

Focus: The cross as a sign of God's love for all of us

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1
- Gospel: In lesson plan
- Clear jar, paper strips, paper cross
- Book: 100 Bible Stories and 100 Bible Songs

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how to be peace-filled people by getting to know one another. This week we will hear a story about how the cross is a sign that God's love wins all the time.

Opening Prayer

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.

Let us pray,

Dear God, you sent us Jesus to show us how much you love us. Help us to remember your love and show your love to others. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Song/Movement

Praise Him, Praise Him, All Ye Little Children, track: 29, from [Bible Songs for Kids Vol. 1](#)

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Replace Praise Him, Praise Him for verses 2-4 and repeat Praise Him on the final verse.

Praise Him, Praise Him
All ye little children
God is love, God is love

Love Him
Serve Him
Thank Him
Praise Him

Memory Verse

Say: Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.

God loved the world, he sent his only Son.

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: We believe that God created the whole world and everyone in it. We might see God when we see something beautiful, like a rainbow or a beautiful fall tree. We also see God is with us in the love and generosity of other people. We believe that all humans are created in God's image. That means

that God is in each of us and God is in other people we meet too. God has given us many gifts. He even gave us his only Son, Jesus, as a gift.

Gospel Story

Say: Today we are reading from the Gospel of John.

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

Read: None, pp. N/a,

Jesus said:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“No one has gone up to heaven

[Point upward]

Except for the one who has come from heaven.

[Make a motion from above to the ground]

Everyone who believes in him

[Put your right hand over your heart]

May believe in eternal life.

[Point upward]

God loved the world so much

[Give yourself a hug]

That he gave the world his only Son.

[Spread arms open with palms facing up]

So that the people would not be separated from God.

[Trace tears down your cheeks, sad face]

But live with God forever.”

[Raise your arms in praise and smile.]

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

Discussion Starters:

- *Who does Jesus say has been to heaven?*
- *Who is the one that came down from heaven?*
- *Why did God give his only Son?*
- *What is our gift because we are followers of Jesus?*

Reflection on Reading:

God sent his Son, Jesus, to be with us because he wants to be in our lives. He wants good things for us, and our family and our friends and everyone! He sent Jesus to show us the path from sin and death to life forever with God.

Some of you might remember the story when some people got so angry with Jesus and what he was teaching that they decided to arrest him and put him to death on the cross.

After 3 days, Jesus rose from the dead. He won! He made it possible for us to live with God for ever in heaven. He shows us the way to be with God for always.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

God cleans up our sins:

Do: Take a clear jar and show it to the children.

Say: See how clean and pretty this jar is? This jar is like us before sin.

Do: Take dark strips of paper, put them in the jar.

Say: See this dark colored paper? This represents our sins (when we make the wrong choice).

Whenever we know what is right, but choose to do what is wrong, we sin, (turn away from God).

The more we sin, the less clear the jar becomes. (The harder it is to see God).

Do: Close the lid.

Say: Now the sins are locked inside and they can't come out. (If the children suggest taking the lid off, tell them we can't do that with our sins, we can't clean it up ourselves).

This is sad. It would be very sad if we had to live this way all the time.

Do: Get really excited.

Say: But!!!! There is GOOD NEWS!! God can clean us up!! God can clean us up because of Jesus. God sent Jesus to give us a second chance!

Do: Point to the cross on the prayer table.

Say: Jesus, the Son of God, came to earth and died for our sins on the cross and rose from the tomb, so that God could forgive our sins and clean our hearts.

Do: Open the lid and take out the dark paper.

Say: Because of Jesus, God can and will forgive our sins, give us another chance to follow Jesus and keep our eyes on heaven. When Jesus comes into our hearts, sin goes out. Then our lives are different and new, because Jesus comes to live in our hearts.

Do: Put the paper cross inside the jar.

Say: God forgives our sins and He will never count those sins as ours again. When God looks at us, [Lift the jar] he only sees Jesus in us!!!

Activity 2:

Read **Jesus Loves You** page 136 in 100 Bible Stories and 100 Bible Songs

Play the song (For God So Loved the World-Disc 2-Track 16) Have the kids clap and/or hum as the words are removed from the song.

Remind them that God's love is always with us and there is nothing stronger than God's love.

Lyrics below:

Chorus:

For God so loved the world
God so loved the world
God so loved the world
He gave His only Son

repeat

Verse:

That whosoever believeth in Him, in Him
Should not perish but have eternal life
Amen

repeat chorus, repeat verse, repeat
chorus

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

Closing Prayer

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who has sent us the Son of God to save us?
Do you believe in Jesus, the Chosen One who died on the cross for our sins?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who fills us with life even after we die?*

Sending Forth

Say: Jesus was sent to us as a gift from God. We are called to live as he taught us. This week remember to be a gift to someone by helping them, give them a hug when they are sad, cleaning up our dinner dishes. Say a prayer to thank Jesus for being such a special gift.

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play "His Banner Over Me is Love." track 15 from Bible Songs for Kids Vol 1 while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.