

LESSON 23

Take Up Your Cross

LUKE 9:18-27



BIBLE TRUTH

JESUS FACED THE CROSS, AND WE MUST FOLLOW HIM

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 9:18–27 from the Scriptures or read story 101, “Take up Your Cross,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Picking Up Your Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two large sheets of poster board
- ✓ four adults or teens

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Some Are Called to Give Up Their Lives

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ *Foxe’s Book of Martyrs* (You can also look up the following martyrs on the Internet: Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Pete Fleming.)

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Take Up Your Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ masking tape

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Who Do You Say That I Am?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

TOTAL 80 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jesus is called the Messiah—When Jesus delivered people from demon possession, many of the demons called Jesus the Son of God (Luke 4:41; 8:28). But now Jesus asks the disciples who the crowds say he is (Luke 9:18). The answers they give are all wrong. Then Jesus asks the same question of his disciples, “Who do you say that I am?” Peter, never one to hold back his opinion, answered, “The Christ of God.” (“Christ” translated means “Messiah”). Peter got the answer correct. Finally a descendant of David had come who could deliver his people from their greatest enemy—sin and death (Luke 1:32).

Jesus is called to die—The people of Israel were expecting the Messiah to be a triumphant king who would lead them to a national victory overthrowing Roman rule. But Jesus taught the disciples that his path to victory as the Messiah would be different from this. Jesus would have to endure suffering at the hands of the Jews and be rejected by the leaders and killed—crucified. His victory over his enemies would come after that, when on the third day he would be raised from the dead. Jesus would triumph not over Rome, but over death! The disciples didn’t understand all of what Jesus told them, for when the time came and he was arrested, they scattered in fear. It was not until after Jesus’ resurrection that they remembered his teaching and understood (Luke 24:8).

We are called to follow him—Jesus says that his disciples (we included) must be willing to give up everything to follow him. In the end, most of the disciples were killed for following Jesus. Though few of us will die for following Christ, we must be willing to give up anything that hinders our following him. Any sacrifices we are called to make or any hardships we are called to bear cannot be compared with having Jesus and his wonderful salvation.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Messiah

The word “Messiah” is synonymous with Christ— the Anointed One. In John 1:41, John clarifies Andrew’s use of the word “Messiah” by adding “which means Christ” to the text. So Christ, Anointed One, and Messiah all refer to the one who the prophets said would come (Daniel 9:25) to deliver God’s people.

Where Is the Gospel? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

In Luke 9:22, Jesus specifically predicted his death and resurrection, which is the core of the gospel. He continues in verse 23 to describe how the path to following him involves our own cross. We must be willing to give up everything, even our lives. Physical death is not a requirement, but death to self and the pleasures of this world are a definite cost of following Jesus. If we try to secure salvation or save our own lives by any other means, we will fail. Whether by our good works or our own understanding, all paths outside the gospel fail and lead to eternal death. We can only have life if we trust in Jesus and in what he has done on the cross on our behalf.

The passing treasures of this life may bring temporary happiness, but all the treasures of the earth are not equal in value to our salvation in Christ. Money cannot buy eternal joy. Good works cannot save.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Luke 9:18–27 from the Scriptures or read story 101, "Take up Your Cross," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Picking Up Your Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two large sheets of poster board
- ✓ four adults or teens

This skit is designed to illustrate how we might be called to take up our cross in following Jesus. You will need the help of four adults or teens for this skit.

Prior to class, cut the poster board into strips and form four crosses. In large bold letters write one of the following words (or phrases) on each of the four crossbeams: friendship, money, free time, football.

Each of the four helpers will play the role of a person who gave up something to follow Christ. Have them all come in carrying their crosses. Explain to the class you brought them in to share their testimonies. Don't mention the crosses that they carry, but each of them should use the cross like a prop when they explain what they gave up.

FRIENDSHIP: My mom shared the gospel with me and I gave my life to Christ not long after that. When I started bringing my Bible to school, my friends started making fun of me. They kept trying to get me to cheat by giving them the answers to tests, but I wouldn't do it. When I got an A and two of them failed, they said they were going to stop talking to me unless I gave them the answers to the next test. I knew cheating did not honor the Lord. (*Holding up the cross*) I would rather give up their friendship than dishonor the Lord.

MONEY: I own my own company and used to work all the time. My wife became a Christian and then shared the gospel with me. That is when I started reading the Bible. I read about tithing—giving ten percent of your income to God—and I said, “No way.” But God began to work in my heart. I had all the money I wanted, but I wasn't happy and I knew I was doing something wrong. One evening, after reading the parable of the rich young ruler, I became afraid. (*Holding up the cross*) I gave my life and my money to God. Now I love to give away my money, and God continues to bless my business.

FREE TIME: I became a Christian at a youth retreat. That is when it all started. One of the dads at church asked me to set up the chairs before the meeting. Then he asked me if I could come to church early every Sunday. I told him I would think about it, but I wanted to say no. I felt God wanted me to do it, so I did. But it didn't stop there. I started setting up for the evening meetings too. (*Holding up his cross*) When God called me, he didn't just want me, he wanted my free time too.

FOOTBALL: I always said I could never become a Christian because of football. The games are on Sundays! Every Sunday—at 8 a.m.! I would go buy the food for the tailgating party. We would all meet before the game at the stadium and eat. One day this preacher came and started talking to us. He said he was on vacation and

saw all of us from his hotel window and thought he might invite us to attend the church across the street with him. Can you believe it! Funny thing though, something grabbed hold of me. Or, I should say *someone*. I went. I actually left my hot dogs cooking and went with the preacher to the church. I responded to the gospel that very day and haven't been to a football game since. (*Holding up the cross*) It's not that football is bad, but for me, God didn't just want me, he wanted my football too.

Ask the class their reaction and then ask them what they think God might want them to give up as they consider following him.

TEACHING/DISCUSSION

Select one of the object lessons to use to cover the teaching points.

OBJECT LESSON 2 15 MIN

Some Are Called to Give Up Their Lives

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ *Foxe's Book of Martyrs* (You can also look up the following martyrs on the Internet: Jim Elliot, Nate Saint, Pete Fleming.)

Read an account from the book to the class and/or read a modern account of a missionary who gave up his/her life for the gospel. Ask the class the following questions:

- How could someone have the courage to give up their life for Christ?
(God gives us the grace to do what he calls us to do. There seems to be a special grace on many who suffer and die for their faith.)
- What are some ways we might be persecuted for our faith and need to stand up for Jesus?
(Friends might make fun of us; if we go to public school we might be penalized or punished for sharing our faith; we might not be able to participate on team sports if the games are on Sundays, etc.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

Take Up Your Cross

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ paper
- ✓ crayons, markers, or colored pencils
- ✓ masking tape

Draw a cross outline and then draw the things inside we must be willing to give up to follow Jesus. Display the finished drawings on the wall and talk as a class about what the different children wrote. Ask the class which would be easier: giving up material things that draw us away from Jesus or giving up our lives if we lived in a country where Christians are persecuted for their faith.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's Scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Who Do You Say That I Am?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ Bibles for the class

Ask the class the same question that Jesus asked his disciples: Who do you say that I am? With Bibles closed, see what they can tell you about Jesus and write their comments on the whiteboard. Then divide the class into groups and have them find verses in the Gospel accounts to support what is written on the board. (Remember in exercises like this you are training the children to search the Scriptures for themselves so a little difficulty should be expected. You can help them think of familiar gospel stories that show who Jesus is. Help them find those stories by scanning the headings in their Bibles.) Make adjustments, if needed, to what is written on the board, and talk about the benefits of having the New Testament, which the disciples did not have, in understanding who Jesus is.