



## LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

### INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

#### LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** Jesus Loves Us and Gave His Life for Us

**SCRIPTURE:** John 12–13; 19

**WORD OF WONDER:** Psalm 77:12

Last year I conducted an experiment.

I wish I hadn't.

As kids tumbled into our children's ministry one Sunday morning, I asked them why they liked Easter. Their answers ranged from candy to new shoes to candy to visiting cousins to egg hunts to candy.

Guess who didn't come up? Jesus.

Like you, we talk a lot about Jesus. He's front and center, week after week. It's our mission for kids to know, love, and follow Him. We want how kids feel about themselves and their world to be shaped by a deep awareness that Jesus loves them so dearly He literally died for them.

That's a message we share often—especially at Easter.

Yet, somehow, the reality of Jesus' love and sacrifice doesn't always sink beneath the surface, deep into kids' hearts and minds. And what's true for our kids is often true for us too.

So here's a challenge. As you prepare for this lesson, read John 12, 13, and 19. But don't just skim the words—pause often to let them speak to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to let those words change you. Ask the Spirit to cement in you this truth: Jesus loves you. He loves you right now, and He'll love you for eternity.

Make this Easter the one you see clearly: as a love story.

Including you.

—Mikal Keefer

Children's Ministry Volunteer and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS**

**WHO?**

Pontius Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea. He presided over Jesus' trial, which involved discussion with the chief priests, who were members of the Jewish ruling council, or Sanhedrin. Pilate ultimately authorized Jesus' crucifixion, albeit reluctantly.

**WHAT?**

In the week leading up to His death, Jesus was anointed by Mary in Bethany and welcomed to Jerusalem as king. He predicted His death and washed His disciples' feet. He was betrayed by Judas, tried by Pilate, and crucified at Golgotha.

**WHERE?**

The events of Holy Week took place in and around Jerusalem. Bethany was about two miles east of Jerusalem. Golgotha, where Jesus was crucified, was located outside the city gate of Jerusalem (Hebrews 13:12) somewhere near the city (John 19:20). The exact location is debated.

**WHEN?**

Jesus was crucified during the week of the Jewish Passover Feast while Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea (approximately AD 26–36). The exact date is debated, but biblical scholars often estimate Jesus' death to be between AD 30–33.

**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Holy Week led up to the climactic moment of God's big story. The death of Jesus made way for the defeat of death, the forgiveness of sins, and life forever with God in a kingdom that will never end.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

## LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Find the Hearts

**SUPPLIES:** die cut hearts

Before kids arrive, place the hearts around the room. Make sure you have enough for each kid to find at least one heart. Keep one heart for yourself.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

**Welcome! Today we are going to learn about someone who loves us very much! Hold up one of the hearts. What shape is this? It's a heart! Hearts remind us that we're loved. There are hearts all around our room today! Can you go find a heart and bring it back to me?**

Help each toddler find a heart and have her bring it back to you.

**You did a great job finding the hearts. Hearts remind us that people love us—like our friends and family! But there is someone who loves you even more than your parents ... it's Jesus! We'll learn today how Jesus shows His great love for us.**



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## LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **Father God, as we listen and learn about Holy Week, may Your Spirit teach us, lead us, and show us Your love and plan. Show us how Jesus loves us and gave His life for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

### God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible special? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

#### Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 427-432

The True King

### Word of Wonder

#### WORD OF WONDER

**I will spend time thinking about everything you  
have done.**

—Psalm 77:12