

BAPTISM: PEOPLE IN COVENANT

Session 7

Jesus Died and Was Buried

FOCUS

Jesus died on the cross and was buried in a tomb provided by Joseph of Arimathea, his friend. The learners should be able to tell of Jesus' death and burial on Good Friday.

GETTING READY

From the Church's point of view, we are not leaving the theme of baptism behind as we turn to the sessions related to Holy Week and Easter. For in baptism we have been “buried with” Christ and raised up to new life. (That is the symbolism expressed by the apostle Paul in *Romans 6:4* and *Colossians 2:12*.)

These words from the Epistles are echoed in the prayer, Thanksgiving over the Water, in our service of Holy Baptism (BCP, p. 306): “We thank you, Father, for the water of Baptism. In it we are buried with Christ in his death. By it we share in his resurrection.”

The Easter Vigil has often been a time for baptism as far back as the early Church. Individuals spent three years preparing for baptism, with the final preparation occurring during Lent.

After the events of Maundy Thursday, including the Last Supper and Jesus' arrest and trial, Jesus died on the cross. Two followers, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, took his body and prepared it for burial with spices such as myrrh and aloë. Spices were placed between the cloth and the body to take away the odor of decay.

The two men wrapped Jesus' body in linen cloths and placed it in a tomb belonging to Joseph of Arimathea that was located in a garden. They also wrapped the head of Jesus in a linen napkin. Afterward, they covered the entrance to the tomb with a large stone. Tombs located in caves usually were sealed by stones to keep in smells and keep out animals.

Little is known of Joseph of Arimathea except that he practiced his Christianity in secret because he feared Jewish authorities. Nicodemus had come to Jesus previously and asked Jesus to teach him.

For primary-age children, we share the story of Holy Week and encourage their participation in the Church's enactment of the drama of Jesus' death and resurrection. This lays the foundation for their later understanding of baptism and new life in Jesus Christ.

Almighty God, we pray you graciously to behold this your family, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ was willing to be betrayed, and given into the hands of sinners, and to suffer death upon the cross; who now lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen.

Good Friday
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 221

TEACHING TIP

Primary-age children may have many questions about Jesus' death on the cross. They may ask, Why would anyone want to kill him? Who wanted him to be put to death? It will be important for teachers to think through proper responses. Stress the fact that it was “enemies” of Jesus who called for him to die. Avoid singling out individuals or groups as primarily responsible. (Christians understand that all humankind bears responsibility for the death of the Son of God.)

GATHERING

Display two crosses in the front of the classroom. Drape one with a black ribbon or piece of black cloth. Cover the second one with brightly colored fabric or ribbons, or tissue flowers. By the side of each cross, post a large sheet of newsprint or posterboard. As the learners arrive, invite them to write words or draw simple pictures that express their feelings about each cross. (Younger learners may want to dictate words to older class members or the teacher.)

Gather the group, and say the Apostles' Creed (using Poster No. 11 in the Teacher's Packet):

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth. . . .
The Book of Common Prayer, p. 96

STORYTELLING *(Time: 10 minutes)*

Share the story of Jesus' death and burial on Good Friday. Open the Bible and show the learners where to find *John 19:38-42*. Read aloud verse 40:

“They took the body of Jesus, and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial custom of the Jews.”

Finish with the words: The word of the Lord.
The learners respond: Thanks be to God.

1. Begin by sharing in a few sentences the essential facts of Good Friday: Jesus was condemned to death and taken outside the city of Jerusalem to a hillside where he was hanged on a cross between two criminals. He suffered and died. (For children of primary-age, these facts require no elaboration.)

2. Describe the two men who were secret friends of Jesus: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (the same one who had come to Jesus at night to ask him questions about faith in God, as described in *John 3:1-21*). Both

were Jewish leaders. They took the body of Jesus after his death and prepared it for burial in a new tomb that belonged to Joseph. (You may want to tell about the spices used to preserve the body, including myrrh. Remind learners that myrrh was one of the gifts brought by the Wise Men at the time of Jesus' birth.)

3. Good Friday ends in deep disappointment for all the friends of Jesus. They remembered all that he had said and done. They could not understand why their Lord and Teacher was now dead.

4. Say the words of the Apostles' Creed that refer to the crucifixion of Jesus.

(The learners' book, *God's People Are Baptized*, chapter 7, describes the events of Good Friday. Remind the children that they can read this story at home.)

CREATING *(Time: 15-20 minutes)*

Option 1. Crayon Cross

Draw an outline of a cross (approximately 5 x 7 inches) on a sheet of construction paper. Invite the learners to use a black crayon to divide the cross into irregular segments, then color the segments with crayons or markers. The crosses may then be cut out.

Option 2. Stained Glass Crosses

Provide a supply of broken wax crayons. Invite the learners to shave a variety of colors onto a piece of wax paper to form a cross. (Use the side of a pair of scissors, a hand-held pencil sharpener, or a cheese grater.) When the crayon shavings are completed, place another piece of wax paper on the top and iron the wax paper at a medium temperature. This will melt the crayon and seal the two pieces of wax paper together. A cross shape can be cut out of the fused sheets.

EXPLORING THE STORY *(Time: 10-15 minutes)*

Option 1. Game, “Cross Puzzle”

Using the pattern on Poster No. 16 in the Teacher's Packet, copy a cross for each learner. The crosses can be cut to form a puzzle. Learners can use and reuse their cross puzzles. Trade puzzles with other learners for fun. Provide envelopes for taking them home.

Option 2. Puzzle, “Jesus Died and Was Buried”

Use Puzzle Sheet III.7 titled “Jesus Died and Was Buried.” Make copies for everyone in the class. Directions are given on the sheet.

This can be a class or small group activity, or learners may work independently.

Option 3. Seven Last Words

We can locate seven sayings of Jesus that were spoken from the cross. They are spread among the four Gospels. Invite the learners to find, in their Bibles, the seven “last words” of Jesus. These may be found in *Luke 23:34; Luke 23:43; John 19:26; Matthew 27:46; John 19:28; John 19:30; Luke 23:46*.

TALKING IT OVER (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Allow time for the learners to express their feelings about the events of Good Friday. Ask: What do you remember best from the story? How do you feel when you hear about Jesus' crucifixion? Why is this so important for Christians?

Think together about Joseph of Arimathea. Why would he want to provide a tomb for Jesus? What made him do this?

INQUIRING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Locate a crucifix, an icon, or another image of the crucifixion (such as a stained glass window, a painting, or a sculpture). Take the class to visit the place. Spend some time in quiet reflection. Ask learners to look at the object quietly and then close their eyes and remember it. Invite them to open their eyes and move to a new place to look at the same object. The learners may respond to this visit by drawing or painting their own feelings about Good Friday.

IMAGINING (*Time: 10-20 minutes*)

Share a story starter: “It was Saturday morning and everyone in Jerusalem seemed very sad. They were all talking about . . .” Invite the learners to use their imaginations and discuss how the story could continue. What might the people have gone on to say?

Individual response. The children can write their own endings or draw pictures. Encourage the learners to express their own thoughts. Avoid giving the impression that there is a “right” way to finish the story.

Group role play. Invite the learners to dress in biblical costumes (from the prop box). Individuals or small groups can choose to participate in one or more of the following scenes: people standing around looking at the empty cross, remembering the events of the day before; Joseph of Arimathea providing the tomb for Jesus' burial; a visit to the garden where Jesus was buried; or a scene of a group of children sharing stories of their friend Jesus.

MUSIC (*Time: 10-15 minutes*)

Sing with the *Children Sing!* tape “There is a green hill far away” (*The Hymnal 1982*, 167; *We Sing of God*, 31). Encourage the children to think about the words and mood of this Good Friday hymn.

CONTINUING ACTIVITY *(Time: 10-20 minutes)*

Easter Garden. Add more green plants and a few rocks to the Easter garden. Check on the progress of seeds, and add water if needed. Ask the learners: When the garden is complete, where will it be displayed so that others in the congregation may see it?

TAKE-HOME CARD

Card 25 has a picture of a Navajo cross, a Scripture verse, facts about the story, and a question to think about. Remind learners to add this card to their collection at home.

CLOSING

We thank you, Lord, for all the blessings of this
life.

Thank you for sending your Son, Jesus.

(Add intercessions)

We will exalt you, O God our King;

And praise your Name for ever and ever. Amen.

From The Prayers of the People, Form VI

The Book of Common Prayer, p. 393

All stand and say:

Teacher: Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Learners: Thanks be to God.

TEACHER'S REFLECTION

Were the children able to sense the sadness felt by the friends of Jesus after the crucifixion? What did the class members say about Good Friday? Have they gained a clear grasp of the link between Jesus' death and the good news of Easter?

LOOKING AHEAD

The next session is designed for use on Easter or a class session following. It focuses on the discovery of the empty tomb by Mary Magdalene. As you prepare to share with the learners, reflect on Easter joys you have experienced in your own life.