



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

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: wet wipes (several), baby dolls (several), coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Holy Week Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?

Play Station: Feet Washing

Set-up: Set out wet wipes (or a wet rag) and several baby dolls.

Play: Kids can take turns washing the dolls' feet with the wet wipes or wet rags like Jesus washed His disciples' feet.

Play Station: Holy Week Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Holy Week Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of someone who loves them and does kind things for them.



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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

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who did the people welcome to Jerusalem as their king? *(Jesus)*
- What did Jesus know that the other people didn't? *(He was going to die soon.)*
- What did Jesus do to show His disciples He loved them and wanted to serve them?
(washed their feet)
- Why did Jesus wash their feet? *(to show He cleans hearts from sin)*
- Why did Jesus have to die? *(to make us clean from the wrong things we do)*
- How do you know Jesus loves you?

Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to die for us so that we could be made clean from our sin. That's a **big** love!



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LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

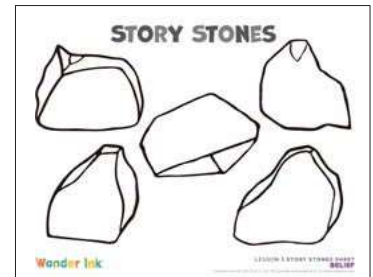
Craft: Story Stones

SUPPLIES: kid-safe scissors (1 per kid), glue sticks, smooth river stones (optional, 5 per kid)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Story Stones Sheet (1 per kid)

Ahead of time, print a Story Stones Sheet for each kid.

Each year, on your birthday, you can remember and celebrate that you were born. Each year on Christmas, we remember and celebrate that Jesus was born. And each year, during Holy Week—the week between Palm Sunday and Easter—we remember how Jesus died and came alive again.



Did you know that the Bible tells us that God’s people sometimes used stones to remember the times God helped or saved them? They would pile up the stones and say, “Remember? This is where God helped us!” Today we’re going to use story stones to remember what happened to Jesus during Holy Week. Pass out the Story Stones Sheet or river stones along with scissors and glue sticks. Remembering the events of Holy Week reminds us that Jesus loves us and gave His life for us.

Let’s cut out the picture of a palm branch and glue it on your first stone. Doing this will help us remember how Jesus was welcomed to Jerusalem as King.

Give kids time to cut out the picture of the palm branch and glue it on either a paper stone or a real stone.



Our next picture is of a loaf of bread. Let’s cut out the loaf of bread and glue it on our next stone as we remember the dinner Jesus had with His friends.

Give kids time to cut out the picture of the bread and glue it on either a paper stone or a real stone.

Our next picture is of soap bubbles. This picture helps us remember that Jesus washed His friends’ feet. Let’s cut out the picture of the soap bubbles and glue it on our next stone as we remember how Jesus washed His friends’ feet.

Give kids time to cut out the picture of the soap bubbles and glue it on either a paper stone or a real stone.

Our last picture is of a cross. This picture helps us remember that Jesus loves us so much that He gave His life for us on the cross. Let’s cut out the picture of a cross and glue it on

our last stone as we remember how Jesus showed He loves us by dying on the cross. He was perfect and didn't deserve to die.

Give kids time to cut out the picture of the cross and glue it on either a paper stone or a real stone.

We have one more stone left—but there are no more pictures to cut out and glue. This empty stone reminds us that Jesus' death was not the end of the story! We'll learn more about that next week when we hear about the empty tomb.

You can take these stones home to help you remember that Jesus loves you and gave His life for you! And you can use them to share that news with other people as well!