

Focus: The Great Sadness

Materials:

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth
Video: The Story of Easter
Book: The Beginner's Bible
Book: The Giving Tree
Book: The Donkey Who Served the King.
CD: Toddler Bible Songs

Gathering (have children sit on the floor—"Criss-Cross Applesauce")

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is _____. Last week we talked about our forgiveness and forgiving others. Today we are going to talk about Jesus' Death and Resurrection. Let's begin.*

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.*

Almighty Father, help us remember the love you have for us. We ask this through your son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in heaven forever and ever. Amen.

Song/Movement

SHOW VIDEO

Play: "The Story of Easter" video. Stop the video after the entrance into Jerusalem. (approx. 4 minutes long)

Main idea:

- *The people believed Jesus was going to be the new king. They put palm leaves in front of him and thought he should have a chariot not just a donkey. But they did not know that Jesus was not like all the other kings. He did not dress in fancy clothes or live in a fancy house. He was going to rule the Kingdom of God, where everyone takes care of each other. BUT*
- *Some of the leaders did not like Jesus, because the people were listening to Jesus and the leaders did not want to lose the power they had. They planned to get rid of him.*

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: The Beginner's Bible, pp. 482-485, *Sadness*

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

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

Discussion Starters:

- *What happened to Jesus?*
- *What had God planned?*
- *Did Jesus know?*
- *What is the surprise? (We celebrate next week—Jesus rose from the dead and lives in glory with God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in heaven)*
- *This is a hard concept for small children. Try to help them understand that the life Jesus is raised to is not like it is here on earth. In heaven everything will be made perfect and we will live with God forever.*

Gospel Activity

Activity 1:

Read “The Giving Tree”

Explain that just how the tree gave everything it could to the boy/man, Jesus gave everything he could to us so that all believers could live with him in heaven. Jesus loves us that much. We should always remember to live like Jesus wants us to as a ‘Thank you’ to him for loving us so much.

Activity 2:

If after completing the bulletin as a group, you still need another activity.

Read “The Donkey Who Served the King” —See last page for discussion points.

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 sent Jesus to give his life for us?*

Do you believe in Jesus, who did what God needed him to do and loved us so much?

Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who gives us the wisdom and strength to obey God?

Sending Forth

Say: *This week the whole church remembers what Jesus did for us. Jesus gave us a very special gift. You can remember what Jesus did by giving away a toy or book that you don't play with anymore to someone who does not have one, a friend, a brother or sister.*

Lining Up/Closing Song

Play “*Jesus Loves Me*” track 1 from Toddler Bible Songs 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.