

JESUS' SACRIFICE

Objective

The children learn how Jesus sacrificed his life.

Contents

- Jesus' crucifixion and death (Luke 23:33-46; John 19: 17-30).
- Events at the time of Jesus' death (Luke 23: 44-45; Matthew 27:51-52, 54).
- The significance of Jesus' sacrifice for us.





Introductory
Remarks

1 The Death on the Cross

The following information about the crucifixion should only be used if the children ask about Jesus’ death on the cross. On no account should it be passed on to them so as to instill the children with a sense of fear.

Crucifixion was a very cruel punishment. The convicts were either nailed to the cross, or tied to it with ropes. When they were nailed to the cross, the nails were driven between the bones of the wrist. The nerve damage resulting from this, caused unbearable pain. The crucified was tormented by terrible thirst, splitting headaches, severe fever and a state of panic. The hanging position created breathing difficulties, and the convict was only able to elude death from suffocation by straightening up, using the nails driven through his feet as a support. The death throes were an alternating between raising and lowering the body, breathing difficulties and taking a breath, during the course of which fluid would accumulate in the thoracic and abdominal cavities. The process of dying could take several days, particularly if the condemned was only tied to the cross. To shorten the torment, death was sometimes hastened by smashing the thigh bones.

2 Jesus’ Sacrifice

The greatness and uniqueness of Jesus’ sacrifice is not due to the fact that the crucifixion was particularly cruel. Jesus’ sacrifice is unique because Jesus, being without sin, took death upon himself and thereby fulfilled God’s will.

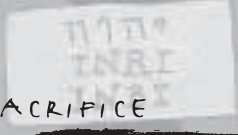
The focal point of the lesson is the greatness of Jesus’ sacrifice, and the Lord’s conduct during his suffering.

3 The Inscription on the Cross

According to John 19:20, the inscription on the cross was in Hebrew (probably Aramaic), Greek, and Latin. Exactly what it looked like, is not known. Only the Greek wording has been handed down. It was customary for the Romans to affix such inscriptions in abbreviated form.

The abbreviations could have looked like this:

■ In Hebrew/Aramaic: יהושע representing “jeschu^a hanozri w(u)melech hajehudim”,



Lesson Plan

Lead-In

Workbook, Theme Picture, Discussion

■ In Greek: $\text{ΙΗΣΟΥΣ ΝΑΖΑΡΕΤΟΥ ΒΑΣΙΛΕΥΣ ΙΟΥΔΑΙΩΝ}$ representing “
”,

■ In Latin: INRI representing “Iesus Nazarenus Rex Iudaeorum”.

It is remarkable that the Hebrew abbreviation is JHWH (Jahwe), which is the name of God. Consequently, the inscription on the cross also implies that Jesus is God.

Implementation

Teacher’s Presentation

The children look at the theme picture and describe it.

■ Jesus hangs on the cross. His hands and feet (not depicted in the picture) are nailed to the cross.

■ To Jesus’ right and left, two other men have been nailed to crosses.

■ The cross bears an inscription.

■ etc.

Crucifixion was a cruel death penalty, with which the Romans punished only slaves and horrible criminals. Roman citizens could not be crucified. Originally, a single stake, onto which the corpse or head of one who had just been executed was hung as a sign of public humiliation, was used for crucifixions.

Jesus was not guilty of anything, he was even without sin. He took the humiliating death by crucifixion voluntarily upon himself.

Workbook, Text

The children take turns reading the text, “The Crucifixion – the Sacrificial Death” in sections.

Workbook, Exercise 1

Thereafter, they work on the exercise.

Discussion

Discuss the following with the children:

■ On the cross, Jesus prayed for his murderers, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.”

■ Also while on the cross, he had to submit to derision and scorn.



Result

- To the repentant criminal who was crucified with him, Jesus said, “Verily I say unto thee, To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise.” This paradise was not the garden of Eden, but a place of bliss in the beyond.
- Jesus still thought solicitously about his mother while on the cross. He asked John to look after her.
- As a human being, Jesus had to bring the sacrifice all alone. Finally he could say, “It is finished.”

Even while dying on the cross, Jesus revealed an exemplary inner disposition.

Workbook, Exercise 2

Jesus’ death was accompanied by special signs. To elaborate, the children individually work on exercise 2.

Discussion

Afterwards discuss the following:

- Around noon, it became dark for three hours throughout the land.
- The curtain in the temple tore.
- There was an earthquake, and boulders cracked.
- The centurion and those accompanying him recognized, “Truly this was the Son of God.”

Teacher’s Presentation

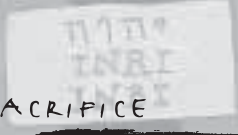
The curtain in the temple separated the (inner) most holy place, or holy of holies, from the (outer) holy place. When the curtain tore at the time of Jesus’ expiring on the cross, access to the most holy place was no longer impeded. This is symbolic of the fact that Jesus’ sacrifice provides for free access to God. At the same time, Old Testament sacrifices and offerings—particularly those brought on the Day of Atonement, the only time in the year that the high priest was allowed to enter the holy of holies—lost their effect as a result of Christ’s sacrifice.

The Son of God had been sent into the world by his Father with the commission to take the sins of mankind upon himself by bringing a fully valid sacrifice. The Lord fulfilled this mission of his own free will, and out of godly love for mankind.

Question Prompt

What meaning does Jesus’ sacrifice have for us?

A child reads the following aloud:



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