

## **Easter Sunday 2008**

### **The Sacrificing Savior**

**Scripture Text:** Luke 23:1-49

**Memory Passage:** “While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

**POWer Line:** Jesus sacrificed so we could be saved!

#### **Supplies**

- ✓ sticky notes, pencils
- ✓ large posterboard cross or wooden cross
- ✓ *Kids in Praise I and II* CDs
- ✓ hymnals
- ✓ blue and gray construction paper
- ✓ small Dixie paper cups
- ✓ grapefruit (or large oranges)
- ✓ Bibles
- ✓ biblical costumes

#### **Before the Session**

*Welcome:* Create a large cross out of posterboard or use a wooden cross from your supply closet.

*Praise Generators:* Collect hymnals. Write the words to songs from *Kids in Praise* CDs on posterboard, a transparency, or in your computer song program.

*Truth Conductor:* Create several ocean waves out of blue construction paper. Cut two shark shapes out of gray construction paper. Recruit an adult or teen to play the part of Jesus in the skit.

## **POWer of Worship**

### **Welcome** (6-8 minutes)

As the children arrive, direct them to a table with pencils and sticky notes.

Ask them to answer these two questions:

- What does Easter mean to me?
- Why is Jesus dying on the cross important to me today?

In the hustle of this holiday, it is easy to forget the children may not always process the importance of this weekend. By giving them a few minutes to think it through, no matter what their answers are, the activity will open their minds and hearts to the importance of the resurrection of Jesus, which is celebrated at this holiday. Instruct students to stick the notes on the cross.

### **Praise Generators** (5-6 minutes)

Bring out the hymnals and teach the children one of the classic hymns such as “He Lives,” “At the Cross,” or “The Old Rugged Cross.” Many children do not know how to go from verse 1 to the chorus to verse 2, and so forth. Show them how to follow the words as they learn a hymn. Take time to explain the meaning.

### **Truth Conductor** (3-4 minutes)

**Our POWer line today is Jesus sacrificed so that we could be saved!**

**Repeat that with me.**

Give several children the blue ocean waves and ask them to stand in the front and be the ocean. They can move the waves up and down to simulate the water. Hand the sharks to two students and instruct them to swim around in the waves. Select two or three other students to stand in the waves and pretend to drown and dodge the sharks. Recruit an adult or teen to be Jesus.

**Imagine that we're all on the shore of a giant ocean. This ocean is called the Sea of Sin. Everywhere we look there are giant tidal waves and sharks. Luckily, we're safe here on the beach.** A couple of students should start yelling for help, as if they are drowning.

**Oh no! There are people out there that need saving! They're crying for help! But what if the sharks get them first? What if they drown in the tidal waves? What if we go in to save them and the sharks get us? I don't want to go in there and die!** "Jesus" should jump into the water and start swimming out to the drowning people. **Look! Jesus is swimming out there!** Jesus fights the waves, going under, then coming back up to pull the drowning people to safety.

**Jesus saved them! Jesus sacrificed so that we could be saved!**

**Because Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross, we can be saved.**

**Prayer (3-5 minutes)**

**Prayer often requires sacrifice. Sometimes it's a sacrifice of time, just to stop doing what we want to do and to listen to the Spirit. Sometimes, when we're praying we must sacrifice our wants for other people's needs. If we're too selfish with our prayer time, then we're no longer praying, just pestering God.**

**When Jesus went to the cross, He put our needs in front of His wants. He wanted to avoid the pain and suffering. He wanted to continue living on earth, but our needs demanded that He make the ultimate sacrifice—and that's just what He did.**

**When we pray this morning, let's avoid saying "I want" and focus on "they need." Who can we pray for?**

Lead in prayer.

### **Offering (2-3 minutes)**

**Jesus has done so much for us all.** Ask students to tell something that Jesus has done for them.

**There are many ways for us to do something for Jesus—with our time, our prayers, our compassion toward others. Right now we're going to give Him our offerings. An offering is just money that can be used to help others hear about Jesus.**

### **POWer of the Word**

**Bible Memorization (8-10 minutes)**

Ask students to find Romans 5:8 in their Bibles. Explain that Jesus did not say we were not good enough to die for; He died for us even though we were sinners. Repeat the verse several times until all the children can say it.

You need two small Dixie paper cups and two grapefruits (or large oranges). At least one teacher should be up front and another at the whiteboard keeping score.

Depending on class size, divide the children into teams and line them up at one end of the room. A teacher should stand at the other end of the room, along with a scorekeeper.

Give the first players on each team a Dixie cup with a grapefruit balanced on top of it. At the signal the players race to the other end of the room, holding only the cup, not touching the grapefruit. If the grapefruit falls off the cup, the player picks it up and continues the race. However, each time a grapefruit is dropped, the team loses a point.

When a player reaches the other end of the room, he quotes the memory verse to the closest teacher. (Multiple teams should have multiple teachers up front.) For each correctly quoted verse, give the team ten points. If the child has to have help, give the team five points. Of course, if he does not know the verse, the team does not receive any points.

Then the student takes the cup and grapefruit back to the next player on his team without dropping it. This player balances the grapefruit on the cup and races to the other side.

Play continues until each team finishes, thus giving each team an equal shot

at winning. Give the first team that completes their team's relay a bonus 10 points.

The team with the most points when all the questions have been answered or time is called wins.

### **Spirit Generator** (2-3 minutes)

Sing "All Ye Children Praise Him" from *Kids in Praise I* to prepare students' hearts for the Bible lesson.

### **Illustrated Sermon** (10-12 minutes)

The Bible story presents four different scenes with students dramatizing the action. Select students to act out and repeat a few lines from the four crucial scenes.

#### **Scene One: The Verdict**

Actors: Jesus, Pilate, one to three accusers

**The Pharisees are about to drag Jesus to Pilate in hopes of having Him sentenced to death. The Jewish Sanhedrin ruled in religious matters, but only the Roman government could pronounce judgment on civil matters. Putting someone to death was a civil matter.** The actors demonstrate the following text.

**According to Luke 23, "And the whole multitude of them arose, and led [Jesus] unto Pilate. And they began to accuse him, saying, We found this**

**fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying, that he himself is Christ a King.”** The accuser(s) repeat this.

**“And Pilate asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews?”** Pilate repeats this.

**“And he answered him and said, Thou sayest it.”** Jesus repeats.

**“Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man.”** Pilate repeats.

**Later, the people cried out, “Crucify him, crucify him.”** The accuser(s) repeat this. **“And Pilate said unto them the third time, Why, what evil hath he done? I have found no cause of death in him: I will therefore chastise him, and let him go.”** Pilate repeats.

**“And they were instant with loud voices.”** Crucify him, crucify him! Accuser(s) repeat.

**“And Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they required.”**

## **Scene Two: On the Cross between Two Thieves**

Actors: Jesus, two thieves, Pharisees

**Now we’re at Calvary. Two thieves hang on either side of the innocent Jesus Christ.** Position Jesus and two students. **You have to hand it to the Pharisees; they don’t give up! They scream and shout at Jesus, even as He hangs before them.**

**One of the dying thieves joins them. Why not alleviate his own pain and suffering by hurling vile words at someone else? Give in to peer**

**pressure and be on the side of the crowd one last time.** The actors act out the following text.

**According to Luke 23:39: “And one of the [thieves] railed on Jesus, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.”** Bad thief repeats this.

**“But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.”** Good thief repeats this.

**“And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.”** Good thief repeats.

**“And Jesus said unto him, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise.”**  
Jesus repeats.

### **Setting Three: Calvary**

Actors: Jesus, centurion, crowd (three or four students)

If possible, flip out the classroom lights at the opening statement.

**According to Luke 23:44, it was around noon when darkness fell over all the earth until about 3 p.m. For three hours the sun was darkened, and the veil of the Temple was rent in two. In those days they did not understand what made up clouds and the weather and eclipses, so severe weather changes were always assumed to be signals of the wrath of the gods, not just stormy weather.** The actors should act out the following text.

**“And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”** Jesus repeats.

**“Now when the centurion saw what was done, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous man.”** The centurion repeats this.

**“And all the people that came together to that sight, beholding the things which were done smote their breasts and returned.”** Students hit their chests, shake their heads, and walk off.

**“And all his acquaintances, and the women that followed him from Galilee, stood afar off, beholding these things.”**

#### **Scene Four: Resurrection**

Actors: ladies, two angels

**Luke 24 tells us that very early on the Lord’s Day some ladies came to the tomb of Christ only to find the stone rolled away from its entrance.**

Actors should act out the following text.

**They entered in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. They were puzzled, but two men stood by them in shining garments. The ladies were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth.**

**The angels said, “Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Angel 1 repeats this.**

**“Remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.”** Angel 2 repeats.

**“And they remembered his words.”**

**Invitation and Prayer (5-? minutes)**

**Paul wrote in Romans 5:19, “For as by one man’s disobedience [Adam] many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one [Jesus] shall many be made righteous.” Because Adam sinned, everyone is born a sinner. Sin separates us from God. The Bible says that the soul that sins will die! But our memory verse says, Jesus died for us. Jesus sacrificed so that we could be saved!**

**Can you think of anyone you would die for? Jesus died for you. Not so that we could live a few years longer on earth, but that we could live eternally in heaven. His only desire is for us to accept His love and live out that love to others.**

**Even as Jesus was dying on the cross, He could not stop trying to save others! The thief, a man worthy of cruel death under the Roman code, was worth saving in the eyes of Jesus.**

**No matter what you have done or said, Jesus died on the cross for you. All you have to do is repent and turn from your sins and He’ll forgive you and fill you with the Holy Ghost, the spirit of Jesus Christ. If you have already received the Holy Ghost, then you might want to be like Mary or John the beloved, and draw close to Jesus today.**

**Play “Once Again” from *Kids in Praise II*. Lead in prayer. Be sensitive to the Spirit. Easter Sunday is a great time to receive the Holy Ghost.**

## **Review**

### **Sword Drill**

This is the classic Sunday school activity. The theme is Easter Weekend. A sword drill is simple. When all students have their Bibles closed, simply announce a verse reference and the first student to stand and read it correctly wins that round.

You can split the class into equal teams. Give each team 10 points for the first person to stand and read the correct Scripture. Subtract 5 points if he reads the wrong Scripture (or starts the wrong Scripture). The team that figures out the scriptural theme first also receives 3 points. The team with the most points at the end wins.

Mark 14:21

Luke 23:33

Matthew 27:37

John 19:1

Luke 24:46

John 20:27

Mathew 26:48

Mark 14:72

John 19:26

Matthew 28:2

Mark 16:14