

Focus: Sometimes it is hard to follow Jesus.

Materials:

- Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
- CD: Bible Songs for Kids-Vol 1
- Gospel: In the lesson plan
- Book: Why is There a Cross?
- Red/Green squares

Gathering (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about how Peter believed that Jesus was the Son of God and how we can learn to follow Jesus. This week we will hear Jesus tell his disciples some sad news, but it has a happy ending.

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,
 Lord Jesus, you teach us how to live and love. Help us to follow you in all we say and do. We pray 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

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:

- 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.

Take up your cross and follow me.

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

Say: Our crosses aren't like Jesus' cross. By taking the hardest cross for himself, Jesus made it easier for us to carry ours. We carry our cross by making good choices and living as Jesus teaches us. Sometimes it is hard to make good choices, but this is what we do because of our love for Jesus.

Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Matthew.*

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 began to tell his disciples:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“The time will come when I will have to carry a heavy cross, die and be raised to life again.”

[Mime carrying a heavy object on your shoulder]

Peter said:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“Do not let those people hurt you.”

[Stand with your hands on your hips with stern look]

Jesus answered him:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“Peter you are telling me to turn away from what God wants for me. Get away!”

[Emphatically point your hand toward the door.]

Jesus then turned to the other disciples and said:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers]

“Those who want to follow me will have to suffer hard times and carry their own cross.

[Mime carrying a heavy object on your shoulder]

The Father will send his angels and I will come to praise his glory.

[Raise your arms in praise]

Those who follow me even when it is hard, will live in perfect happiness with the Father forever.”

[Cross hands over heart]

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What is going to happen to Jesus?*
- *How does Peter feel about what is going to happen to Jesus?*
- *What does Jesus tell his disciples about following him?*
- *How will the Father reward those who follow Jesus?*

Reflection on Reading:

Peter got angry when Jesus said that he would have to die. He told Jesus not to let people hurt him. Peter loved Jesus and didn't want him to suffer. But, Peter did not understand that Jesus had to die so he could rise to new life. Jesus did understand what God the Father wanted him to do and how it would be best for God's people.

Sometimes it is easy to follow Jesus and sometimes it is hard. When it is hard we can remember how hard it was for Jesus to carry his cross and he can help us because he has risen and is still alive and with us always. Jesus teaches us to always be kind, share with others and wait our turn so that we can live with God in happiness forever.

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Read the book "Why is There a Cross?" Replace the word 'Easter' on page 42, with 'Jesus'.

Discuss with the children the blessings they have received from God. Examples: Family, friends, a home, food, Jesus, the Bible, clothes, church, love, kindness, joy.

Activity 2:

When we make good choices, we are following Jesus. Let's play a little game to practice making good choices.

(Use the colored paper squares) Have children raise Red for a bad idea (STOP), Green for a good idea (GO). These are just a few examples. Please make up some more of your own. (Can also use Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down)

- You see a friend crying so you just walk right by.
- You hear your parents talking so you wait patiently before asking a question.
- It is very late and you are tired, so you cry loudly and complain about everything.
- You don't really like peas, but you eat two more bites for mom.
- Time for bed, so you stomp your feet and say, "NO!"
- It is morning and everyone is waking up. You still feel tired, but you give a big smile and a hug good morning to your mom and dad.
- You give your unused toys to the homeless shelter
- A friend asks to play with your new game and you won't share.
- You help your mom and dad deliver food to the food bank
- A child at the playground makes a mistake and you make fun of them.
- There is a new kid at school and you ask him to play with you on the playground.
- You throw a temper tantrum when you don't get what you want
- Before you go home from a play date you help clean up
- Listen to your parent when they tell you it's time to clean up your room
- You don't pay attention at the grocery store and you hit someone with a shopping cart
- You run or skate around inside a store
- Visit someone in a nursing home
- Make a card for a sick friend
- You get mad and hit your brother or sister
- You help a friend who is hurt on the playground
- Join with others to pick up trash in the community.

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 gave us Jesus to be our teacher?
Do you believe in Jesus, who teaches us to be good followers of God?
Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us make the right choices?*

Sending Forth

Say: Remember to act like Jesus taught us. Say your prayers, be kind and helpful to others, share your toys. It's not about doing just one good deed but making all our actions good deeds.

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.