



**A three part Easter programme  
for 3-11 year olds**

**Mustard  Seeds**  
.....

faithful • creative • effective

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Since 1993 TnT Ministries has been resourcing and equipping people to teach the Bible to children and teenagers more faithfully, more creatively and more effectively.

Our comprehensive range of printed material covers the entire 18 month to 18 year age range. It is used right around the world in over 27 countries and has been translated in part or in whole into twelve different languages.

We have conducted live children's ministry training throughout the United Kingdom, South Africa, Singapore, Dubai, Hong Kong and Uganda.

**Mustard Seeds** is our new range of electronic material and will ultimately be a comprehensive four year syllabus for 3 to 11 year olds.

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**We firmly believe** that the Bible is God's word to mankind and that it contains everything we need to know in order to be reconciled with God through faith in Jesus Christ and live in a way that is pleasing to him. Therefore, we believe it is vital to teach the Bible accurately to children, being careful to teach each passage's true meaning in an age-appropriate manner, rather than selecting a 'children's message' from a Biblical passage.

We are grateful for our gospel partnership with the Co-Mission group of churches. Six of these churches across London 'road tested' this material and we value the suggestions made by a committed group of volunteers who are passionate about teaching Jesus to children.

**CO-MISSION**  
A PASSION FOR PLANTING... FOR LONDON... FOR CHRIST

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# THE KING ON THE CROSS

<b>Week 1</b>	<b>The King's Cup</b>	<i>Mark 14:32-50</i>	<i>pg. 5</i>
	Aim : To understand that God's judgement of our sin is so serious that Jesus longed to avoid taking it, but he humbly took it.		
<b>Week 2</b>	<b>The King's Cross</b>	<i>Mark 14:55-65, 15:1-47</i>	<i>pg. 19</i>
	Aim : To see from the story of Jesus' death that we can now be friends with God.		
<b>Week 3</b>	<b>The King's Alive</b>	<i>Mark 16:1-8</i>	<i>pg. 32</i>
	Aim : To see that Jesus' resurrection proves he has taken our punishment and is able to give us life forever.		

## Series Aims

- To understand the seriousness of our sin and how difficult it was for Jesus to take our punishment on the cross.
- To see how Jesus' death on the cross makes it possible for us to be friends with God.
- To see how the resurrection of Jesus proves that he has taken our punishment and conquered death. He is therefore able to offer eternal life for those who trust in him.

## Series Context

Mark is the shortest of the four gospels and is believed to be the first one written. It is fast-moving and action-packed and was probably based on the content of the Apostle Peter's teaching.

Mark himself was not an eye-witness of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, but Peter was. You can read more about Mark in Acts 12:12, 12:25, 13:5, 13:13, 15:36-39.

The gospel is not written in strictly chronological order. Instead, Mark has grouped various incidents together to answer three important questions about Jesus; Who is he? Why has he come to earth? What does it mean to follow him?

## Series Overview

This series zooms in on the last three chapters of Mark and looks at the arrest, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The first lesson explores the anguish of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane as he pleads with God to not make him endure the cross. The lesson also shows the obedience of Jesus as he submits to the Father's will by allowing himself to be arrested.

The second lesson shows Jesus' continued obedience as he submits to being unfairly tried, ill-treated and brutally executed. It is only in his death

that he is finally recognised by a Roman centurion to be the Son of God. The other events which occur during the crucifixion show the significance of Jesus' death; God satisfies his need for justice and extends a hand of friendship towards people who have rebelled against him.

The third lesson explores the wonderful news of Jesus' resurrection. The tomb was found to be empty because Jesus had conquered death. He is who he claimed to be, the Son of God who has come to rescue his people and offer them eternal life.

## Memory Verse

Mark 15:39 – *When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" [NIV]*

## Using This Resource

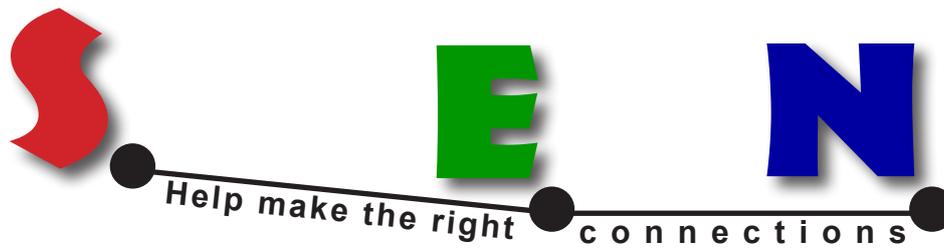
This programme is designed to be adaptable. We understand that many churches have a limited number of volunteers over Easter and are often forced to run a more general, all-age ministry for children.

**Text in blue is generally applicable to younger children (3-7 years), green text is aimed at older children (7-11 years)** and black text is applicable to all-age groups.

Leaders are encouraged to engage with the study material in a devotional manner, seeking to apply God's word to their own lives before attempting to teach others.

We trust that you will be blessed as you do that. We also hope that once you have done that, your application of God's word to the children you teach will be more deliberate and relevant.

**Note:** All page numbers in this document are hyperlinked – simply click on the number to jump to that page.



A child with special educational needs (SEN) may provide some challenges to your group. It is therefore essential that you are well prepared for your lessons and that you have carefully thought about how to include all the children. You may need to make some changes to your existing programme to make it accessible for everyone.

A key principle to consider is that, as with all children in your church, each child is an individual and will have different needs, strengths and weaknesses. It is important that you get to know the children you teach as well as possible and that you make an effort to build a relationship with them.

In terms of the lesson itself, you may need to consider the following:

- A child with SEN may need to have an additional adult to support them.
- Consider the environment in which you teach and try to eliminate potential distractions. Where you are seated and where the children are seated, the temperature of the room and noise levels all affect the sense of calm and orderliness of the class.
- Think about the class size and ratio of adults to children.
- It may be appropriate, at times, for a troubled or disruptive child to be accompanied by an adult and to be moved away from the group to a quiet area. Here they can engage in something related to the lesson which is calming and quiet.
- Use clear and child appropriate language.
- When giving instructions; tell them to the whole group, demonstrate, then check that the child with SEN understands what needs to happen.
- Balance the amount of open ended and closed questions you ask.
- Be careful of rhetorical questions; the child with SEN will want to answer them.
- If a child wants to ask too many questions, which may distract from the lesson, tell them that for now we are going to listen and that later you will come back to their questions. **Make sure that you do spend some individual time with the child going through their questions.** You may find that by the time you go back to them,

their questions have either been answered or forgotten or they are not that important anymore.

- Break up your lesson into different sections; short, sharp sections work best as this keeps children engaged and therefore able to manage their behaviour.
- Children with SEN like structure and routines; you may like to start the session with the same song or greeting time or keep the structure the same each week. For example; start with a song, a recap from last week, a short introduction to the new lesson, a song, the Bible story, a craft, the application and then a game for consolidation and further application.
- Use repetition (chants or songs with simple tunes to teach main Bible truths).
- Use lots of different kinds of aids to teach your lesson (movement, pictures, multimedia, props, music, textures, drama, etc.). Consider different learning styles.
- Use simple pictures (too much detail can be distracting).
- Think about how much reading and writing you are expecting the children to do; too much may cause the child with SEN to become anxious and distressed about failing.
- On worksheets, consider making them accessible by asking children to draw some of the answers, rather than write them. If there is a lot of writing or reading required, pair up the SEN child with an adult or with a more able peer. You can also write the answers on a board for them to copy down.
- Children with SEN may find it more difficult to think about application as this requires them to put themselves into a situation which is, at times, hard to do.
- For a child who is non-verbal, find out what their communication is from parents and try to use these as much as possible in your lessons and interaction (Makaton or BSL signing, eye gazes, communication switch boxes, symbols, photos, pictures, objects of reference, etc).

–Toni Edmonds-Smith  
Special Needs Teacher

## The King's Cup

Mark 14:32-50

**Big Idea :** The night before he suffers, Jesus prays to follow his Father's will rather than trying to escape judgement on the cross.

**Aim :** To understand that God's judgement of our sin is so serious that Jesus longed to avoid taking it, but he humbly took it.



### Leader's Study Notes

Read Mark 14:32-50 noticing what happened and what these verses tell us about God and Jesus.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

Since Mark 3:6, the Jewish leaders have been plotting to kill Jesus. If we trace the course of their hostility throughout Mark's gospel, we see the following sequence of events:

- 11:18 – they want to kill Jesus because of their jealousy that the crowds are amazed by his teaching.
- 12:12 – they plan to arrest Jesus because he has condemned them.
- 14:10-11 – Judas secretly gives them a way of arresting Jesus without risking the anger of the crowds.

The scene for this lesson takes place directly after the Last Supper where Jesus predicted his betrayal (by Judas, 14:18) and Peter's denial (14:30).

14:32 Gethsemane is a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem. As Jesus faces death, he prays.

14:33 Peter, James and John are with Jesus. This is the only time (apart from Jesus' cry on the cross) when Mark describes Jesus' suffering.

Jesus has predicted his death three times in Mark's gospel (8:31, 9:31, 10:33-34). He knew it was coming, when it would happen and how much it would hurt. No wonder he was, "deeply distressed and troubled".

14:34 Jesus' words show the enormity of the task ahead – he was "overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death". When the Son of God feels like this, you know it's big!

14:35-36 At the beginning of the Gospel, Jesus said, "the time has come, the Kingdom of

God is near" (1:15). Now at last the hour has arrived. So horrific was this "hour" that Jesus prayed that he would not have to face it. See the two vitally important points in Jesus' prayer

- "Take this cup from me" – the 'cup' is a picture of God's judgement of sin. It is a cup full of God's right and fair anger over people's sin. Jeremiah 25:15-16 speaks clearly that this "cup of wrath" is more than anyone can bear. Jesus did not want to take his father's wrath, he really didn't! But if Jesus had not drunk that 'cup', then we would have to.
- "Yet not what I will, but what you will". Jesus chose to obey his father rather than do what he wanted to do. His desire to serve his father was greater than his desire to please himself – even though it would mean unimaginable suffering. Our forgiveness and rescue is possible because Jesus made this decision.

14:37-38 Jesus wanted to prepare himself and his disciples for the horror of the next day. The disciples wanted to do the right thing, but they did not have the self-control to pray.

14:41-50 The story of Jesus' arrest at Gethsemane clearly shows the result of Jesus' preparation and the disciples lack of prayer – Jesus stood firm, the disciples buckled.

14:48-50 Jesus was dignified, not fighting, going quietly (Isaiah 53:7). He knew exactly what lay ahead for him. His prayer was answered, he was given the resources to submit to his father's will. His disciples' lack of prayer was exposed. They, "deserted him and fled", just as Jesus had predicted in 14:27.

## Reflect

- What does it say about God that he has a 'cup of wrath' that must be emptied?
- What would you think of Jesus if he had chosen not to go to the cross?
- If you had been there, how would you have responded? Is that different to how the disciples responded?

## Session Outline

Introduce the series

Consider introducing the series with one or two of the following:

- Mark's Gospel.
- The events that led up to this point in Mark's Gospel.
- Easter – bunny rabbits, chocolate eggs and an empty tomb!

## Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

**Option 1** will work for all-ages.

**Option 2** is probably best for older children, but will also work in an all-age setting. Younger children will enjoy seeing older children doing the more challenging forfeits.

**Pose the questions** at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.

## Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.

## Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Revise the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.

## Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



## Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



## Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section above – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



## Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



## Introductory Idea

**Option 1:** Draft a list of things that children might not enjoy doing, but sometimes have to do. Get them to vote on these or rank them in order.

These might include:

- Eat certain vegetables
- Dress up smart
- Clean up after pets (or other household chores)
- Homework
- Taking the garbage out
- Going to the dentist

**Option 2:** Draft a list of questions from a series of lessons you have recently completed. The questions need to be quite challenging to ensure that most of them cannot be answered by the children. Tell them that if they get an answer wrong, they will have to pay a forfeit.

For each question have two forfeits to choose from; one that is incredibly challenging (eg. 100 press ups) and one that is simple (eg. 1 star jump). The children will always choose the easier option. Ask them why they have chosen the easy option.

**For both of the above options** use the following bridge into the lesson. In today's true story from the Bible we are going to hear about something very difficult that Jesus didn't want to do, but did anyway. As we go through the story, think about these questions:

- What did Jesus not want to do?  
[Take the punishment for our sin (the cup)]
- Why did he do it?  
[To obey God (Mark 14:36)]



## Teaching Plan

This lesson is primarily about seeing how hard it was for Jesus to go to the cross.

This will be new to the children. We readily assume that 'perfect Jesus' walked happily to the cross because that was his job. When we think like this, we underestimate the wrath that our sin deserves, the suffering that Jesus experienced and the humanity of Jesus.

The passage naturally has two parts; Jesus' prayer, showing his desire to avoid the cross and his decision to submit and go willingly to the cross.

**For younger children** – a 'cup of God's anger' is abstract and it will be hard for them to understand how anyone can 'drink' a punishment. You will need to illustrate this in a practical way that the children can understand.

One way to do this might be to begin the lesson by pairing various sins with reasonable punishments. Think of some things that your children might get 'told off' for in any given week (eg. hit a sister, say 'no' to mum, take something that doesn't belong to them, swear, lie and so on).

Mention each one and ask the children to tell you what might be an appropriate punishment in each case. Write each punishment on a small piece of paper and place the punishment in a cup labelled, 'punishment'. Set this aside for later in the lesson.

If you're acting out this story, there are two scenes; the prayer and the arrest.

- The focus of the prayer scene is how awful the punishment will be that Jesus wants to avoid. The picture of Jesus praying on page 10 might be helpful to visually represent this. Remind the children of all their sins (naughty things) mentioned at the beginning of the lesson and each punishment. What would it be like to get all of those punishments at the same time?
- The focus of the arrest scene is the fact that Jesus goes willingly to take all the punishment that our sins deserve. The picture of Jesus with the soldiers on page 10 might be helpful to visually represent this. Remind the children once again of all the punishment that Jesus knew he was going to receive. Jesus knew that the punishment would mean that he would die on a cross.

Other visual aids provided on page 12 can be enlarged and coloured as required.

**For older children** – teach the lesson using a simple small group Bible study. The study naturally breaks into two parts; Jesus' prayer (14:32-42) and the arrest (14:43-50).

**Focus the first part** of the study on the content of Jesus' prayer in verse 36. The first picture on page 11 might be helpful as a summary.

To help the children understand the 'cup' get them to

mention some wrong things that they might be guilty of and the appropriate punishment for each 'crime'. You could broaden this to include crimes committed by people generally, but it is helpful if the children actually 'own' this lesson by understanding that their sin deserves to be punished.

Get them to write the various punishments on pieces of paper. Pass a cup labelled 'punishment for sins' around the group. The children place all the punishments in the cup – even if there are multiple copies of the same punishment. Ask them to say the punishment out loud as they place the paper in the cup.

- What was Jesus asking God to do? Could God have said 'yes' to Jesus? Where would we be if God did grant Jesus' request?
- Why must there be a 'cup of God's anger'? What would life be like if there was no 'cup'?

**Focus the second part** of the study on verses 46-48. The second picture on page 11 might be helpful as a summary.

- Contrast the disciples' and Jesus' responses to the arrest. How does each show their preparation (or lack thereof)?
- By not fighting, what was Jesus choosing to do instead? By submitting to the soldiers, who was he actually submitting to?
- Refer to the cup again. Can the children imagine *choosing* to take any one of those punishments for someone else's wrong-doing?
- Can they imagine receiving all the punishments in the cup at once?



## Game Idea

**Option 1:** Play 'pass the cup'. This is a variation of 'pass the parcel'.

Children sit in a circle and pass a plastic cup from child to child around the group while music is playing. When the music stops, the child holding the cup receives a small sticker or mark against their name. The child with the least stickers at the end of the game, gets a prize.

This game differs from 'pass the parcel' in that children are now desperately trying to get rid of, rather than holding onto, the cup. It is a disadvantage to be stuck with the cup and therefore no-one will want it.

Remind the children how Jesus didn't want to take the punishment because he knew how painful it would be. But he decided to take it anyway because he wanted to obey God.

**For older children** – you could use a plastic cup or a ball. Have a timer that the children can't see counting down from 20 seconds. You will need to give a sticker to those who don't throw or catch properly, as this game of 'hot potato' can quickly degenerate

into deflecting the object away from yourself, which is less interesting for everyone else. The person holding the object when the timer sounds receives a sticker as before.

**Option 2:** Play a game where a child at some point has to choose to 'lose' by giving in. This will help the children to know how it feels to 'lose' when they could 'win' if they wanted to. This is hard, especially for those who are competitive.

Perhaps play a game of dodgeball or running races or just throw/catch. Explain that when a leader taps you on the shoulder, you must choose to go out, or drop the ball, or whatever is relevant.

It is likely that some will refuse to give in, or will do so very dramatically to demonstrate that they could have carried on. Jesus did not shout loudly, "I could fight, but I'm choosing not to". He simply submitted to God's will and did what was required, even though it was very hard.



## Discuss and Apply

There are various ways you can apply this story to the children's lives. These are two options:

1. God's anger against sin is right. Do the children think it is fair that God punishes sin? How would they feel if God did nothing about sin? How do they feel about God? (-the God who punishes sin).
2. Jesus struggled to take God's judgement, but he did choose to. How did Jesus feel? Why was it so hard for him? Did he have to? Why did he choose to? How would you feel about Jesus if he chose not to go to the cross? How do you feel about him that he did?

The first option is probably better for younger children. Older children generally understand the first option, while older children (who have grown up in Church) often think Jesus died "because that's what he did". So, the second option will help older children feel the shock of Jesus' struggle and choice.

It is important for children to understand that God's anger against sin is justified. While many people struggle with the idea that God requires a price to be paid for sin, the truth is that we would all feel a terrific sense of injustice if God did not punish sin – especially sin against ourselves.

**For younger children** – ask them how they feel when someone hurts them or says something nasty to them? How do they feel when they see someone else being hurt in the same way?

Explain that God also gets angry when people hurt other people or say nasty things to them. Can the children think of other things that God might be angry about? This will include the way people have treated God or disobeyed him.

Remind the children of some of the things they mentioned at the beginning of the lesson that they would get 'told off' for doing. Explain that God is also angry when we do those things, but that he sent Jesus to take our punishment.

- How do they think Jesus felt about this?
- Why was Jesus praying that God would not punish him for all the bad things we have done?

Help them to understand that Jesus knew that he would have to die and that it was going to hurt very much, but he did it because he wanted to obey God. If he didn't take our punishment then we would have to be punished.

What would the children want to say to Jesus?

**For older children** – refer them to the 'cup of punishments' and the 'crimes' they admitted to during the Bible study. Should God also punish those sins? How should he punish them?

- How would they feel if Jesus had walked away from the cross that night and only looked after himself?
- How do the children feel about Jesus being willing to take their punishment?
- Do they understand that if Jesus doesn't take their punishment that they will have to be punished?



## Prayer Idea

The focus of this lesson has been the fact that Jesus willingly went to take an awful punishment in our place.

Get the children to each use a small piece of paper to represent themselves. Younger children can draw their face on the paper and older children can write their name.

Remind the children that Jesus chose to take the punishment for their sin (**the naughty things they do, think and say**).

Pass the cup around and encourage the children to pray something they think Jesus would like to hear as they put their piece of paper in the cup. They mustn't feel under obligation to pray out loud – God even hears unspoken prayers!

You can give an idea of what might be appropriate by thanking God that Jesus took your punishment as you place your name in the cup.

You could also be more specific and perhaps thank God that Jesus took the punishment you should get for ignoring God, telling a lie or being jealous or angry at someone.



## Activity

**For 3-7s** – Choose either Activity A (page 14) or Activity B (page 15-16).

**Activity A** – Print page 14 onto paper for each child. The children colour the picture. Remind them of the detail of the story using the pictures and words. See if they can follow the arrows to tell you what happened and why.

**Activity B** – Make a pop-up card. Print page 15 onto paper for each child and page 16 onto paper (one copy for every five children).

- **For all children** – before the session, use a craft blade to cut along the two 'pop-up lines' between the trees on page 15. Cut out one Jesus figure per child from page 16.
- **For younger children** – you can do further preparation before the session by folding and gluing page 15.
- **To assemble:**
  - Fold the page in half on the first (horizontal) fold line and glue the halves back to back. **BE SURE** to not get any glue between the lines that have been cut before the session.
  - Fold the page in half again on the second fold line to produce a card with the sleeping disciples on the front cover.
  - Fold inwards along the dashed line at the bottom of the Jesus figure to create a glue tab. Glue this tab to the area marked on page 15.
  - Place a little glue on the 'pop-up' tab as marked and close the card to stick the tab to the back of the Jesus figure. When you open the card, the figure should pop up to reveal a praying Jesus.

**For 7-11s** – Print either Activity Sheet C (page 17) or Activity Sheet D (page 18) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



## Memory Verse

**For younger children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the soldier saw Jesus die, he said, "This must be the Son of God"* [Paraphrased]

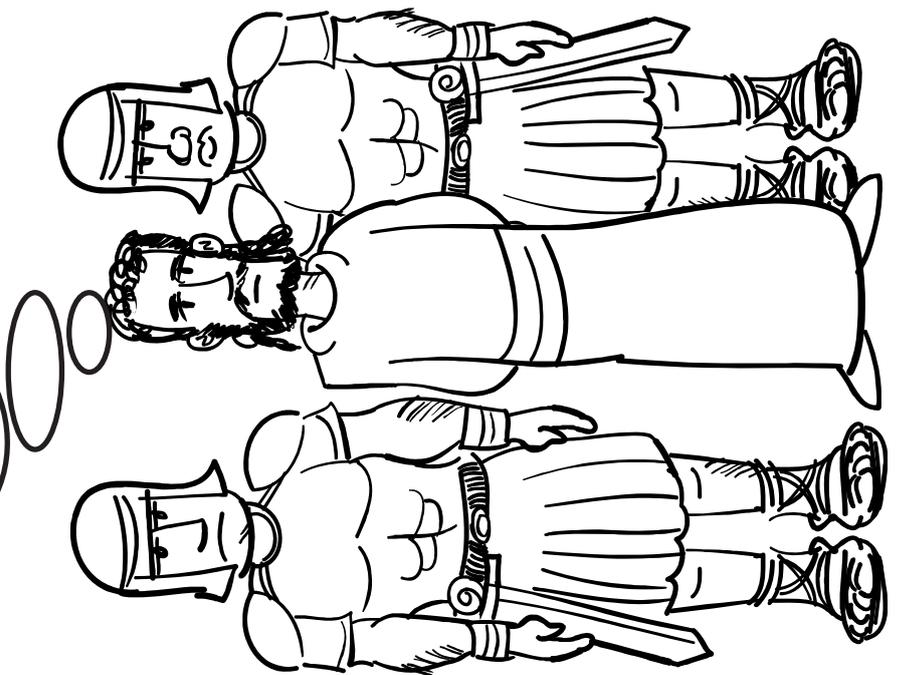
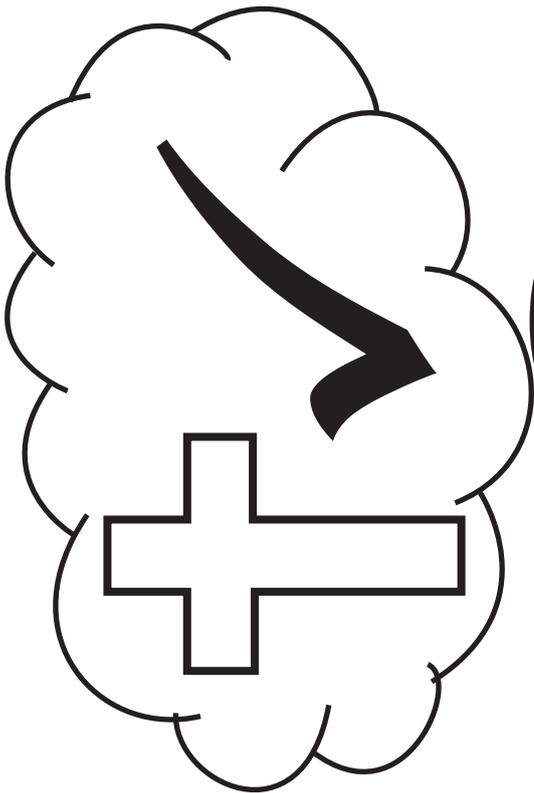
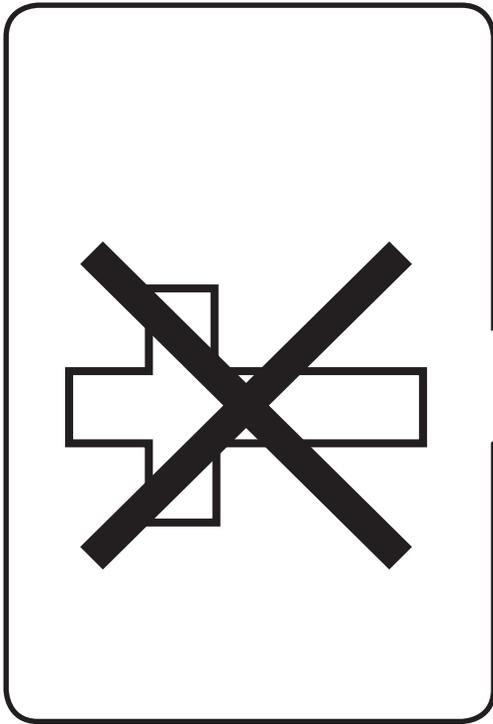
**For older children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"* [NIV]

For children who can read, or an all-age group, play a quick game to help them learn the memory verse. Print the ears on page 13 – you will need one ear per group. Groups of two or three work best.

**Before the session** – cut the ears out and cut along the dashed lines to produce a puzzle from each ear. Place the pieces for each puzzle in an envelope. Hand the envelopes out to each group and see who can assemble the puzzle first and read the memory verse out loud.

If you have more time and space, then you could run this in bigger groups of up to seven per group. Get the children to collect the pieces one at a time (in relay) from the other end of the room before assembling the puzzle.

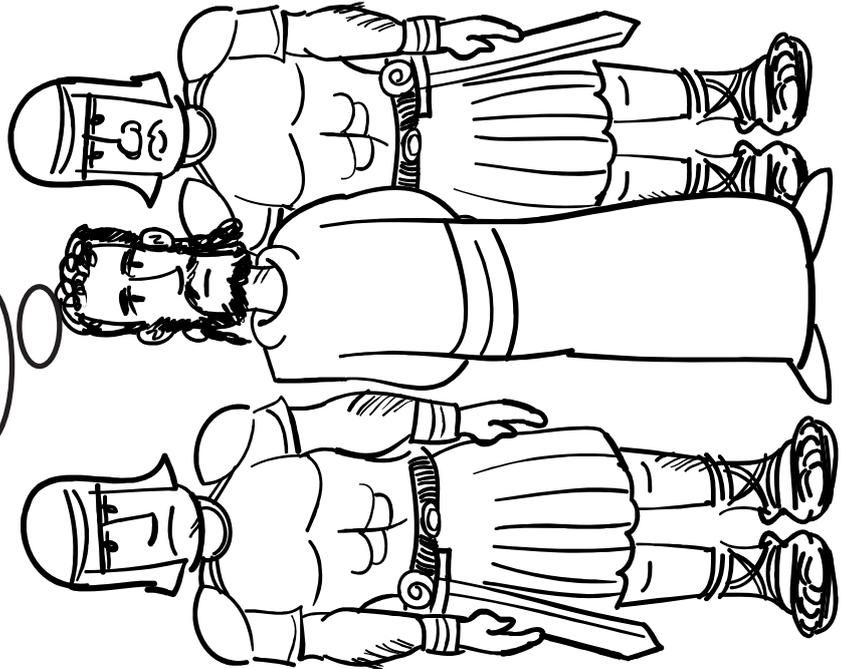




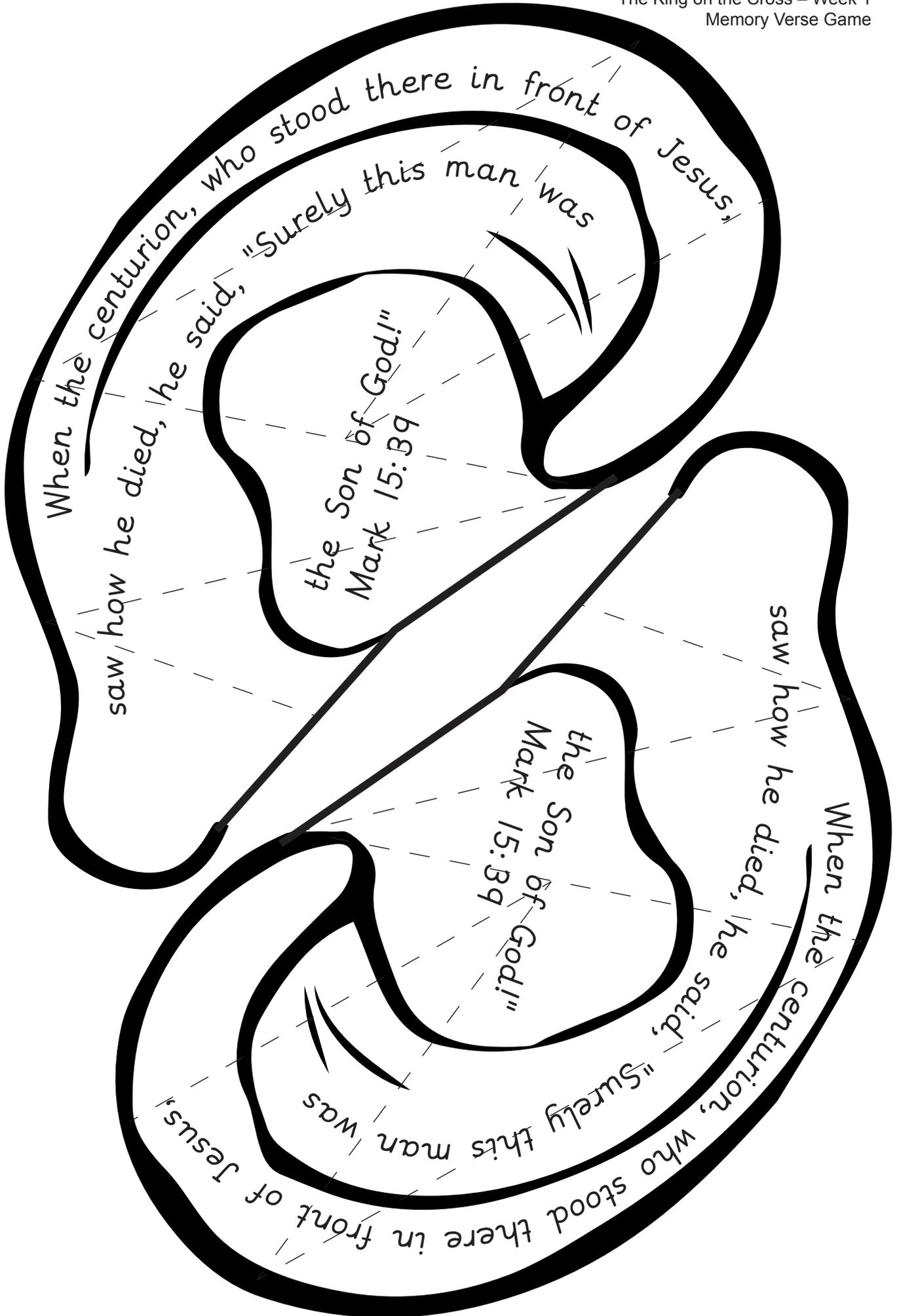
Please take  
this cup  
from me.



Not what I want,  
but what you  
want, Father.









Jesus' friends slept while he prayed.



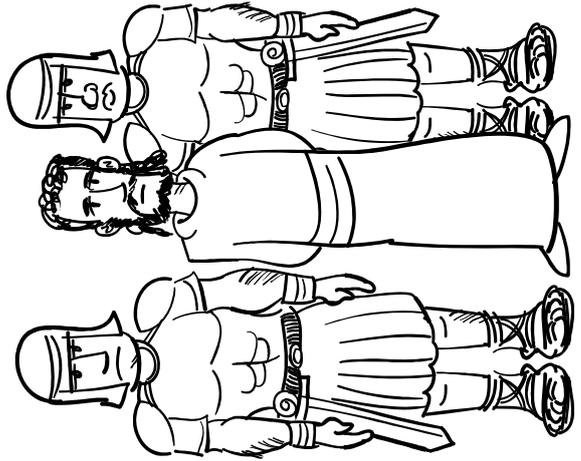
When Jesus' enemies came to get him



Jesus' friends wanted to fight



but Jesus obeyed God.



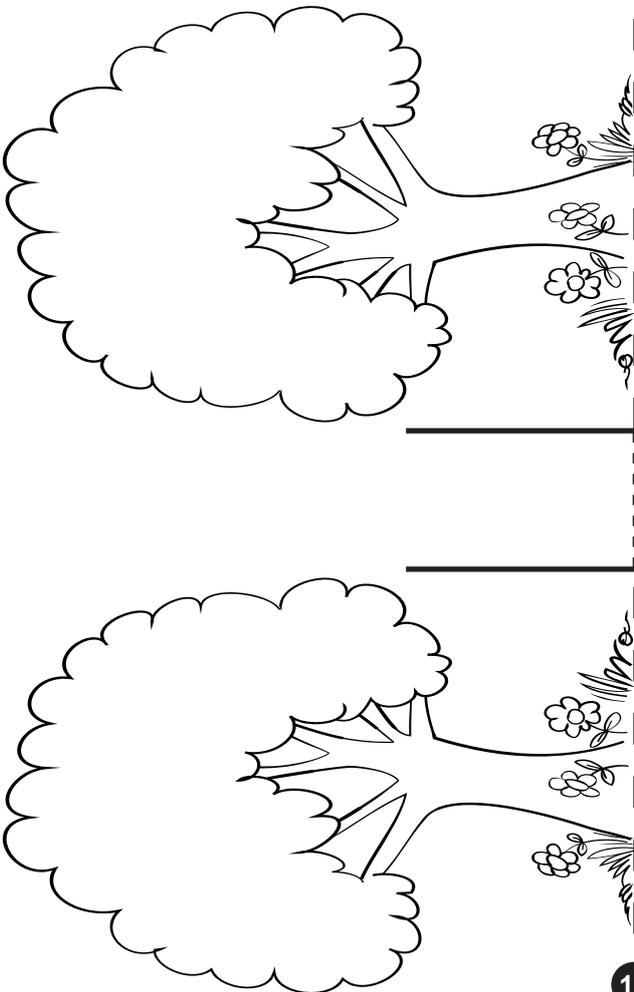
Mark 14:32-50

While Jesus' friends were sleeping...



SECOND fold (outward)

FIRST fold (outward) and glue



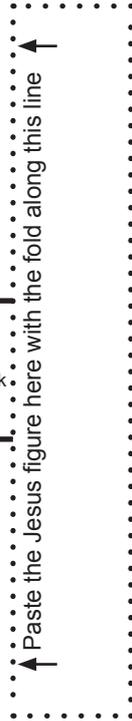
fold out

Pop up tab

Glue only this side of the fold line to the back of the Jesus figure.

cut

cut



...Jesus prayed that he wouldn't have to die on the cross.

Mark 14: 32-50

The King on the Cross – Week 1  
Activity B (2 of 2)



# The King's Cup

This true story can be found in Mark 14:32-50



## Discover

What clues are there that something awful was going to happen? (v.34)

- It was dark     Jesus was very sad     Judas was missing

What does he ask God to do for him? (v.36) \_\_\_\_\_

## Discuss

What is this 'cup'? (see Jeremiah 25:15)

Is it okay for God to be angry? What if he just forgave everyone and didn't bother about sin?

## Discover

What do the disciples do when Jesus is arrested? (v.47)



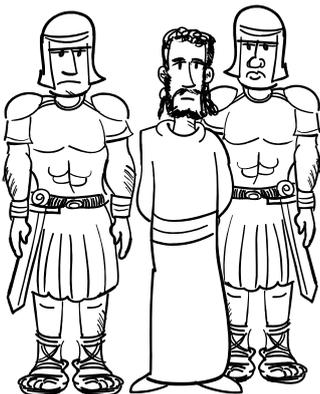
In verse 49 Jesus said that his arrest was all part of

- a big mistake     a bad joke     God's plan in the Bible

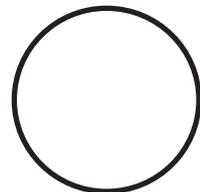
## Think Spot

God can do anything. Why do you think he didn't take the 'cup' from Jesus?

Jesus chose to obey God and take the 'cup'.  
What would happen to you if he didn't?



Draw on this face how you feel about what Jesus did.



# The King's Cup

This true story can be found in Mark 14:32-50



## Discover

What clues are there that something awful was going to happen? (v.34)

---

What does Jesus know about his Father? (v.36) \_\_\_\_\_

What does he ask God to do for him? (v.36) \_\_\_\_\_

## Discuss

What is this 'cup'? (see Jeremiah 25:15)

How do you feel about the idea of God being angry? Should he not just forgive everyone? Why/why not?

## Discover

How do the disciples respond when Jesus is arrested? (v.47)

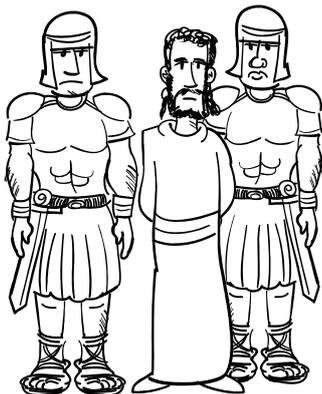
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How do we know that Jesus' arrest is part of God's plan? (v.49)

---

## Think Spot



All things are possible for God. Why was it not possible for the 'cup' to pass from Jesus?

Jesus had a choice. What would have happened if he chose differently?

How does his choice make you feel about Jesus?

How does God saying 'No' to Jesus make you feel? Why?

# The King's Cross

Mark 14:55-65, 15:1-47

**Big Idea** : People lied about Jesus, this led to his death. But the torn curtain and the centurion's words show that Jesus is God's son who died to make us friends with God.

**Aim** : To see from the story of Jesus' death that we can now be friends with God.

## The Story So Far

### Week 1

- Jesus knew that on the cross he would 'drink the cup' of God's anger for sin and that it would be awful.
- He prayed for God to take it away, but he knew it was God's plan for Him. He willingly chose to go to the cross.



## Leader's Study Notes

Read Mark 14:55-65, 15:1-47 noticing what happened and what these verses tell us about God and Jesus.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

This is a long passage which is divided into three clear sections; Jesus' trial by the Sanhedrin, the trial by Pilate and the crucifixion.

- 14:55 The Jewish Leaders were not treating Jesus fairly and were looking for any excuse to have him put to death. Remember, they have been plotting to do this since Mark 3:6.
- 14:57-61 They call in witnesses who lie and do not agree. Jesus does not defend himself in any way. He knows this must happen, even if it happens in an unjust way. He is submitting to his father's will.
- 14:61-62 The high priest asks a direct question and Jesus tells the truth; he is the chosen King of God's Kingdom who will reign on a heavenly throne.
- 14:63-65 They condemn him for blasphemy (claiming to be God). The irony is that he really is God, but they have closed their minds to that possibility.
- 15:10 Pilate knows that Jesus is innocent and that the religious leaders are acting out of envy.

- 15:15 Pilate knows the truth, but he is a weak man who wants to please the crowd.
- 15:16-20 The soldiers' job was to crucify criminals. They didn't consider who Jesus might be. They assume he is a criminal and so mock him and treat him shamefully.
- 15:25-32 Passers-by, criminals on the cross and religious leaders all mock Jesus. They find the idea that this man hanging on a cross could be God's promised king, ridiculous.

There are three important events surrounding Jesus' death that explain what was happening.

### The Darkness (15:33)

It was dark from noon (sixth hour) until 3pm. Scientists tell us that there is no possible natural explanation for this. It can't be a solar eclipse. The sun doesn't disappear in a Mediterranean country in the middle of the day!

Just like the plague of darkness in Egypt (Exodus 10:21), this darkness is a sign of God's judgement against sin. Jesus was taking the punishment for the sin of the world.

### The Cry (15:34)

Jesus speaks here of being left all alone by God, his father. God the Father turns his back on his own dear son. Jesus has been thrown out of God's care because of our sin. He is receiving our punishment.

### The Curtain (15:38)

This curtain hung in Herod's temple and separated the people from the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant was. The Ark represented God's presence. Only the high priest was allowed behind the curtain once a year on the Day of Atonement.

It was a visual aid to remind God's people that no-one could come into God's presence because of their sin.

The curtain was 20m high, 10m wide and 10cm thick. It tore supernaturally from top to bottom at the point of Jesus' death. Jesus' death made it possible for people to again approach God and be friends with him because their sin had been dealt with.

15:39 This is the climax of Mark's gospel. The Jewish leaders who had been expecting God's promised king rejected Jesus, but a Roman centurion realises that Jesus really is the Son of God.

### Reflect

- Read through the passage slowly, and imagine you are standing close by watching the action as it happens. At each point ask yourself the question, "How would I have felt at this moment?"
- If you had to convince someone you loved, that Jesus' death is more than one man's gruesome crucifixion – what one piece of evidence would you explain to them? What would you say?
- More than anything else, these events demand prayer. Take a few minutes to pray. Please don't rush!

## Session Outline



### Revise

Revise the last lesson using the following questions (make use of the visual aids for younger children from that lesson):

- What did Jesus not want to do?  
[Take the punishment for sin (the cup)]
- Why did he do it?  
[To obey God (Mark 14:36)]



### Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

**Option 1** will probably only work for younger children.

**Option 2** is probably best for older children, but will also work in an all-age setting.

**Pose the questions** at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



### Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



### Game Idea

**Not essential.**

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Revise the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



### Discuss and Apply

**Not to be missed!**

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



### Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



### Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section above – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



### Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



### Introductory Idea

**Option 1:** For younger children, it would be fun to put a large curtain or sheet across one corner of the room. When children come into the room and see it, they will be desperate to see what's on the other side. You can help to build this anticipation by asking what they think might be behind the curtain. To be told that they are not allowed to pull back the curtain to see, will help make a bigger impact.

**Tip:** If there is no way of hanging a barrier in this way then simply place one table (or chair) upside down on another. Drape a sheet over the four legs of the upturned table (or chair) to create a special hidden space.

On the other side of the curtain (or in the hidden space) place the picture of the 'hands of friendship' and throne from page 24. Obviously nothing you put behind the curtain will ever be able to live up to

the expectation you have created. So, what you say when you eventually take the curtain down later in the session matters far more than the picture.

Tell them that the space inside the curtain is special and they may not go there or see what's inside. Briefly discuss other 'no go areas' the children may be familiar with. Is there a place or cupboard at home that their parents have told them not to go or look into? Why are they not allowed there?

In today's true story, we will see how Jesus broke the barrier between God and us. The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover:

- What was the barrier?  
[*The curtain (our sin)*]
- How did Jesus break the barrier?  
[*By dying on the cross (Mark 15:38)*]

**Option 2:** Piecing together the Cross. Print the cross puzzle on page 25 onto paper or card. You could print more than one on a few different coloured sheets and run the intro as a game between teams of two or three children.

Before the session, cut the cross(es) out and cut along the dashed lines to produce the puzzle(s). Place all the pieces for each cross in an envelope for each group.

In today's true story from the Bible, Mark showed that there are many different parts to the story of Jesus' death on the cross but they all come together to show us who Jesus is. Can the children discover:

- What happened as Jesus died?  
[*The curtain in the temple torn in two (Mark 15:38)*]
- Who realised who Jesus really was?  
[*A Roman centurion (Mark 15:39)*]



## Teaching Plan

It is good for the children to see the whole narrative leading up to Jesus' death, including his death and burial. The story can be broken into five or six scenes:

Scene 1: The Sanhedrin (14:55, 56, 61-64; key = vs.61-64)

Scene 2: Pilate (15:1-15; key = vs.10 & 15)

Scene 3: The Soldiers (15:16-20) **You could exclude this one for younger children if time is short.**

Scene 4: Crucifixion (15:25-32; key = v.31)

Scene 5: Death (15:37-39)

Scene 6: Burial (15:46-47; key = v.46)

You could set up different areas/walls of the room as different scenes of the story. Use props and pictures as you see fit. Move from one part of the room to another as you tell the narrative. You could use a cutout of a Jesus figure to move from place to place.

**For younger children** – it is a long passage, so don't worry about too much detail. Aim to get the general shape, colour and variation of the story by focusing on the key verses noted above.

You may even choose to only focus on the curtain with very young children – that is the most graphic and helpful to understand what the cross has achieved for us.

There is no need to dwell on the gruesome details of crucifixion, but it is fine to say that Jesus died and it hurt very much. Younger children are not upset by hearing that Jesus died. As always, they will take their emotional prompts from your tone and mood.

**For older children** – the key verses noted above could form the basis of a simple Bible study. Perhaps one question for each of the five or six key sections.

After looking at all the key texts above, get the children to think about the story as a whole and what it was like for Jesus.

How many different ways was Jesus hurt in this story? Get them to consider how it felt to be unjustly tried, mocked, rejected by the crowd, insulted by passers-by and doubted by everyone.

These examples are less obvious to children than the more obvious brutal physical pain of being hammered to a cross and starved of air.

Again, we dwell on the pain and hurt not to traumatise, but to understand the depth of pain Jesus endured for us. In particular, the greatest pain was experiencing fully the anger of God the Father on our sins – this was the only time he cried out. That is worth exploring briefly.



## Game Idea

**Option 1:** Chocolate game. Allocate different things to the numbers on a die e.g. 1. Pilate 2. Chief priests 3. The curtain 4. The crowd, 5. The centurion, 6. The soldiers. You could even make your own die with different pictures/words on the faces.

The children sit in a circle and they get a turn to roll the die before passing it on in the circle. If they roll 'the centurion' or 'the curtain', they can run to the middle, put on a few items of clothing (including a pair of gloves) and then try and eat some chocolate from a slab using a knife and fork. The child in the middle continues eating chocolate (one block at a time) until another 'centurion' or 'curtain' is thrown.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible, even though Jesus died a horrible death, the centurion and the curtain show us that Jesus is the Son of God and that he died so that we can be friends with God.

**Option 2:** Friends and Enemies. Play a game of tag where one child is the tagger and another is the rescuer. When a tagger touches a child they are an 'enemy' and are stuck on the spot.

When the rescuer touches an enemy, they shout, "Friend" and the child is free to run around again.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible, we saw that Jesus is our rescuer who died so that we can be friends with God.



## Discuss and Apply

There are two key aspects to this week's story:

1. The events of Jesus' death (negative): People rejected Jesus over and over again as the Christ/Messiah until he was eventually killed.
2. The explanation of Jesus death (positive): 15:37-39 unlocks the story. The centurion sees that Jesus is really the Son of God, and the torn curtain shows that his death allows people to be friends with God.

**For younger children** – the aim is for them to hear, understand and remember the narrative of Jesus' death on the cross. It would be good for them to understand the positive – Jesus is God's Son who came so we can be friends with God.

Do they understand that Jesus dies so we can be friends with God? Remind the children of the barrier from the Introductory Idea. Break through the barrier and produce the picture of the throne and 'hands of friendship'. Explain that the picture shows friendship with God which we can only have if the barrier is broken.

You could also personalise the problem of sin by using Lego bricks (or other building blocks). Build a wall and label each brick with a different sin. Ask the children to suggest what these might be as you build the wall.

Explain that when Jesus died, he took the punishment for all our sin (the way we treat God and the naughty things we say, think and do). Break down the wall you have built. Because Jesus takes the punishment, the barrier is taken away so we can be friends with God.

Help the children to also understand that the way we can be friends with God is by trusting that Jesus died for our sin.

**For the older children** – to revise the events of Jesus' death, you could go around the group asking each child in turn to think of one way Jesus was hurt. You may need to remind them that Jesus was not just hurt with nails and a hammer. He was also hurt by what people said. Finally, he was hurt by his father placing on him the punishment for the sin of the whole world.

Do the children understand which part hurt Jesus the most?

Ask the children to imagine they are proving to someone why Jesus died. They have to put together a file of evidence. Can they suggest the clues and what each shows us?

Do they see how Jesus' death makes friendship with God possible?

Explain visually how sin separates us from God. Use Lego bricks or wooden building blocks to build a physical barrier. You could get the children to each label a number of blocks with various sins.

Remind them of the previous lesson and how each of those sins needs to be punished. Because Jesus took the 'cup' (the punishment), the barrier is broken down.

Do they also understand that we are not automatically friends with God. We can only become friends with God if we trust in Jesus and his death.

What in this story do they find, shocking, surprising, amazing or unbelievable?

If Jesus was here with them, what would they want to ask him or say to him. This could easily lead to prayer.



## Prayer Idea

Give each child a square of paper that represents the temple curtain. They write (or draw) on the curtain something they have done in the past week that they know to be wrong.

Remind them that when Jesus died, he took the punishment even for the sin they have written down. Encourage an open prayer time where they pray about anything they wish.

As they start their prayer, they tear their piece of paper in half. The sound of tearing is a great reminder that the reason they are able to speak to God and have friendship with him is because Jesus died on the cross.

If some children do not wish to pray aloud, they simply tear their piece of paper and pray silently.





## Activity

**For 3-7s** – choose either Activity A (page 28) or Activity B (page 29).

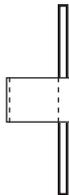
**Activity A** – print page 28 onto paper for each child. The children colour the picture. Remind them of the detail of the story using the pictures and words. You can also provide small pieces of fabric cut to fit the outline of the curtain. Tear or cut these down the middle and let the children paste these in place.

**Activity B** – make a centurion. Print page 29 onto card. You will need one copy for every two children.

You will also need one kebab stick for every two children. Make each kebab stick into two spears by cutting off the sharp end and then cutting them in half to produce two small sticks about 10cm long. Cut two aluminium foil triangles for each spear and glue them together at one end of each stick.

• **To assemble:**

- After the children have coloured the centurion, roll him into a tube and use glue to secure as indicated.
- Use a small amount of glue on the back of the shield in the middle. Attach the shield to one of the centurion's hands. By only gluing the middle, the shield will stand away from his body.
- Attach the spear to the other hand by using a small (1cm x 3cm) strip of paper wrapped and glued around the spear to create a tab. Glue this tab at an appropriate place so the centurion appears to be holding the spear.



**For 7-11s** – Print either Activity Sheet C (page 30) or Activity Sheet D (page 31) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



## Memory Verse

**For younger children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the soldier saw Jesus die, he said, "This must be the Son of God"* [Paraphrased]

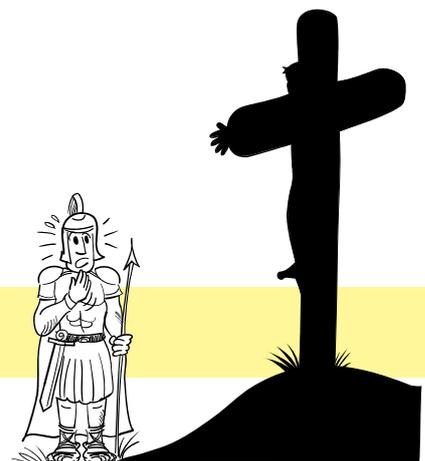
**For older children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"* [NIV]

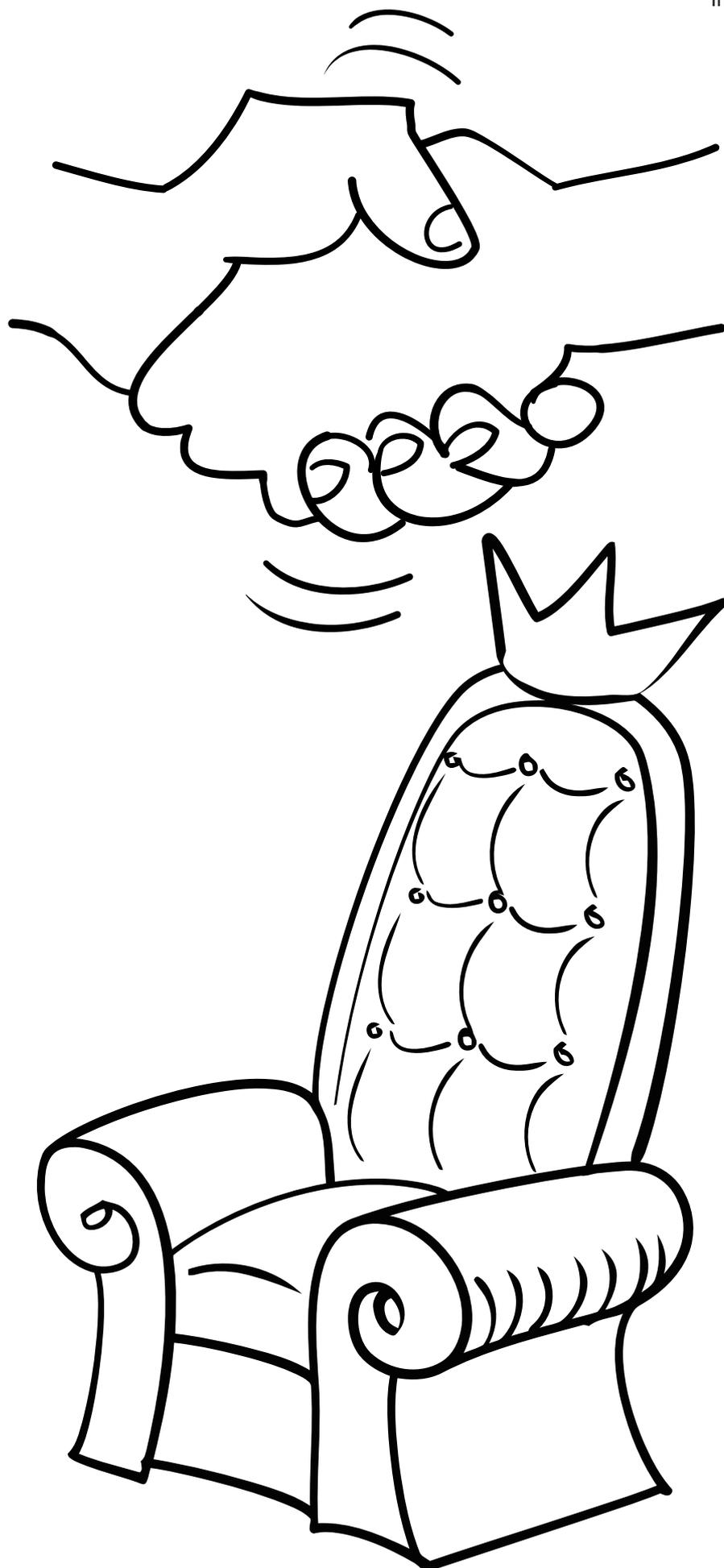
See if any of the children have already learned the memory verse from the previous lesson. Write the memory verse on the board (or repeat it a number of times for younger children).

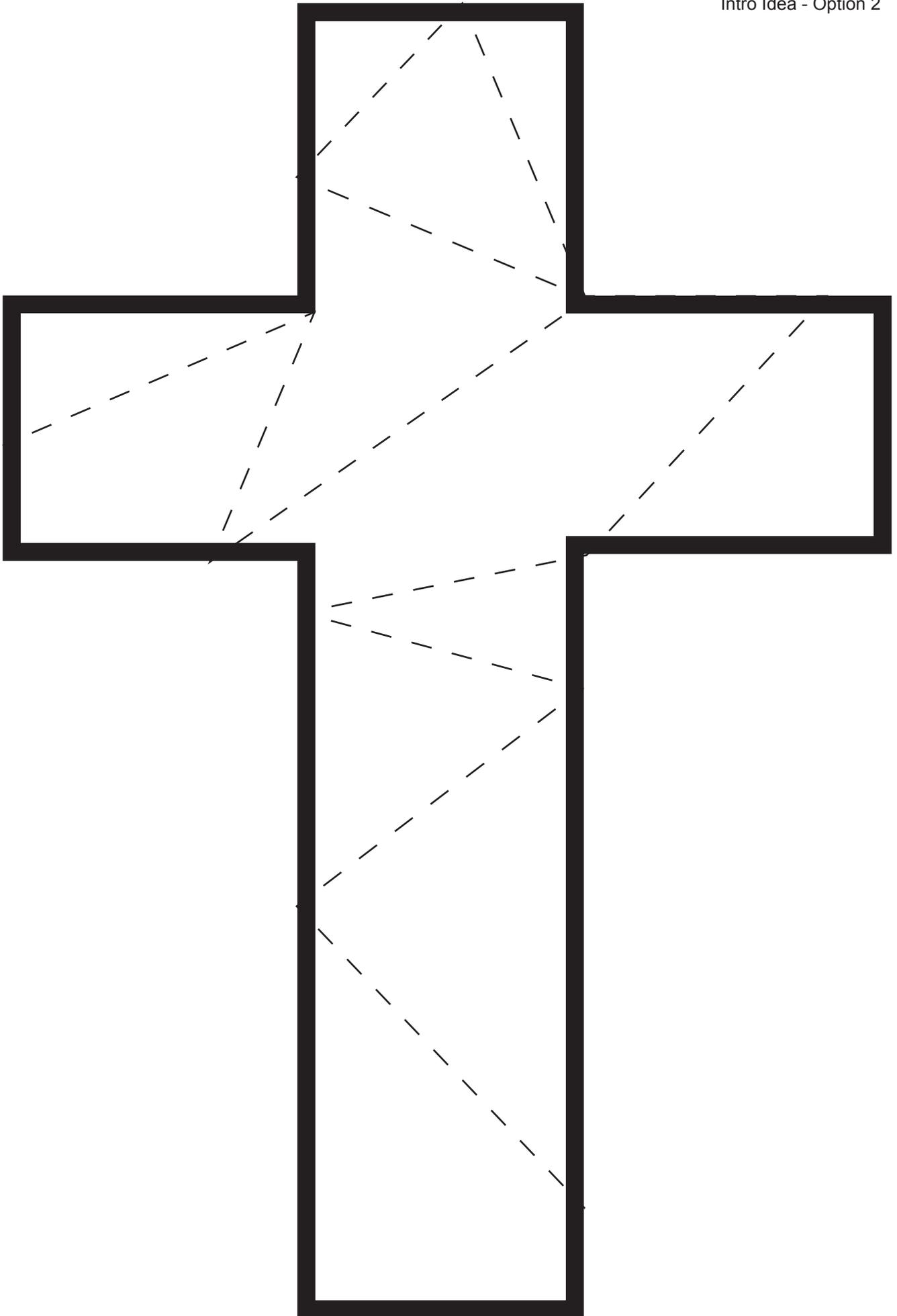
Get the children to stand in a circle and pass a ball around the group. The first child says the first word of the verse and then throws the ball to another child in the group. As each child catches the ball, they say the next word of the memory verse. Wipe the verse off the board after a few rounds.

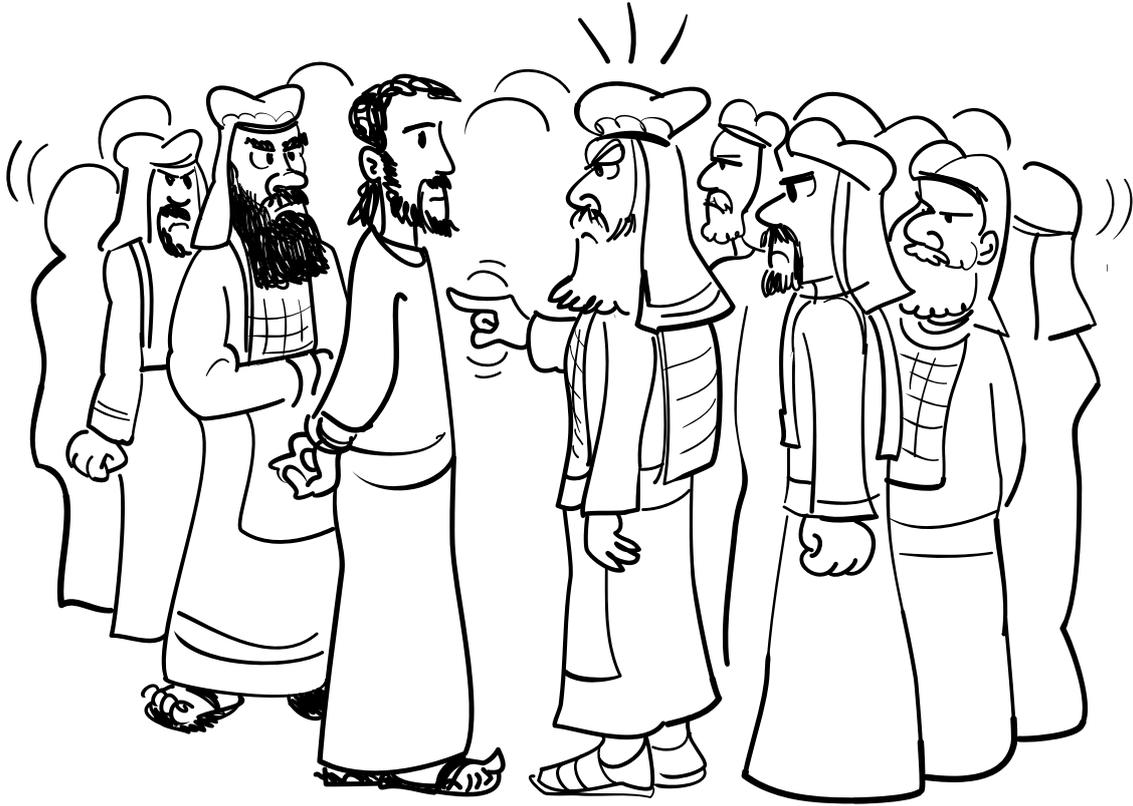
Add to the fun by timing how long it takes to get through the verse and see if they can set a new record every time they do it.

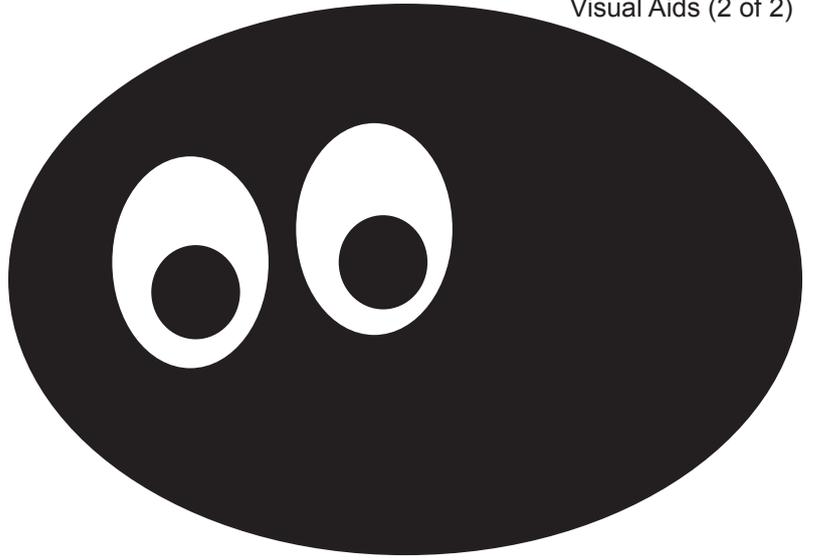
**For younger children** – start by simply passing the ball around the group from person to person. Once they start memorising the verse, you can get them to throw it around the group.





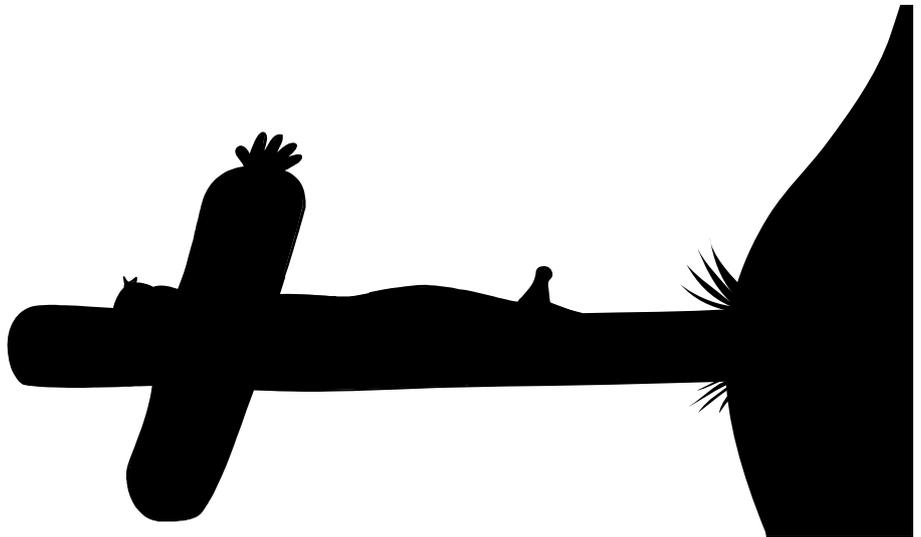


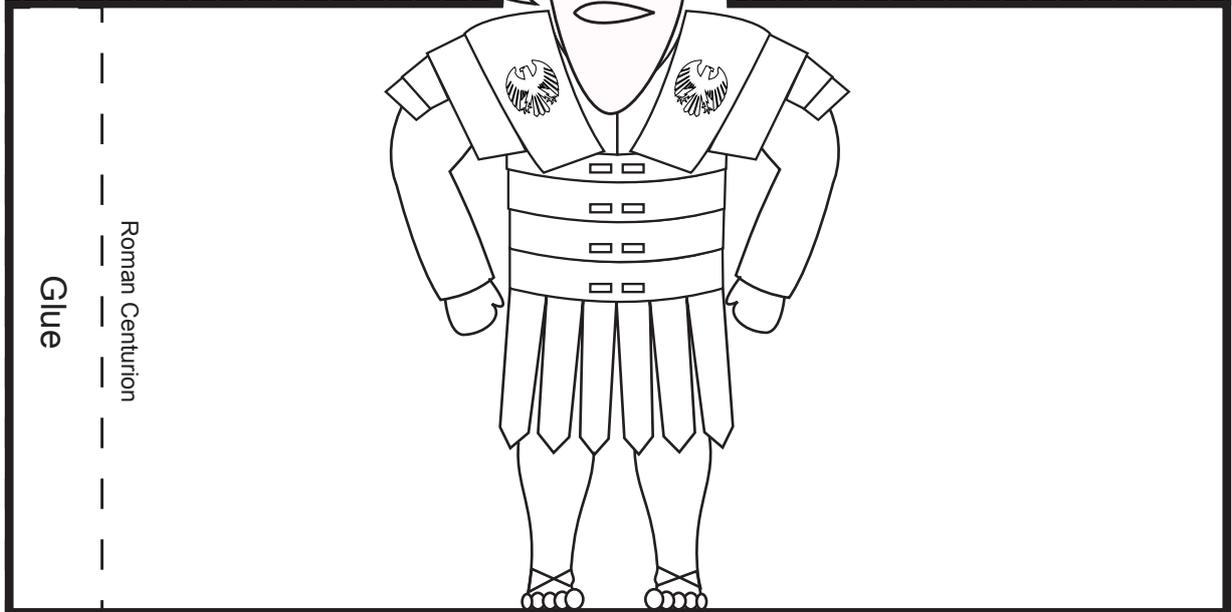
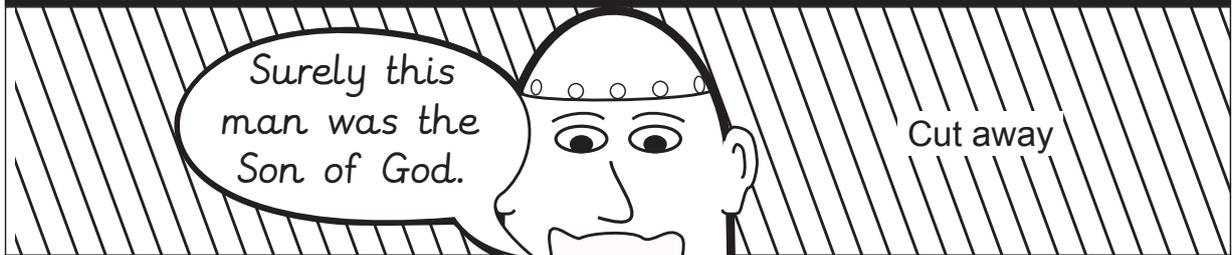
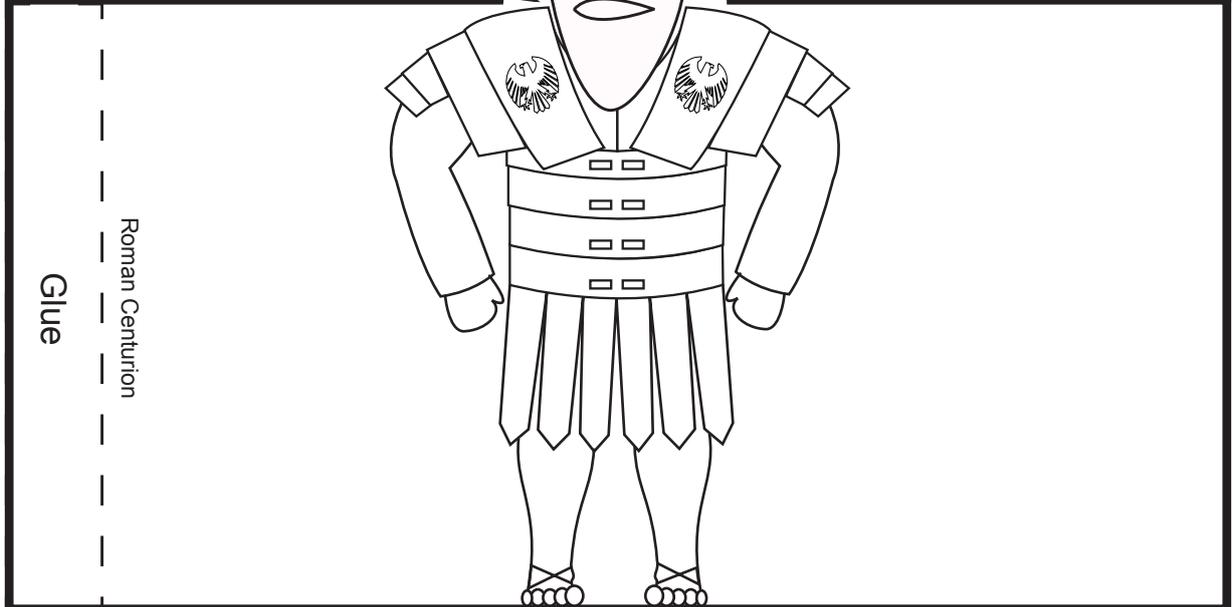




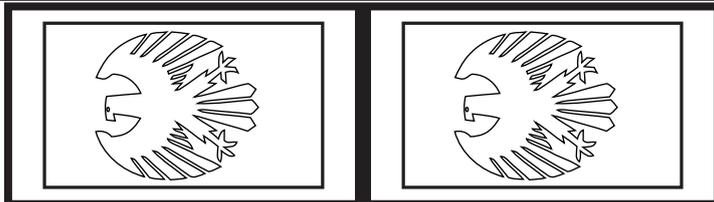
When Jesus died on the cross, the Temple curtain tore in two to show that we can be friends with God.

Mark 15:38



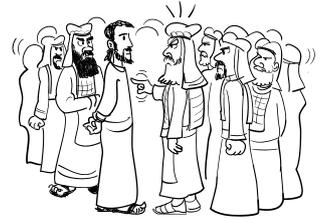


Shields



# The King's Cross

This true story can be found in Mark 14:55-65, 15:1-47



## Discover

Draw lines to connect the people to what they did to see why Jesus' trial was unfair.

- |             |                                     |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| Sanhedrin   | Said Jesus was blaspheming          |
| Pilate      | Looked for any reason to kill Jesus |
| High Priest | Didn't defend the lies against him  |
| Jesus       | Shouted, "Crucify Him!"             |
| Witnesses   | Scared of the crowds                |
| Crowds      | Lied about Jesus                    |



## Discuss

Could Jesus have defended himself? Why didn't he?

What made Jesus cry out in 15:34?

## Think Spot

When does the centurion realise who Jesus really is? Did Jesus look like a king?

When did the curtain tear?

What does this mean for you?

Fill in the centurion's speech bubble.

Do you agree with the centurion?



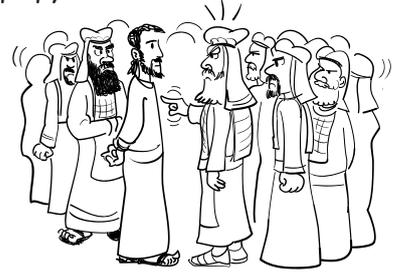
# The King's Cross

This true story can be found in Mark 14:55-65, 15:1-47

## Discover

Why was Jesus' trial not fair? (14:55-57)

---



Why did the high priest tear his clothes? (14:61-64)

---

What did Pilate think Jesus was guilty of? (15:10, 14)

---



Why did Pilate agree to crucify Jesus? (15:15)

---

## Discuss

Could Jesus have defended himself? Why didn't he?

Of all the things that happened to Jesus, which do you think was the hardest? What is it that finally makes Jesus cry out?

## Think Spot

At what point does the centurion realise who Jesus really is? Why is this strange?

At what point does the curtain tear? What does this mean for you?

Fill in the centurion's speech bubble.

Do you agree with the centurion?



## The King's Alive

Mark 16:1-8

**Big Idea :** On the third day after Jesus died, the women found his tomb empty and an angel told them Jesus had risen just as he had said he would.

**Aim :** To see that Jesus' resurrection proves he has taken our punishment and is able to give us life forever.

### The Story So Far

#### Week 1

- Jesus knew that on the cross he would experience the 'cup' of God's anger for sin and that it would be awful.
- He prayed for God to take it away, but this was not possible. He went obediently to the cross.

#### Week 2

- Jesus was unfairly tried by the Jewish leaders. Pilate was too weak to release Jesus even though he knew Jesus was innocent.
- As Jesus died on the cross, he received the punishment for the sin of the world, the just wrath of God the Father.
- His death made it possible for us to be friends with God, the torn curtain in the Temple shows this.

the heavy stone up the hill and away from the entrance. It would have been a huge surprise to see the stone rolled away.

16:5 The women are "alarmed" because they do not see what they expect. They see a "young man dressed in a white robe" instead of Jesus' body. Matthew, Luke and John explain that the man was an angel.

16:6 The young man (angel) explains why there is no body – "He has risen". He was dead, but now he is alive again and his body has been transformed.

"See the place where they laid him" – this is further evidence for the resurrection. "The place" refers to the slab on which Jesus' body had laid and on which the angel was now sitting. Clearly Jesus' body was gone.

16:7 The disciples had deserted Jesus when he was arrested and Peter had denied him at the high priest's palace. This message implies that they can be forgiven and be reinstated as his disciples.

"There you will see him" – the disciples had to see Jesus before they could be witnesses to the resurrection.

"Just as he told you" – this refers to 14:28 where Jesus told the disciples that he would go into Galilee after he was raised. Jesus fulfils this in John 21 where he meets with disciples on the seashore in Galilee as the risen Lord. His death was not a mistake, but all part of God's plan.

16:8 The women did not understand the significance of what they had seen. They were shocked and afraid, as you would expect.

It may not be clear from this passage how the resurrection of Jesus applies to us. Some other New Testament passages make it clearer.

From John 11:25 it is clear that Jesus is the only one who has conquered death. If we want to live after



### Leader's Study Notes

Read Mark 16:1-8 noticing what happened and what these verses tell us about God and Jesus.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

In 15:42-47 Mark gives evidence to confirm that Jesus was definitely dead and buried. The centurion's job was to ensure a successful execution and he reports this to Pilate. Joseph buries Jesus in a new tomb and Mary witnesses this. There is no room for theories of Jesus fainting or that his body was stolen. It would take a miracle to save Jesus from this state.

16:1 Jesus was buried late afternoon (Good Friday) after the crucifixion (15:42). He rose on the morning after the Sabbath (Easter Sunday).

16:3-4 The stone was easy to roll down hill by one person until it lodged in place; but they would have needed several men to move

death we need to know and trust in him. We can be very sure that Jesus' words can be trusted because he has proved that he is able to do what he says he will in Mark 16.

In 1 Corinthians 15:17-20 Paul makes it clear that the Christian faith stands (or falls) on the fact of the physical, historical resurrection of Jesus.

The resurrection proves that his death was enough to fully satisfy the debt of sin. If he hadn't risen, we would still be stuck with our problem of sin and death.

Paul makes a clear connection between Jesus' resurrection in the past and the future resurrection of believers. Jesus was the first to rise, and we can follow him and be raised to life if we trust in him.

### Reflect

- How would Christianity be different if Jesus didn't physically rise from the dead?
- How does the fact of the resurrection help you in the following areas:
  - Trusting Jesus' words?
  - Dealing with the guilt of sin?
  - The reality of death?
- Give thanks to God for the living hope that we have because he raised Jesus to life.

## Session Outline



### Revise

Revise the last lesson using the following questions (make use of the visual aids for younger children from that lesson):

- What was the barrier?  
*[The curtain (our sin)]*
- How did Jesus break the barrier?  
*[By dying on the cross (Mark 15:38)]*
- Who realised who Jesus really was?  
*[A Roman centurion (Mark 15:39)]*



### Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

**Option 1** will work with older children or an all-age group.

**Options 2 & 3** will work with any age group.

**Option 4** is particularly fun for a large all-age group.

**Pose the questions** at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



### Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



### Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Revise the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



### Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



### Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



### Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section above – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



### Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



### Introductory Idea

**Option 1:** The full story – discuss any current series of films where a second or third part is due to be released. The story wasn't finished in the previous film, there is still more to come. Or read a brief children's story (perhaps a Mr. Men type book), and just stop reading before the end.

In today's true story from the Bible, we will see that the last part we heard about (Jesus' death) was not the end. The Jewish leaders and the Roman soldiers thought it was the end. Even Jesus' friends, the disciples, thought it was the end, but the best was still to come.

**Option 2:** The unexpected – prepare several containers where what is written on the container differs from the contents, e.g. coffee in a tea tin, cheese in a cake tin.

Ask the children to guess what is inside the tins. Display the contents to see if they were right. The contents are unexpected. In today's true story from the Bible something unexpected happened.

**Option 3:** Empty – certain chocolate Easter eggs contain a toy (like a Kinder egg). Buy two of these and find an ordinary egg about the same size.

**Before the session:** Make a pin hole in each end of the ordinary egg and blow the yolk and white out of the egg. Wrap the empty egg in the foil wrapping of one of the chocolate eggs – you get to eat the unwrapped chocolate egg!

In front of the children, unwrap the chocolate egg and explain that the best thing about these kinds of eggs is the surprise in the middle. Show the toy.

Show the wrapped egg, and say it has an even bigger surprise. Unwrap the real egg, and explain that Jesus' body was placed in the tomb, and the surprise that Jesus' friends found was that it was...*crack open the egg...empty.*

**Option 4:** A variation on Option 3. Simply use a box of six ordinary eggs, one of which has been emptied as described in Option 3.

Make up a scenario where one of the leaders must pay a forfeit. The forfeit is to have an egg cracked on their head. Get the leader to sit on a chair in front of the group and show the children the box of eggs. It will be more effective if the leader doesn't know that the egg you're going to use is empty.

Ensure you use the empty egg! The leader will be relieved when they discover this – the children will, no doubt, be disappointed!

In today's true story from the Bible the disciples were expecting something terrible (seeing Jesus' body in the tomb) but they found something wonderful.

**For any of the above options** use the following bridge into the lesson. As we go through today's true story from the bible, think about these questions:

- Who discovered the big surprise?  
*[Mary, Mary and Salome (Mark 16:1)]*
- What were they told?  
*[Jesus had risen from the dead (Mark 16:6)]*



## Teaching Plan

When working with children who are familiar with the Easter story, it's nearly impossible to recreate the expectation and the surprise of the empty tomb. This may be possible with very young children and those who are unchurched.

The focus of this lesson will therefore be on the implications of the resurrection.

There are two sections to the passage:

1. The Expected: The women go expecting to find Jesus' dead body (16:1-3)
2. The Unexpected! The women find the stone rolled away, an empty tomb and an angel with a message (16:4-8)

**For younger children** – track the emotions of the three women through the story. Perhaps use enlarged versions of the faces on page 38. You can interrupt the story at verses 1, 4, 5, 7 and 8 to ask the children how they think the women felt and why.

You could also narrate the story from the perspective of the three women (three leaders). Children who are familiar with the story will be caught up in the story and will relive the expectation and surprise through the characters even though they know what to expect.

It would be an emotional account. They would have been sad and without hope as they walked to the tomb that morning since they had witnessed Jesus crucifixion and burial.

The mood would switch to confusion, surprise, amazement and fear as they encounter each piece of evidence that Jesus had risen (stone rolled away, empty tomb, angel's message).

You could ask questions like:

- Do you think the three women could have moved the heavy stone?
- How do you think the women felt when they saw the angel?

**For older children** – you could approach the story as detectives. In this way you can equip the children to help their unchurched friends see the resurrection as an historical event that requires a response.

Raise some common objections and see if the children can find reasonable answers from the passage.

Objections might include:

- Jesus didn't really die. (15:44-45)
- The women went to the wrong tomb. (15:47)
- The women hid the body. (16:3-4)
- The women made up the story. (16:8)

Another piece of evidence to note is the connection made between the resurrection and the trustworthiness of Jesus words (16:7). This all happened the way Jesus said it would (Mark 10:32-34).



## Game Idea

**Option 1:** A simple game for very young children. The children all lie on the floor, motionless as though dead. The lights in the room are turned off. Tell the children that when the lights go on (sunrise), they must jump to their feet and shout, "He is risen!"

You could repeat this a number of times. The first person standing in each round, receives a point. Award a small prize at the end.

Remind the children that when the women got to the tomb early in the morning Jesus had already risen from the dead.

**Option 2:** For those who do not have much space to move around. Write a quiz based on the story you have just taught. Setup a basic game board that has a 'start' block, five or six places and an end block.

The end block is covered by a round piece of paper made to look like a tomb stone. You will also need one marker per team. The first team to get to the tomb stone gets to move the stone to discover what's behind it (nothing!)

Remind the children that the angel said that Jesus was not there, he had risen from the dead.

**Option 3:** Play 'Grab the Flag'. Divide the group into two teams and have the children lie next to each other, flat on their backs in their teams at opposite ends of the room.

They lie with their feet towards the centre of the room and their eyes closed. Number each team off and ensure the children all know their number. Place a piece of cloth (which you may want to call, 'grave clothes') in the middle of the room.

To run the game, call two random numbers. Tell the children that you will call the number from Team A first and then Team B. Neither are to move until you say, 'Go'. The aim is to grab the cloth and get back to their space. If this is achieved, they earn two points for their team. If they are tagged before they get back to their space, the other team gets one point.

**Tip:** To ensure that all the children get a turn, write the numbers in two columns on a piece of paper and cross the numbers off as you call them. It's then easy to see who has already had a turn.

**Option 4:** Play Possible/Impossible. Have the leaders say things that can be done. Make up some obviously ridiculous things (e.g. swim across a river of crocodiles). Mark one wall, 'Possible' and the opposite wall, 'Impossible'. The children need to run and touch the relevant wall after each statement. Include "Raise someone to life" as your last statement.

In today's true story from the Bible, Mark showed us that Jesus did the impossible and rose from the dead.



## Discuss and Apply

This lesson cannot be disconnected from the previous one. Jesus said that he would die and rise again. He does both of these. These two aspects can be seen as:

- The Defeat (previous lesson): We saw the truth that Jesus, the Son of God, suffered and died so that we can be friends with God. It seemed like a massive defeat.
- The Victory (this lesson): We see the truth that Jesus didn't stay dead and buried, but he rose and is alive. Jesus' victory over death shows that his death really did pay for our sins and we can trust that he has power to forgive our sin when we trust in him.

**For younger children** – it is enough for them to hear, understand and remember the story. Help them to see that it is true that Jesus rose, and that it was an amazing miracle.

Assure them, with great enthusiasm, that Jesus is *still* alive. Because he rose again to live forever, we know that will live forever as well, with him. Easter day is the best day ever!

Ask the children to remember how the women felt when they found out Jesus was alive. How do the children feel?

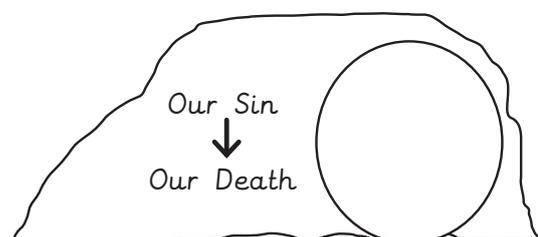
**For older children** – especially those familiar with the story, spend more time exploring what the resurrection means for us today. The resurrection proves a number of things about Jesus. This lesson focuses on one aspect – the effectiveness of Jesus' death in taking our punishment.

Start by asking the children to remember the facts of the story. You could just ask them for the facts or you could do this imaginatively by writing out some sentences, leaving a few blanks for them to complete. You could also give them the facts in simple sentences on pieces of paper and get them to sort them in the right order. This should only be brief.

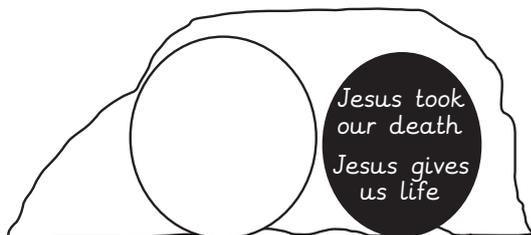
We want to discuss how Jesus' new life shows that the punishment for our sin has been removed forever.

The punishment for our sin is death, but Jesus died in our place. Those who trust in Jesus' death have had their punishment taken away by Jesus.

On a simple sketch of the tomb (as below) explain that if Jesus died and stayed dead, then our rescue was not complete. Jesus had not won. Write "Our sin" and "Our death" on the side of the cave. Our sin would still be our's and our death would still have to come.



But if Jesus rose again, and the tomb was empty, then (roll a simple cut out of the tomb stone to cover “our sin” and “our death”). In the empty tomb we now see what Jesus’ life means for us – our punishment is gone. Instead of death we can have life forever.



Perhaps finish by simply asking, “What difference does it make to us that Jesus did rise again?”

- What difference does it make when we feel awful about things we have said or done?
- What difference does it make when we’re worried about death?
- What difference does it make about how we feel about Jesus?
- What difference does it make when we worry that Christianity might not be true?



## Prayer Idea

**Before the session** cut out a number of egg-shaped pieces of paper in various colours – one for each child.

On each egg write (or draw) one of the aspects that have been taught in this series. This might include a cup (Jesus’ obedience to his father), a cross (Jesus’ death in our place), the curtain (separation from God) etc.

Hide these eggs around the room before the session starts. When it comes to prayer time, get the children to hunt for the eggs. Once each child has one, sit down together to pray. Each child prays about the aspect of Easter on their egg. You will need to explain the pictures for younger children, or read and explain the phrase for younger readers.



## Activity

**For 3-7s** – choose either Activity A (page 39) or Activity B (page 40 and 41).

**For Activity A** – print page 39 onto paper for each child. The children colour the picture. They could also embellish the picture by gluing a few strips of linen onto the pile of grave clothes. Although this is not mentioned in Mark’s gospel, it is mentioned in Luke’s account.

**For Activity B** – print page 40 and 41 onto paper for each child. You will also require one split pin paper fastener for each child.

**Before the session** – cut the grey areas away from page 40 with a craft blade.

The children colour the picture and cut the big circle out from page 41.

Help them to place the circle behind the main picture and secure with a split pin paper fastener as marked.

The children turn the circle to see the body and stone disappear and the angel and women appear.

**For 7-11s** – Print either Activity Sheet C (page 42) or Activity Sheet D (page 43) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



## Memory Verse

**For younger children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the soldier saw Jesus die, he said, “This must be the Son of God”* [Paraphrased]

**For older children:** Mark 15:39 – *When the centurion, who stood there in front of Jesus, saw how he died, he said, “Surely this man was the Son of God!”* [NIV]

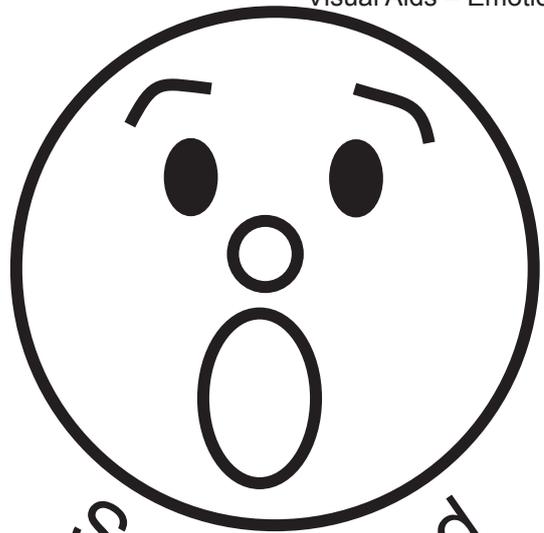
By now, all the children should have memorised the verse. Divide the children into groups of four or five and give them a few minutes to think of some actions to go with the key words in the verse. Let each group perform the actions whilst saying the verse for the rest of the group.







Happy



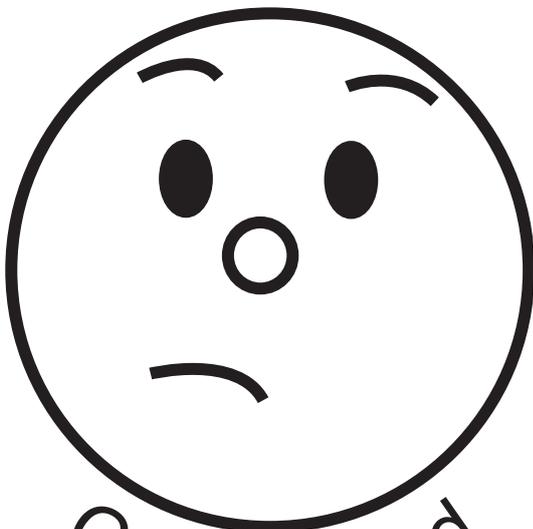
Surprised



Sad



Scared



Confused



Angry

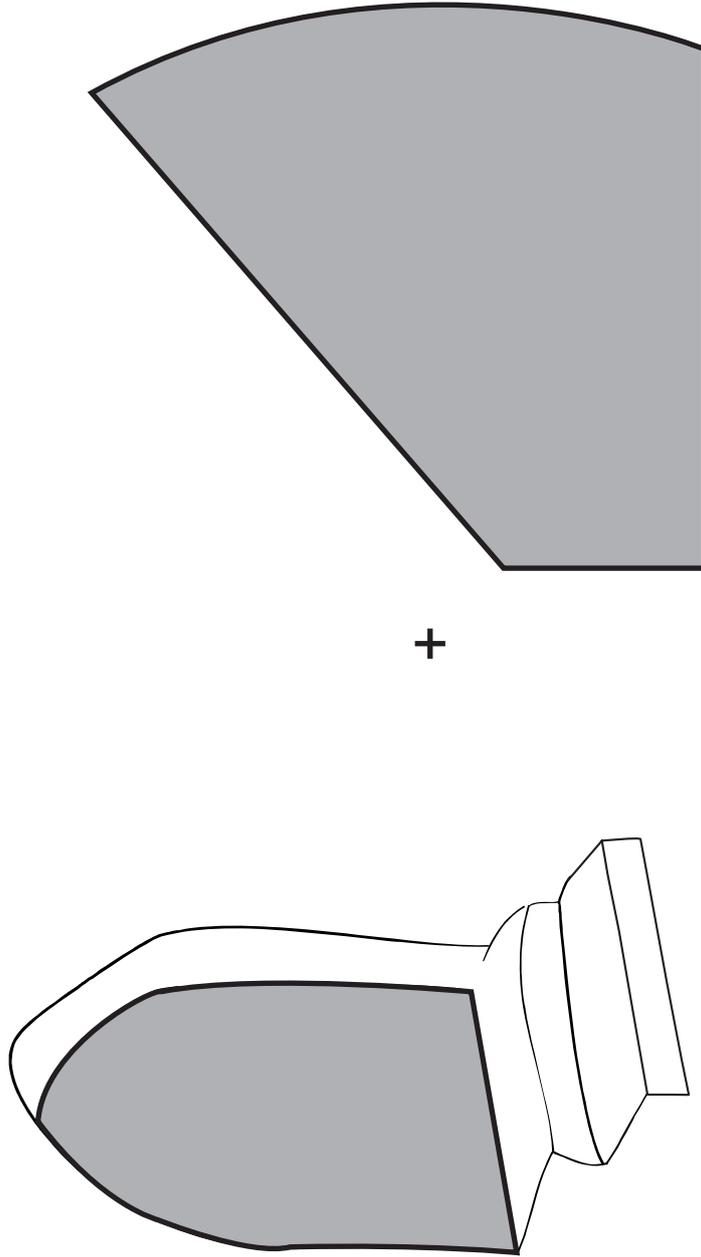
Mark 16:1-8

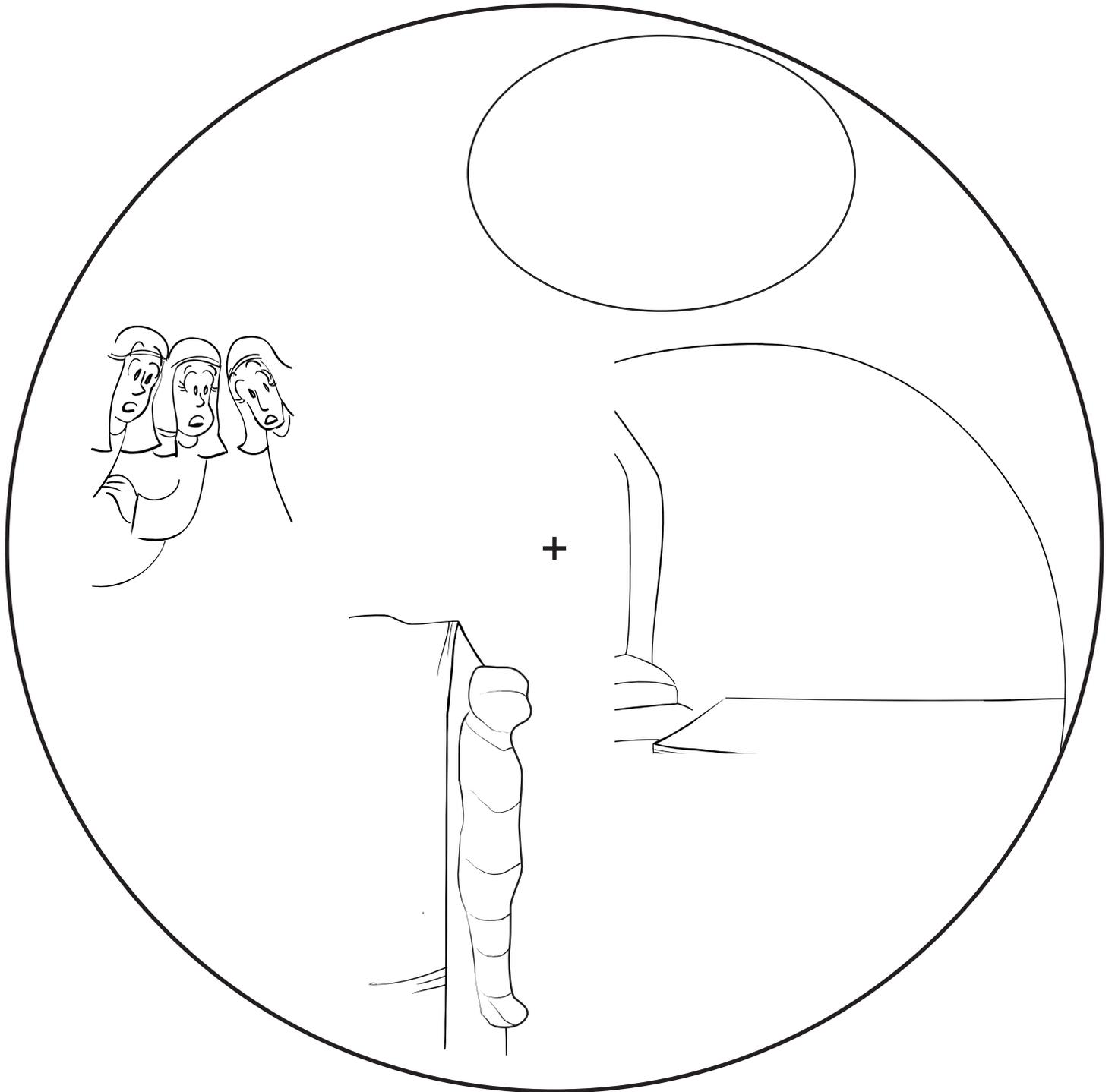
When they went into the tomb, they saw a man.  
He said....



Mark 16:1-8

When they went into the tomb, they saw a man.  
He said, "Jesus is not here, he is alive again!"





# The King's Alive

This true story can be found in Mark 16:1-8

## Discover

Cross out all the wrong words below.

Jesus **was** / **wasn't** really dead when they took him off the cross (15:44-45).

The two Marys **were told** / **saw** which tomb was used to bury Jesus (15:47).

The women **could** / **could not** have moved the stone because it was so **light** / **heavy** (16:3-4).

The women were **alarmed** / **angry** because they expected to see Jesus' body, but discovered it was gone (16:5).



## Discuss

How does the resurrection help us to trust Jesus' words? (16:7)

Death is the price that Jesus paid on the cross for our sin. If Jesus is now alive, how much of the punishment still needs to be 'paid'?

## Think Spot



How does knowing that Jesus really did rise from the dead help you when:

You feel awful about something you have thought, said or done?

You worry about dying?

You worry that Christianity might not be true?

What is the most exciting thing you have learned about Easter that you could share with a friend?

# The King's Alive

This true story can be found in Mark 16:1-8

## Discover

How do we know:

That Jesus really died? (see 15:44-45)

---

That the women knew which tomb to go to? (15:47)

---

That the women didn't move the body and make up this story?

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## Discuss

What does the resurrection prove about Jesus' words? (16:7)

The Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:17 that if Jesus has not been raised to life our faith is a 'waste of time' and we are still in our sins. Why is this so?

## Think Spot



How does knowing that Jesus really did rise from the dead help you when:

You feel awful about something you have thought, said or done?

You worry about dying?

You worry that Christianity might not be true?

What is the one thing about the whole Easter story that gets you most excited? How would you tell a friend?