



## 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:** painter's tape, musical instruments (several), palm branches or green streamers (1 per kid),

**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: Praise Parade

**Set-up:** Mark a path on the floor using painter's tape. Set out musical instruments and place palm branches or green streamers nearby.

**Play:** Kids can walk the path on the floor and pretend they are welcoming Jesus to town by playing their musical instruments and waving their palm branches or streamers.



Curiosity

**Belief**

Faith

Identity

## 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!



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

## LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Game: Roll the Egg

**SUPPLIES:** plastic eggs (3–4), spoons (3–4), cones or chairs (3–4)

Split kids into three to four different groups for a relay race. Give the first person in each line a plastic egg and a spoon. Place a cone or a chair at the other end of the room opposite each team.

**Using a spoon, we're going to have a relay race to see who can roll their eggs down and around the cone (or chair) and back the fastest. But there is something special about this race! When you get back to the line, before you can hand the next person in line the egg and spoon, say, "Jesus loves you!" As soon as someone tells you, "Jesus loves you," you can take your turn rolling your egg down and back with the spoon. Play as time allows.**

**Leader Tip:** Kids might find it easier to get down on all fours and crawl as they roll the eggs with their spoons. Remind kids to push the eggs just a little at a time, so they don't go rolling away.

**Make It Inclusive!** For kids with mobility issues, allow them to stay in one place at the start of the line and use their hands to roll their eggs across the floor to the other side of the room. Station someone on the other side to catch the eggs and roll them back.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

## LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

### Responding in Worship: Play Dough Response

**SUPPLIES:** play dough, paper plates (optional, 1 per kid)

**Jesus loves us and gave His life for us! Let's spend some time responding to Jesus together. We are going to make some shapes out of play dough to remind us how much Jesus loves us.**

Have kids sit quietly at a table, or if no tables are available, you could give each child a paper plate. Give each child some play dough.

**Leader Tip:** Some kids might struggle with making certain shapes. Let them know it's OK if their shapes aren't perfect! Encourage them to do their best and have fun while making their creations.

**Let's think about the start of Holy Week. Holy Week started with people welcoming Jesus into the city like a king. They waved palm branches and shouted "Hosanna!" Let's make a palm branch out of our play dough and thank God for sending Jesus as King.**

**God, thank You for sending Jesus as our King and Savior.**

**Next Jesus ate dinner with His followers. Jesus knew that it was about time for Him to die. He washed His friends' feet after their dinner. To help us remember that dinner, let's make a loaf of bread out of play dough. We can think about what it would be like to have had dinner with Jesus and to have Him wash our feet.**

**Jesus, thank You for loving us even though we make wrong choices sometimes.**

**There were some people who hated Jesus. They hurt Jesus and nailed Him to a cross. It hurt Him a lot, and He died. Take part of your play dough and let's make a cross while we think about what Jesus did to save us.**

**Jesus, thank You for loving us so much that You were willing to die for us.**

**Let's make a heart and put it on top of the cross. It will remind us that death does not get to win! Jesus loves us and gave His life for us.**