

Date May 15, 2022

Scripture/Bible Story/Theme

The Crucifixion – Matthew 27, Mark 15, Luke 23, John 19

The Children's Illustrated Bible – p.p. 274-275

Forgiveness

Background notes

Crucifixion was a brutal and humiliating form of torture and execution. This punishment was exceedingly cruel, and was thus reserved for the very worst crimes or for the lowest of classes of people – slaves, the poor, deserters and of course, non-Romans. In fact, crucifixion was forbidden for Roman citizens. Public shame was a major part of the horror of crucifixion. As a deterrent to any potential rebels, the executions were always performed in very visible and public locations.

Prior to the actual crucifixion, the prisoner was stripped and beaten with a cat-of-nine-tails. This consisted of a whip with nine leather cords with small, sharp objects such as bones or metal attached to the cords. These scourgings were at times so severe that prisoners bled to death before ever reaching the cross. Jewish rules stipulated that only 39 lashes could be given, but the Romans had no such limit.

After the beating, the prisoner was forced to take up the patibulum (the shorter, horizontal piece of the cross) and carry it to the place of execution. (The vertical post was already at the site) The prisoner was next fastened to the patibulum with nails through the wrists (not the hands). The patibulum was hoisted up and attached to the vertical post. The prisoner's feet were placed one on top of the other and parallel to each other, probably with knees bent to one side (rather than the traditional picture we see of legs outstretched), with a single nail piercing both heels. The vertical post had a small wooden ledge, the sedicula, on which the condemned could just barely sit. This actually served to prolong the torture, by allowing the prisoner to push up in order to breathe. Death by crucifixion was slow and agonizing – some prisoners took up to a week to die. The pain from the scourging and the nails, thirst, exposure to the elements, rigid fixation, and the torture of insects all created a supremely humiliating and horrific torture.

Occasionally to speed death, the legs of the crucified were broken. Unable to support himself, the prisoner was soon asphyxiated.

This was Jesus' fate. He was taken to Golgotha, the Place of the Skull, (Calvaria in Latin – thus Calvary as we sometimes call it) and there he was crucified between two robbers. Attached to the top of the cross was a wooden board describing his crime, "The King of the Jews." It was 9:00 a.m. At noon, darkness fell over the land and lasted for three hours. Each gospel tells the story in a slightly different manner. Matthew and Mark's gospels record Jesus crying out, quoting from Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Mark's gospel especially focuses on the continued spiritual blindness of the religious leaders. (we have talked about this in our previous miracle studies this winter) Who recognized Jesus for who he truly was? A robber next to him on his own cross and a Gentile, Roman soldier! Mark also focused on the fulfillment of scripture and the divine will of God who provides for human salvation through the sacrifice of

His son. In Luke's gospel Jesus asks God to forgive those who have done this to him. He then breathed his last. It was 3:00 p.m.

Precisely at 3:00 p.m. the high priest blew the shofar to announce the daily sacrifice of a lamb that took place at exactly that time. At this moment, other amazing things happened:

1. The curtain in the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom. The Temple curtain was immense – 15 feet high and very thick and heavy. It separated the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Temple. Only the high priest was allowed inside this space and he could only enter if he brought with him the blood of an animal sacrifice. This physical boundary was now gone. Jesus opened the way for all to have access to God's grace.
2. The earth shook, rocks split and tombs opened.
3. A Roman commander confessed belief in Jesus.

It was Friday. The Sabbath began at sundown, just a few hours away. Once the Sabbath began, the Jews were permitted to do no work. Because of the offensiveness of crucifixions at such a religious time, the Jews asked Pilate to break the legs of the prisoners, speeding their death, so that the bodies could be removed before the Sabbath. The legs of the other two prisoners were broken, but Jesus was already dead. A Roman soldier stuck his spear into Jesus' side. The Old Testament scriptures were thus fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken." (Exodus 12:45, Numbers 9:12, Psalm 34:20) and "They will look to the one they have pierced." (Zechariah 12:10)

Workshop Name

The Good News Rolls

Opening Prayer

Dear God,

Thank you for the great compassion with which you shower each of our lives. Help us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus to help others in pain or distress. Help our hearts keep the faith necessary to know that all things possible with God. Amen.

Objectives

1. Children will locate the story in the Bible.
2. Children will identify the four gospels.
3. Children will locate Jerusalem on the map.
4. Children will identify Golgotha.
5. Children will identify key characters and their role in the Passion narrative: Pilate, Sanhedrin, Herod.
6. Children will retell the story in their own words.

Supplies – Please note the pictures at the bottom of the lesson. The pictures show how the rolls looked before baking and then after baking.

Ingredients:

Large Marshmallows (1 per child) – there will be a bag of marshmallows in your supply bag

Crescent Rolls – there will be a tube of crescent rolls in your supply bag

These supplies you will have to have at home:

Melted Butter

Cinnamon – several tablespoons

Sugar - several tablespoons

Supplies:

Mixing Bowls

Baking Pan

Spoons

Napkins

Small saucepan

Small Baggie for the sugar and cinnamon mixture

Activity

Definitions and People to Know:

Sanhedrin – Jewish ruling council, made up of 71 religious leaders, including chief priests, scribes, Pharisees and Sadducees (religious leaders)

Caiaphas – chief priest and president of the Sanhedrin

Pontius Pilate – Roman governor of Judea

Herod (Antipas) – ruler of Galilee region

Caesar – supreme ruler over all of Roman Empire

Joseph of Arimathea – member of the Sanhedrin who supported Jesus, gave his tomb for Jesus' burial

Sin - doing wrong things, what keeps us separate from God

Have all the children wash their hands.

1. Place the butter in the saucepan and melt over medium heat.

2. Mix the cinnamon and sugar. Place the cinnamon and sugar in a baggie, seal and mix together.

3. Pour the mixture into a bowl.

4. Unroll and separate the crescent rolls into separate triangles.

5. Pass out the marshmallows.

Explain: This marshmallow is going to represent Jesus. It is white which stands for purity and perfection since Jesus had no sin.

6. Let each child roll a marshmallow in the melted butter.

Explain: This is the anointing oil.

7. Next, let each child roll the marshmallow in the cinnamon/sugar mixture.

Explain: This is the anointing spice.

8. Now have each child roll the marshmallow in the crescent roll, wrapping the marshmallow completely with the dough and making sure that it is completely sealed. None of the marshmallow should be showing.

Explain: This is how the tomb was completely closed when Jesus was placed inside.

9. Have each child place his/her tomb on the baking sheet seam side down. Bake @ 350 degrees for 10 minutes.

The following could be used for discussion while the rolls are cooking:

Where did this story take place? (Jerusalem)

Who was Caiaphas? (chief priest, President of the Sanhedrin)

Why did the Jewish religious leaders arrest Jesus? (They were afraid that he would ruin the freedom to practice their religion and they might lose the “high” positions they held. They thought he was teaching against the Law.)

How did the guards treat Jesus? (Beat Jesus and called him terrible names.)

How did Jesus respond to what they said? (He did not fight back or say anything.)

What did the Jewish leaders hope to do with Jesus? (Get rid of him)

Did Pilate cooperate with them? (He did not want to, but the priests kept after Pilate, until he finally gave in.)

What did Herod want Jesus to do? (Perform miracles for him)

What was Jesus’ reaction to all these terrible things? (Nothing, he knew it would not change anything.)

Where was Jesus crucified? (Golgotha, the Place of the Skull)

Reflection/Evaluation

Jesus asked God to forgive those who hurt him. Has there ever been a time you have forgiven someone? Was it hard? Does knowing how forgiving Jesus was to his enemies help you forgive?

Lord’s Prayer