


the  
Jesus   
Storybook  
Bible  
Curriculum

# The sun stops shining

The Crucifixion, from Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

*The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum*  
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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## Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main points of the previous stories: “We have been reading that Jesus knew he was going to die. He came to die—to take away the punishment for our sin. We also memorized a verse in which Jesus told his disciples about his death.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Mark 8:31 — ‘The Son of Man must be killed and after three days rise again.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Jesus told his disciples he must be killed. Jesus knew he must be killed so we can be saved. It is God’s rescue plan that we have been reading about from the very beginning of the Old Testament.”

## Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

**Aim:** To expend energy and introduce the idea that Jesus’ death is God’s rescue plan.

**Materials:** 15 large cards, each with one letter from the words “God’s rescue plan” written/printed on them in very large type; a way of taping the cards to a wall; a poster-size card with the entire phrase “God’s rescue plan” written/printed on it in very large type.

1. Hold up the poster and ask: “Who can read what this poster says? Correct, it says, ‘God’s rescue plan.’ I have taken each letter from the words ‘God’s rescue plan’ and put them on separate cards. I’d like each of you to have a card.”

2. Quickly hand one card to each child in the circle. Hang any extra cards on a wall in order (it will be easier if the cards you hang are from the end of the phrase; e.g., if you have 12 children, keep back the cards with the letters L, A, and N and hang them in order close to one another on the wall). If you have 15 children in your group, there will be no need to tape any cards to the wall.

3. Ask the children to line up with their backs against the wall in any order and hold up their card. Say: “We should be able to spell out ‘God’s rescue plan,’ but you are all in the wrong places. You’ll need to swap places to get in the right order. To take someone else’s place, you need to say: ‘Please may I take your place?’ Let’s say that all together to practice.”

4. Practice saying, “Please may I take your place?” until everyone has learned it.

5. Then say: “Good. This is how we play. The first person in line comes to the center of the room and decides whose place you need to take. Go up to the person and say, ‘Please may I take your place?’ and then you take that person’s place and they will come to the center of the room. They will ask to take someone else’s place until all the cards are in the right order. Ready? First person come to the center. Everyone hold your card so that we can see it.”

6. Ask another teacher to hold up the poster so that the children can use it to help get into the correct order. You may want to help out further by asking them to count where their letter comes in the phrase (e.g., you can point at the poster and say: “You have the letter ‘R,’ that is letter number 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, so you need to take the place of the person who is sixth in line”).

7. When they are in the correct order, ask them to hold up their cards above their heads and together call out, “God’s rescue plan.” Then, ask them to leave their cards by the wall and sit back down in the circle. Say: “In today’s story, see if you can spot who stands in someone else’s place. Also, as we read today’s story, remember it is all part of God’s rescue plan. Ready?”

**For larger groups:** You will need to divide the group into smaller circles of 12–15 children, each with their own set of cards.

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 302–309 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD3 track 10.

### Notes for Teachers on the Text

In Matthew 27:27–31 and the similar account in Mark 15:16–20 (see also John 19:2–3), Jesus is being mocked for his claim to be a king. The purple robe and crown of thorns mocked his claim to royalty. The cries of “Hail, king!” and the soldiers bowing before him were a direct and vicious scorn of his kingship claim.

In Matthew 27:39–44 and the similar account in Mark 15:29–32 (see also Luke 23:35), he is being mocked for his claim to be a savior. The people mock his weakness, his inability to come down off the cross. Their premise (and common sense, really) is that he would have to save himself in order to save others.

Back in Matthew 26:67–68 and the similar account in Mark 14:65 (see also Luke 22:63–65), we see that Jesus is being mocked for his claim to be a prophet. The leaders blindfold him and strike him, challenging him to “prophecy,” i.e. to tell them who it was who hit him.

Jesus is mocked for the three specific aspects of his mission on earth. Historically, Christian theology has taught that Jesus came to be a prophet (to instruct us), and to be a merciful priest (to save us), and to be a royal king (to rule us). Even the mocking and rejection of Jesus Christ reveal his glory. Even their insults proclaim him for who he is and point to his threefold work on our behalf.

Most people think of Christ’s work on the cross only in its negative aspect. In other words, they only see him as a “dying Savior,” paying the penalty for our sin. But Jesus is not only our sin bearer, but our righteousness. He not only, as substitute, died the death we should have died—he also, as substitute, lived the life we should have lived. When we believe in him, there is a “double” legal transfer. Our record is put on him, and he is treated as we deserve to

be, but also, his perfect record is put on us, and we are treated as he deserved to be. Not only is our sin “imputed” or transferred to Christ, but Christ’s righteousness is “imputed” or transferred to us. That means his matchless obedience is credited to us, and God treats us as if we obeyed all Christ obeyed.

We can see this theme (Jesus is our substitute) all throughout the end of the Gospels. For example:

☉ Jesus is clearly innocent and tells the truth under interrogation, yet is condemned by a court which should itself be condemned. Jesus gets the punishment the judges deserve.

☉ Peter lies and denies the truth under interrogation, yet escapes. Jesus gets the punishment Peter deserves.

☉ Jesus is again clearly innocent before the Roman court. Barabbas becomes a metaphor for us all. In a symbolic switch, Jesus gets the punishment Barabbas deserves.

In other words, Jesus, an innocent man, is receiving the justice due a guilty man. Jesus is bound so we can be “released.” We get what he deserved, and he gets what we deserve. Jesus, though innocent, is counted “worthy of death,” so that we, though guilty, can be acquitted. The blameless is blamed so the blameworthy can go free. Paul writes, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). The concept of substitution is at the very heart of the gospel.

# Understanding the Story

15 min. 

**Aim:** To understand the meaning of Jesus' death.

**Materials:** 2 identical sets of large cards with a missing word written/printed on each (see below); crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: "The Leaders think that is the end of Jesus. Raise your hand if you think they are right. Good, we know this is not the end of Jesus and we'll learn more about that next time."
2. Say: "In our first activity, we asked to stand in someone else's place. In the story, Jesus stood in someone else's place. Whose place did Jesus stand in? Correct, he stood in our place."
3. Assign half the circle as team 1 and the other half as team 2, and give a set of cards to each team. Each child takes a card (or two if numbers are low).
4. Explain the game (you have played a similar game before, but the instructions have slightly changed this time): You are going to call out the main events in the story, but there is a word that will be missing. The two players who have the missing-word card should hold the card up above their head and call out the word. You will then ask a bonus question to the team whose player held up the card first.
5. Read aloud the story in the following table, pausing where there is an ellipsis (...). Allow a child from each team to hold up the missing-word card and say the word. Ask the bonus question and use the comments. Say "Ready?" before moving on to the next part of the story.

STORY	MISSING WORD	BONUS QUESTION AND COMMENTS
The Roman soldiers gave Jesus a purple ...	ROBE	Who usually wears a purple robe? Raise your hand if you think a king wears a purple robe. Correct, hands down.
The Roman soldiers also put something else, something made of thorns, on Jesus. It was a ...	CROWN	Why did the Roman soldiers give Jesus a robe and a crown? Stand up if you think it is because they believed Jesus is King. Stand up if you think it is because they were mocking or making fun of Jesus, pretending to think he was a king. Correct, sit down.
The Roman soldiers whipped Jesus and spat on him. They did not know that he was the ...	KING	Why did Jesus let them do this? Who thinks they know? Correct, Jesus knew that his suffering and death was the only way to rescue us from our sin.
The Roman soldiers made Jesus carry the cross up a hill outside the ...	CITY	Do you know who the Romans killed on crosses? Raise your hand if you think the Romans killed criminals on crosses. Correct, hands down.

STORY	MISSING WORD	BONUS QUESTION AND COMMENTS
The soldiers were going to kill Jesus the way criminals were killed. But Jesus had never done anything ... *	WRONG	What is the word that means Jesus had never done anything wrong? Say it all together. Yes, sinless.
The soldiers nailed Jesus to the ...	CROSS	Why did Jesus let them do this? Who thinks they know? Correct, he knew it was the only way to rescue us from our sin.
The Leaders mocked Jesus saying, "You say you've come to ... us, but you can't even ... yourself."	SAVE	Are the Leaders right? Stand up if you think Jesus could not save himself. Stand up if you think Jesus could have saved himself. Correct, Jesus could have saved himself if he wanted to. Sit down.
The people mocked Jesus saying, "You could climb down off the cross, if you really are the Son of ..."	GOD	Are the people right? Stand up if you think Jesus could not climb down from the cross. Stand up if you think Jesus could have climbed down from the cross. Correct, sit down.
Jesus cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken ..."	ME	Had God ever forsaken or not been with Jesus before? Call out yes or no. The answer is no, never.
Even though it was midday, the land was filled with ...	DARKNESS	Why did darkness fall? Raise your hand if you think it is because there was a solar eclipse. Raise your hand if darkness fell because God had turned his face away, that he was angry. Correct, hands down.
God had forsaken Jesus. The full force of God's fierce anger at ... was coming down.	SIN	Is God angry at our sin? Stand up if you think God is angry at our sin. Correct, sit down.
God's fierce anger at sin is coming down on ...	JESUS	Why? Raise your hand if it is because Jesus takes our place and takes the punishment for our sin so we don't have to. Correct, hands down.
God's fierce anger at sin is coming down on Jesus, instead of on ...	US	Again why? Who can tell me? Yes, Jesus takes our place. Say it all together: "Jesus takes our place."
Jesus cried out, "It is ...". Then he died.	FINISHED	Why did Jesus let himself die? Say it all together: "Jesus takes our place." Remember that Jesus knew it was the only way to rescue us from our sin. He took the punishment for sin in our place.
Jesus was dead. His friends took him and laid him in a ... *	TOMB	How did his friends feel? Correct, their hearts were breaking, sad, scared, etc.
Jesus, the King, the Lamb, is dead and buried.		Announce: "The End for now!"

**NOTE:** \* Indicates parts to skip if you are running out of time.

6. Give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "There are three colored sections on your paper. Let's start with the purple section. I will read the sentences aloud and you need to fill in the missing words."

7. Read aloud each of the sentences in turn, saying "blank" where there is a missing word and allowing time for the children to fill in the missing word. Ask someone to read the completed sentences aloud.

8. Say: "Good. Let's move on to the red section. I will read the sentences aloud. Circle 'yes' or 'no.'"

9. Read each of the sentences aloud in turn, allowing time for the children to circle their answer. After each sentence, ask the children to stand up if the answer they circled is "yes" and comment appropriately. (All the answers are "yes.")

10. Say: "Thank you, sit down. You are right; Jesus can save others. Look at the last section in brown. I will read the sentences aloud and you need to fill in the missing words."

11. Read the sentences aloud, saying "blank" where there is a missing word. Allow time for the children to complete the exercise, and then ask someone to read the completed sentences aloud.

**For larger groups:** You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher. Each circle will need to be divided into two teams, each team with a set of cards. Each teacher can facilitate the activity, checking understanding.

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## Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “That was God’s rescue plan. Jesus, the Son of God, died on the cross in our place to rescue us from our sin.”

Say: “On the cross God’s fierce anger at sin came down on his Son. The punishment for our sin came on Jesus. Jesus died to save us.”

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## Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately; then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

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## Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that even though Jesus could have saved himself, he didn’t because he wanted to save us. Thank God that Jesus loves us and stood in our place and died for us.

Ask the children to pray, saying thank-you to God for his amazing rescue plan.

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## A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “The verse to memorize is all about why Jesus died.”

☉ Announce the verse: “Your verse to learn at home is 1 Peter 3:18 — ‘Christ died for sins once for all, to bring you to God.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.



# The sun stops shining (The Crucifixion, from Matthew 27; Mark 15; Luke 23; John 19)



The soldiers mock Jesus.

They say: "Hail, k \_ \_ \_ \_ \_!"

The people mock Jesus.

They say: "Come down from the c \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ , if you are the Son of God!"

The Leaders mock Jesus.

They say: "He saved others, but he cannot s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ himself!"



Is Jesus the King? YES NO

Is Jesus the Son of God? YES NO

Could Jesus come down from the cross if he wanted? YES NO

Could Jesus save himself if he wanted? YES NO

Can Jesus save others? YES NO

On the cross God was punishing J \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ for our sin.

This was God's rescue plan: Jesus died to s \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ us from our sin.

## ☉ Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about Jesus from this story?



Jesus

## ☉ A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

Christ died for sins once for all, to bring you to God.

(1 Peter 3:18)

Hebrews

James

**1 Peter**

2 Peter

1 John



Notes for parents: From the story we learned that on the cross Jesus was punished for our sins. He died to save us. Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of 1 Peter, using the diagram above. [www.jesusstorybookbible.com](http://www.jesusstorybookbible.com)

