

Good Friday Story Profile

Bible Story: Good Friday
(AKA: Jesus' Crucifixion, Jesus Died for Me)

Bible Text: John 19:6b-18, 28-30, 38

God's Unfolding Story Element: God sent Jesus to help us.

Story Summary:

Note: This summary includes the trials of Jesus that took place after the Lord's Supper (Passover meal) Jesus shared with His disciples and immediately prior to His crucifixion. You may wish to summarize the trials in order to focus on just the crucifixion. In either case, there's a lot of detail to the story that we have not included here. Use your discretion in determining how much to explain to the kids you're teaching. We have also included some comments regarding the reason Jesus had to die that you may find helpful.

Our story takes place just after Jesus had been arrested and taken to the high priest, Caiaphas. All night the religious leaders had questioned Jesus to try and find a reason to kill Him. When Jesus was asked if He was the Messiah, Jesus replied, "You are right." To the religious leaders this was enough evidence for them. They did not want to believe that Jesus was God's Son, the Messiah. The high priest accused Jesus of breaking the law and His punishment was death.

The next morning, Jesus was taken to the governor of the territory. His name was Pilate. The religious leaders wanted Pilate to sentence Jesus to death. At first Pilate said he could not find any fault in Jesus. But Pilate was afraid of the people, so he handed Jesus over to the religious leaders. They shouted, "Take Him away! Crucify Him!" So they took Jesus away,, carrying His own cross. They took Him to a place called Golgotha. There they crucified Him and two others with Him, one on either side, with Jesus in the middle.

Boys and Girls, why do you think Jesus had to die? (Pause for responses.) Until Jesus came God required the people to sacrifice animals for their sins. The animals took the punishment for each person's sins. These sacrifices had to be made every day because people sinned every day. The Bible says we are all sinners, and just like you have consequences for disobeying your parents, even more we have a consequence for our sins against God. The consequence of our sin is death and separation from God. But God loves us and does not want to be separated from us. Jesus came to take our consequence for us. He chose to die in our place. Like the animals took the place for the sins of the people, Jesus took our place. Now we can live with God and not be separated from Him.

After hanging on the cross for several hours, Jesus said, "It is finished." That meant that the debt had been paid for everyone. No longer would there be a need for animals to be sacrificed. Jesus took all of the punishment for our sins. The cross was Jesus' punishment for your sins and mine. It was a cruel and terrible way to die. Jesus did not deserve to die, He was perfect. But Jesus loved us so much that He was willing to die for you and me.

When Jesus finally died, a man named Joseph of Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, took Jesus and buried Him. It was a very sad day for Jesus' friends and His followers. But, Jesus didn't stay dead! We'll learn about Jesus' resurrection in another story!

Highlights:

- The crucifixion is the pinnacle event in Jesus' ministry. This is why He came. In the resurrection, God confirmed that Jesus was, indeed, His Son, the Messiah and King. But it was at the crucifixion where Jesus accomplished and "finished" His life's work.
- Jesus' entire ministry had been focused on one thing; the Kingdom of God. His ministry demonstrated that He was the King. Now here, on the cross, the King of God's Kingdom gave His life to forgive, redeem, and restore His people. The crucifixion was not a distinct event from His Kingdom ministry, but was the final act of His Kingdom ministry.
- Jesus' crucifixion (Good Friday) is often virtually overlooked in the Easter season because it falls on the Friday between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. Further, many churches prefer not to dwell on the "gory details" of the crucifixion. Nonetheless, the crucifixion deserves appropriate attention even with children. Use discretion, but do your best to convey the truth that Jesus needed to die to bring us forgiveness. The resurrection is significant, but only because it affirms what Jesus accomplished three days earlier.

Point(s) of Interest:

- Jesus was careful to time His crucifixion with the Passover to make the point that He WAS the final Passover sacrifice. He was in control at every step.
- Just as God secured the Hebrews' freedom from Egypt in the Exodus with the first Passover sacrifice, so He secured the last and ultimate Exodus with the final Passover sacrifice in Jesus.

Approximate Date:

There's a good deal of debate about the exact date of Jesus' crucifixion, but it certainly took place when Jesus was around the age of 33 and likely occurred somewhere around 33 A.D.