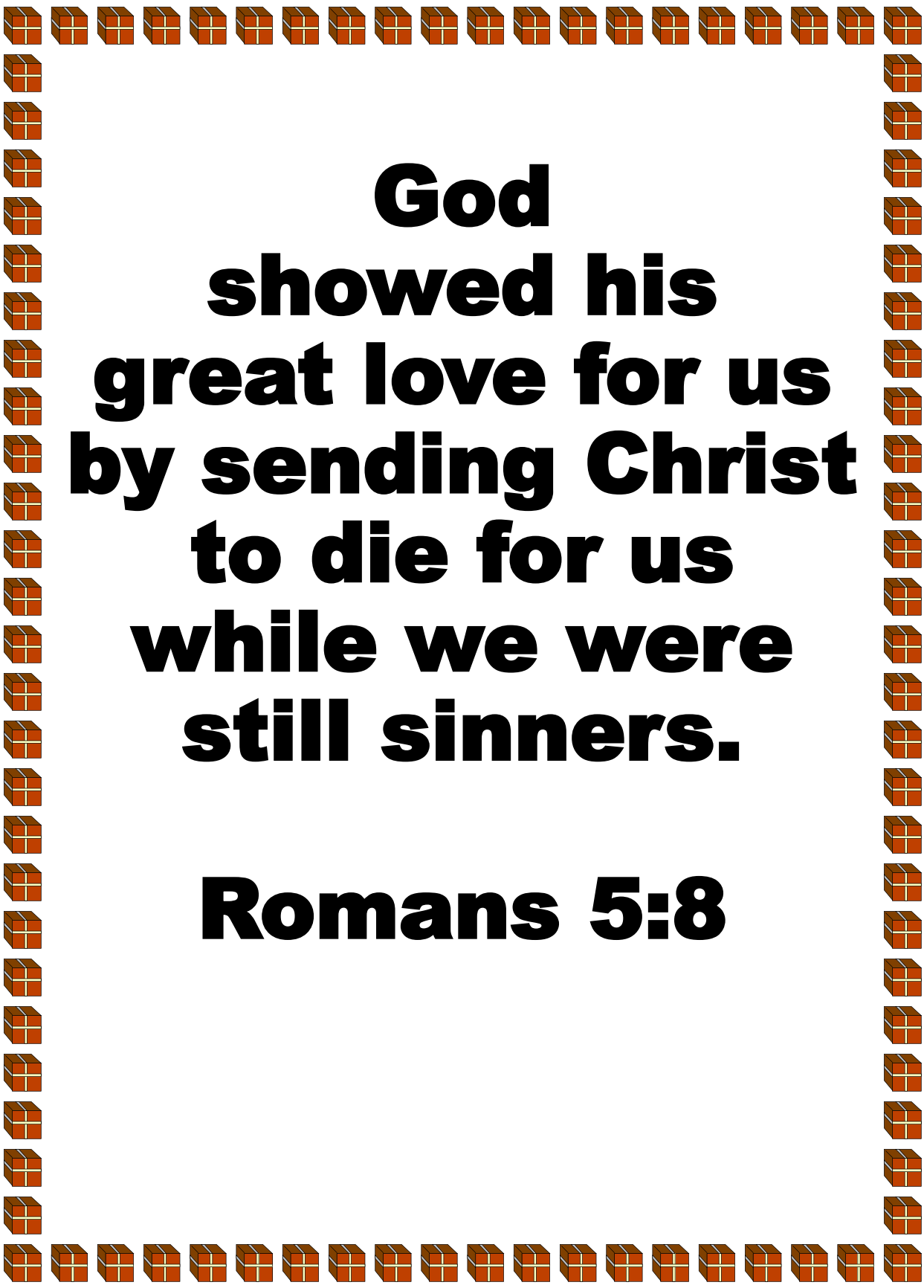
Sing "Lord, I Lift Your Name on High." This is a great song because it summarizes what Jesus did and why He did it!

Have the kids cut out hearts from construction paper (or do it ahead). Write the Bible verse on the heart.



**God
showed his
great love for
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Romans 5:8



**God
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while we were
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Romans 5:8

D P W T B O N Y F D H R
S C H R I S T T O D I E
W I I D C U S H R O S S
I L L R T D B Y U L G E
S L E S U S Y J S B R L
L I W G O D S H O W E D
R T E O S S E P P H A I
I S P S I N N E R S T C
Y E O B V E D P E A L S
R R C E T S I S U R O F
O E N H S U N O O E V D
R W R O T S G G U H E M

God showed
by sending
while we

His great love
Christ to die
were still

for us
for us
sinners

D	P	W	T	B	O	N	Y	F	D	H	R
S	C	H	R	I	S	T	T	O	D	I	E
W	I	I	D	C	U	S	H	R	O	S	S
I	L	L	R	T	D	B	Y	U	L	G	E
S	L	E	S	U	S	Y	J	S	B	R	L
L	I	W	G	O	D	S	H	O	W	E	D
R	T	E	O	S	S	E	P	P	H	A	I
I	S	P	S	I	N	N	E	R	S	T	C
Y	E	O	B	V	E	D	P	E	A	L	S
R	R	C	E	T	S	I	S	U	R	O	F
O	E	N	H	S	U	N	O	O	E	V	D
R	W	R	O	T	S	G	G	U	H	E	M

God showed
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for us
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sinners