

Review the last stories a bit, focusing more on the most recent story, Miracles.

- What patterns do you notice about God in these stories?
- Describe the kind of kingdom Jesus talked about.
- Which miracle that we learned about really sticks with you?

*Note to Parents/Teachers: You may want to talk about the meaning of the following words especially with younger children: arrest, riot, covenant, abandon, betray, plead, mob, execute, mock. This is not light reading!*

## Tell the Story *(Don't just read it—know it and bring it to life!)*

Jesus and his disciples traveled to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. The Pharisees and other Jewish leaders were becoming more and more upset with Jesus and his teachings. They looked for ways to trap Jesus into saying something so they could arrest him; but Jesus was too wise for them. Many of his stories pointed out the hypocrisy of the Jewish leaders – how they taught about doing things one way and then actually did them another, or without the right love in their heart for God.

Jesus said, “When the Pharisees and teachers share with you God’s commands, listen to them—but don’t follow their example. They don’t live out what they teach.”

The High Priest met with these leaders to discuss capturing Jesus and putting him to death. “We can’t arrest him during Passover,” they agreed, “or it will create a huge riot.”

Jesus and his 12 disciples met together in a home to celebrate the Passover. During the meal Jesus picked up some bread, thanked God for it, broke it into pieces. Giving it to his disciples he said, “Take this and eat it, this is my body given for you.”

Then Jesus picked up a cup of wine and thanked God for it. He gave them the cup and said, “All of you, drink this. It is my blood given for you—a new covenant between God and his people. It is poured out to forgive the sins of many. Remember me when you continue to eat and drink these things together.”

Jesus told them, “When you see what happens tonight you will all abandon me. It is part of God’s plan that I will be betrayed and die. But don’t fear, I will rise again from the dead!” He knew that his disciple Judas would betray him, bringing Jewish soldiers to capture him later that night when no one was around.

After the meal, when it was dark, Jesus went to pray. Filled with pain and sorrow, he pleaded with God, “Father, if there is another way besides my death, please let that happen—but I will do whatever you ask.”

Just as he had finished praying, Judas showed up with an armed mob. He greeted Jesus with a kiss—a sign to show the guards which one they should arrest.

Jesus said to them, “Am I a dangerous criminal that you need weapons to capture me? Why didn’t you arrest me in the Temple where I’ve been teaching everyday? No! This is part of God’s plan, just as the prophets predicted long ago.”

When the guards arrested Jesus and dragged him away, the disciples ran away and hid. The guards beat Jesus and brought him before the Jewish leaders for questioning.

They asked, "Are you the Messiah, the Son of God?"

Jesus answered, "I am, and you will see me seated next to God in power—coming back on the clouds of heaven."

When Jesus said this, the High Priest tore his clothing in horror and said, "Any man who claims to be God must be put to death." Then they slapped Jesus in the face and spit on him.

Since Jews could not execute anyone without official approval, Jesus was brought to the Roman governor, Pilate. The Jewish leaders stirred up the crowds and pressured Pilate to have Jesus put to death. They shouted, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate feared a riot would break out, so he handed Jesus over to the Roman soldiers to be crucified. Crucifixion was the cruelest and most humiliating way to die.

Jesus was brutally beaten and whipped by the soldiers. They put a crown of sharp thorns on his head and a purple robe around his shoulders. "Hail the King of the Jews!" they laughed. All night, the Roman Soldiers continued to beat Jesus and mock him.

When morning came, they led Jesus to a place called Skull Hill. Like a criminal, Jesus was nailed to a heavy wooden cross between two thieves.

Hanging there, he cried out, "Father, please forgive them, they don't know what they're doing."

At noon, darkness filled the skies blocking out the sun for three hours. Suddenly, the thick curtain hanging in the Temple tore down the middle!

At that moment Jesus shouted, "Father! I give you my life... it is finished." Then Jesus breathed his last breath and died.

The soldiers broke the legs of the criminals crucified next to Jesus to speed up their death. When they found that Jesus was already dead, they didn't break his legs. To be sure, one of the soldiers stabbed him in the side with a spear—blood and water poured out.

Late Friday afternoon Jesus' body was taken down from the cross, wrapped in long strips of cloth, and buried in a rich man's tomb. A large stone was rolled over the entrance to the tomb and Roman guards were posted to make sure nothing happened to his body. *(Pause here for a moment.)*

Early on Sunday morning, some of the women who followed Jesus went to prepare his body for burial. When they arrived at the tomb, they saw the stone rolled away and the soldiers were gone!

Suddenly, two angels appeared. They said, "Why are you surprised? You are looking for Jesus, but he is not here, he's been raised from the dead." The women were excited but afraid and hurried to tell the disciples the amazing news. Some of them ran back to the tomb and looked inside for themselves...

Jesus was not there!

## Retell the Story

This may seem redundant, but it helps you remember and own the story.

## Dialogue

These questions are a good start to draw out observations about the story.

- **Why was Jesus going to Jerusalem? What do we know about this celebration?**

- **Do you think Jesus had a choice in how he died?**
- **How does the Passover story we heard earlier remind you of Jesus' death?**
- **Why did the Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus?**
- **What did Jesus mean when he said, "Take this and eat it, this is my body given for you" and "...drink this. It is my blood given for you—a new covenant between God and his people"?**
- **What was God's covenant with his people? What do you think the "new covenant" is?**
- **Why do you think the curtain in the Temple tore in half? What did the curtain separate?**
- **How did Jesus fulfill the prophet's predictions about the coming Messiah?**
  - » He will be beaten, whipped, and wounded
  - » He will be put on trial and thrown in prison.
  - » His hands and feet would be pierced.
  - » He will be killed like a criminal, then buried in a rich man's tomb.
  - » God will lay the punishment and guilt for all of our sins on him.
  - » His life will be made an offering for us.
  - » Because of Him, many will be made right with God.
- **How is Jesus being raised from the dead significant? What does it show us about him?**

## Application (Optional questions that also work well in smaller groups)

- What questions do you have about the story? What do you wonder about?
- What will you remember most about this story?
- How does this story make a difference in your life?
- What do you see for the first time in this story?
- What amazes you the most about Jesus?
- How was Jesus' death part of God's plan?

## Scripture Memory Verses

The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified and on the third day be raised again. Luke 24: 7

Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. John 13: 1