LESSON 10

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS



Aim: **To show the children that Jesus willingly allowed people to crucify him. He died carrying our burden of sin, to bring us into fellowship with God.**

Scripture Reading: **John 18:1–40; 19:1–30**
This is a longer reading than usual and not all of it will be included in the lesson, but do read these two chapters in full for the children to be able to follow the events.

Memory Verse: **John 1:8**
He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

Tell me about the different plans you make when you have to carry something heavy. Give the class time to respond. Some of you girls may have carried jerry cans of water on your heads to your houses earlier today. At harvest time you can hardly see people underneath the huge loads of grass or grain they are carrying!

We can all see and feel the weight pressing us down when we are carrying a heavy load or burden. There is another kind of burden we carry around that we can't see with our eyes. It's the burden of our sins. We can't understand who God is or how much he loves us because the burden of sin gets in the way, pressing us down. The past few lessons have shown that Jesus is God himself, the perfect Son of God. He is the only one who can lift this burden of sin from us, and so liberate us to serve God and enjoy his life of freedom.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. Jesus told his friends beforehand that he was going to die. They did not understand what he was saying, but knew the Jewish religious leaders wanted to kill him (11:55–57). Jesus celebrated the Passover feast with his disciples in Jerusalem. In the evening he went to pray in a garden just outside the city. It was there that Judas, one of his own disciples, led armed soldiers and guards sent by the religious leaders to arrest Jesus (18:1–3).
2. Jesus did not act like people who are arrested usually do. He did not fight nor did he try to run away. **Describe how Jesus told the soldiers who he was and how he allowed them to arrest him.** It was the other way round: it was the soldiers who were frightened (18:4–8)! Simon Peter, Jesus' close friend, was frightened, too, but he wanted to protect Jesus. He had a sword with him and he used it. **Describe what Jesus said and did (Jn 18:10–11; Lk 22:49–51).**

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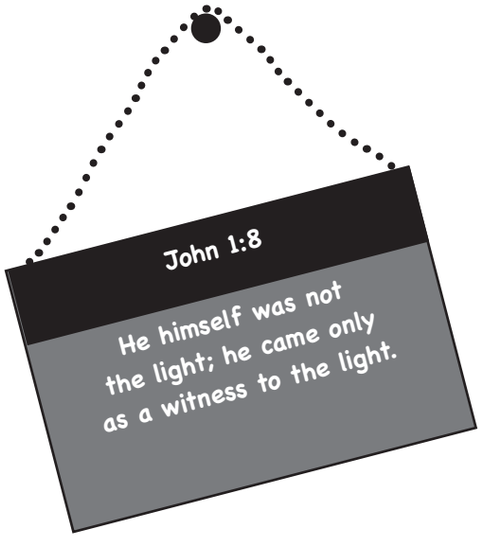


3. All through the night the high priest and religious leaders questioned Jesus. The trial was illegal. Firstly, it took place during the night and secondly, they could bring no witnesses who could prove that Jesus had done or taught anything that was wrong (18:19-24).
4. In the morning they took Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, the only person who could give the order for somebody to be put to death (18:28-31). However, Pilate could not find Jesus guilty of anything. He offered to set Jesus free, but the Jews and their religious leaders chose Barabbas, a thief and a murderer, to be set free rather than Jesus (18:38-40).
4. Pilate allowed his soldiers to mistreat Jesus even though he knew Jesus was innocent. He hoped that would satisfy the Jews, so that he would not have to let Jesus be put to death. Pilate realised Jesus was no ordinary man, but he was so frightened of the Jewish leaders that he handed Jesus over to them to be crucified (19:1-16).
5. Jesus was hung on a cross between two thieves, guarded by soldiers. **Show Picture 10.** When Jesus knew he had accomplished everything he had come to do on earth, he died (19:17-18, 28-30).

Our Response to the Story

Everybody in this story carried a burden – the burden of his/her sins. Think of Judas, the disciples who left Jesus all alone in the end, Peter, who said he didn't even know Jesus, the Jews and their religious leaders, Pontius Pilate and his soldiers. Jesus took the burden of everybody's sins on himself on the cross. His death shows us how much God loves us even though we are sinners, and how much God wants us to love him in return.

Instil the Memory Verse



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