

TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: LUKE 9:18-27



Jesus faced the cross, and we must follow Him.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

Jesus is called the Messiah. Jesus was praying again when He stopped to ask His disciples a question. He first asked them who the crowds thought He was and then He asked the same question to the disciples. Peter, never one to hold back his opinion, answered that Jesus is the Christ of God (the name "Christ" translated means "Messiah"). Jesus warned them not to tell anyone, knowing that the crowds had already tried to force Him to be king. Perhaps wanting to bring more instruction, Jesus went on to tell Peter of His plan to build the church (Matthew 16:17-19).

Jesus is called to die – The people were expecting a triumphant king who would lead them to overthrow the Roman rule. After telling his disciples not to spread word that He was the Messiah, Jesus clued them in to the kind of Messiah He was. Jesus' triumph would come later. First, He would endure much suffering at the hands of the Jews themselves. Even worse, He would be killed. On the third day, He would be raised. Jesus would triumph-- not over Rome, but over death!

We are called to follow Him – Jesus goes on to tell His disciples (and all of us) that we must be willing to give up everything to follow Him. Most of the disciples would one day be killed for following Jesus. Some of them literally took up their cross. We must be willing to give up anything as we follow Christ. Any sacrifices we make to be His disciples, or any crosses we bear, cannot be compared with having Jesus and His wonderful salvation.

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WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

In Luke 9:22 Jesus specifically predicted His death and resurrection, which is the core of the gospel story. 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 very 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 end in/lead to eternal death. We can only have life if we trust in Jesus and what He has done on the cross on our behalf.

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

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

Bible Passage: Isaiah 53:1-3

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Isaiah described a suffering servant who would be "despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and suffering." Jesus identified with this description when He said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law," in Luke 9:22. Peter also identified Christ as one who was rejected by men (1 Peter 2:4).

Questions for reflection:

- What do you think the verse about no beauty or majesty is referring to? (Jesus was a king, but He did not come as a king should come. Rather than arriving dressed in royal robes, Jesus was born in a stable.)
- How was Jesus rejected? (Jesus was rejected by the Jewish rulers. He was also rejected by His own disciples, who fled in fear after His arrest in the garden.)

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SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

SOME ARE CALLED TO GIVE UP THEIR LIVES

Supplies:

- Fox's Book of Martyrs

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.)



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PICKING UP YOUR CROSS

Supplies:

- two large sheets of poster board

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

Prior to class, cut the poster board into strips and form four crosses. In large bold letters write the following words, one on each, of the four cross beams:

- Friendship
- Money
- Free time
- Football

Each of the four helpers is going to pretend to play the role of a person who gave something up 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 the test, 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 losing my family. One evening, after reading the parable of the rich young ruler, I became afraid. I gave my life (holding up his cross) and my money to God. Now I love to give away my money, and God continues to bless my business."



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Free Time – “I became a Christian at a youth retreat. That is when it all started. One of the dads at the 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. Well, I prayed and felt God wanted me to do it. It didn't stop there. I started setting up for the evening meetings, too. When God called me, he just didn't want me, he wanted (holding up his cross) my free time too.”

Football – “I always said I could never become a Christian because of football. The games are on Sundays! Every Sunday! It started each Sunday at 8 a.m. I would go buy the drinks and the dogs. We would all meet before the game at the stadium and tailgate. One day this preacher came down 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. God did. I went. I actually left my dogs cooking and went with the preacher to the church. I responded to the Gospel that very day and, (holding up his cross) haven't been to a football game since. It's not that football is bad, but for me, God didn't just want me. He wanted my football too.”

Draw out the class to get their reaction and then ask them what they think God might want them to give up as they consider following Him.



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PLAY THE ROLE OF PETER

Supplies:

• items to make up a Peter costume: robe, sandals, etc.

Have Peter tell the story from his perspective as found in Matthew 16:13-28. The four main components to this account are the name of Jesus, the words of Christ about the church, the rebuke of Peter for coming against the cross, and the cost of following Jesus.

PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

AN ACTIVITY

Supplies:

pencil and paper

Draw a cross outline and then draw the things inside we must be willing to give up to follow Jesus.

FOR THE OLDER GRADES

WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

Supplies:

white board and markers

Ask the class the same question that Jesus asked His disciples. With Bibles closed, see how much they can tell you about who Jesus is. Then break them down into groups and have them find verses which support what is written on the board. Make adjustments, if needed, and talk about the benefit we have in the New Testament scripture that the disciples did not have in understanding who Jesus was.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Christ – The title Christ translated means “anointed one” and is synonymous with the word Messiah. In John 1:41 John clarifies Andrew’s use of the word Messiah by adding, “that is, the Christ” to the text. So Christ, Anointed One, and Messiah, all refer to the one who would come to deliver God’s people.