

Jesus Loved Me First

Lesson Scripture: Matthew 27

Bible Truth: I love Jesus because He loved me first.

Bible Story Matthew 26-27

Bible Verse: "We love because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19, NIV)

FOCUS

Learning Activity: "Love Is a Reaction"

Preparation

Write the word "REACTION" on a poster board.

Materials
poster board
markers

Presentation

Start this activity by smiling at the children. Do it in a very obvious way! Most of the children will respond with a smile. Begin asking the children why they are smiling at you until someone replies, "I am smiling because you smiled first." Say: **I smiled at you and then you smiled back at me. That's called a reaction.** (Show the word REACTION written on the poster board.)

When it is time for a child to go to school, his mother usually says, "I'll miss you" or "I love you." How does the child respond? Allow children to answer. **Right, he usually says, "I'll miss you too," or "I love you too." The child is giving a reaction to his mother's words.** (Show the word REACTION again.) **The word reaction means to respond to something. You smiled because I smiled at you first. The child told his mom he would miss her because she told him she'd miss him first.**

In the Bible, Jesus showed His love for us in a special way. Let's see what our reaction should be to His love by learning today's scripture.

SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: 1 John 4:19

Preparation

Write 1 John 4:19 on a piece of poster board.

Explanation

Read the verse and say: **To whom is the word "He" referring?**

(Jesus) **Does anyone know how Jesus showed us His love?**

(He died on the cross for us.) **If you have never heard the story**

about Jesus dying on the cross for us, I am going to tell it to you today. What does the Bible verse say our reaction should be to Jesus' love? (We love Him in return.)

Materials
markers
poster board
one small ball for each group of
six children

Memorization Activity

Show 1 John 4:19. Read the verse together. Divide the students into small groups, no more than six in a group. Have children sit on the floor in a circle. The first child says the first word of the verse and rolls a ball to anyone in the circle. The child receiving the ball says the second word of the verse and so on. Allow the children to look at the verse the first few times they play. Then, remove the verse and see if they can do it on their own. Continue playing until each group can say the verse quickly.

INSTRUCT

Bible Story: "Jesus Died for Me," Matthew 26-27

Preparation

Read and study Matthew 26-27.

Write Romans 5:8 on a piece of poster board.

Materials
Bible
poster board
markers
30 silver coins (or a picture of
30 coins)
bowl filled with water
towel
crown of thorns (made out of
a plant or paper)
hammer
nails
wooden cross

Presentation

Tell the following story showing the items from the materials list when directed.

Say: Judas, one of Jesus' disciples, was a very greedy man. For a long time, he had been robbing the money that Jesus and His disciples used for food and lodging. Now he needed more money. He knew there was a way to obtain it. He had to turn Jesus in to His enemies.

Judas went to the high priest and asked him, "How much would you pay me to put Jesus in your hands?" The high priest agreed to give him thirty silver coins after Jesus was arrested. (Show 30 silver coins) From that moment on, Judas started to look for a way to turn Jesus over to His enemies.

Finally, the time came when Judas knew that Jesus would be alone with His disciples in the Gethsemane garden. "Arrest the man whom I kiss," said Judas to the soldiers. As they were approaching Jesus and His disciples, Judas ran to Jesus and kissed Him. "Hello, Master!" Immediately the soldiers seized Jesus and took Him to be judged.

Jesus was taken before Pilate, the Roman governor. The religious leaders were presenting many accusations against Him, but Jesus didn't even say a word.

Pilate asked the angry crowd what to do with Jesus.

"Crucify Him!" they shouted.

Pilate didn't believe Jesus was guilty. He didn't want to kill an innocent person, but the multitude kept shouting, "Crucify Him!"

Finally, Pilate asked for a bowl filled with water, and washed his hands before the multitude. (Wash your hands in the bowl of water) "I'm innocent of the death of this good man. You are all guilty." (dry your hands with the towel)

The Roman soldiers lashed Jesus. They tore His clothes and put a purple robe on Him. After this, they made a crown of thorns and set it on His head (show the crown of thorns), and mocked Him by yelling, "Hail, king of the Jews."

At the end, in the early hours of the morning, they took Jesus to a hill called Golgotha. There they nailed His hands and feet to a cross. (Hammer the nails into the wooden cross.) Jesus died after many hours of suffering. But before He died, He prayed to God, "Father, forgive them because they don't know that they have crucified Your only Son."

We learned in our Bible verse today that Jesus loved us first. There is another verse that reminds us of how Jesus showed us His love. (Show Romans 5:8). How did Jesus show His love for us? Yes, He died on the cross. Why did He do that? Our Bible verse helps us understand. It says that we are sinners. Sin is when we disobey God, and sin must be punished. The Bible tells us in Romans 3:23 that everyone has sinned. God can't let sin into heaven, so if we have sin in our life we can't get into heaven. The big problem is that we can't take away our own sin.

When Jesus died on the cross, he took the punishment for the sin of the entire world, even your sin. Even though Jesus took your punishment, in order to have him take away your sin, you must ask Him to forgive you of your sins. When you do this, Jesus takes away your sin and gives you eternal life! Eternal life means that when your life on earth is finished, you will go to heaven and live with God forever! The most awesome news is that Jesus did not stay dead. Three days after dying, he came out of the tomb where they had buried him. He is alive! You can meet Him in heaven one day.

What will your reaction be to the love of Jesus? He loved you first. Now will you ask for His forgiveness from sin and love Him? (Invite children who have not accepted Jesus as their Savior from sin to do so at this time. You can share with them I John 1:9 or Romans 6:23 to help them understand God's forgiveness and eternal life.)

APPLICATION

Learning Activity: Creative Writing, "Thank-You Notes"

Preparation

Give a pencil and a piece of paper to each child.

Presentation

Ask each child to write a thank you note to Jesus. The note can include words or drawings that express the gratitude of the child. For example:

Dear Jesus,
Thank you so much for loving me enough to die for me and for loving me even before I loved you.
Love,
(Name)

Materials

paper
pencils
crayons

MINISTRY TIME

Preparation

None

Presentation

Ask the children to place their thank you notes at the foot of the wooden cross used during the Bible lesson and say a prayer to Jesus. Keep the cross in the classroom until this unit is complete as a reminder of the love Jesus has for every child.

Materials

wooden cross used during the Bible lesson
thank you notes from the learning activity