

# **Lower Elementary**

## **The Crucifixion**

# Checklist

- ☐ Cross necklace
- ☐ Pictures of crosses
- ☐ ruler
- ☐ Brown paper strips
- ☐ T-shirt template (on red paper)

## Introduction:

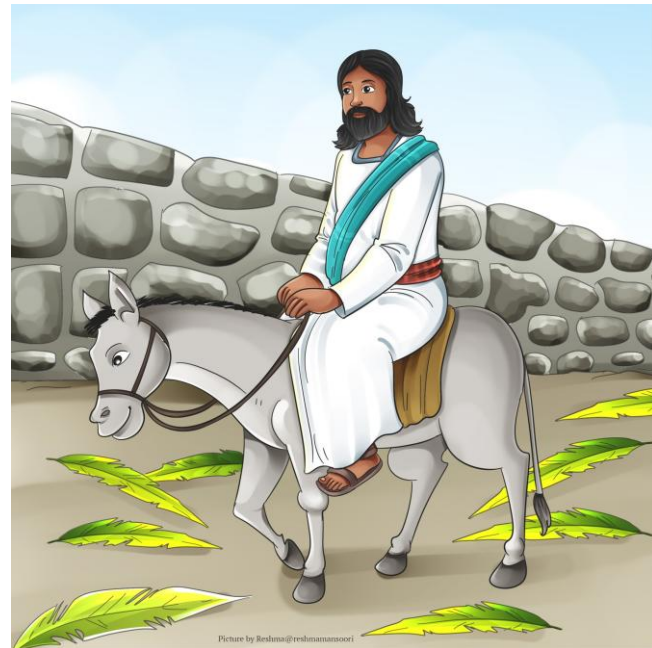
Show children a cross necklace, a wall cross, a t-shirt with a cross, and any other cross items. Look at these with the children and ask where they have seen crosses. The cross is “used” for decoration so much that it has often lost its meaning. Encourage them to think about the “real cross” throughout the lesson.



On the first Passover, God told the Israelites to have a lamb take their place so He would not punish them for their sins. Every year at Passover, a lamb took the place of the people's sins.



When Jesus entered Jerusalem to a parade of palms, He was announcing Himself as the new Passover lamb.



When He celebrated Passover with His disciples and told them what would happen to Him, He was reminding them He was the new Passover lamb.



When He stood before Pilate and Herod and was judged by them, He was preparing to be the Passover lamb. There was only one more thing He had to do.





After the Romans ordered Jesus to be killed, they took off His clothes and put a deep red robe on Him, the kind worn by kings. They twisted some thorn branches into a circle and put it on His head for a crown. They bowed down and pretended to worship Him, snickering at the joke.

They kicked and hit Him, all while calling Jesus the “King of the Jews,” sarcastically.



They made Jesus carry a cross up a hill. He stumbled and fell, so a man named Simon carried it for Him the rest of the way. When they reached the top, the Romans nailed Jesus to the cross, between two criminals.



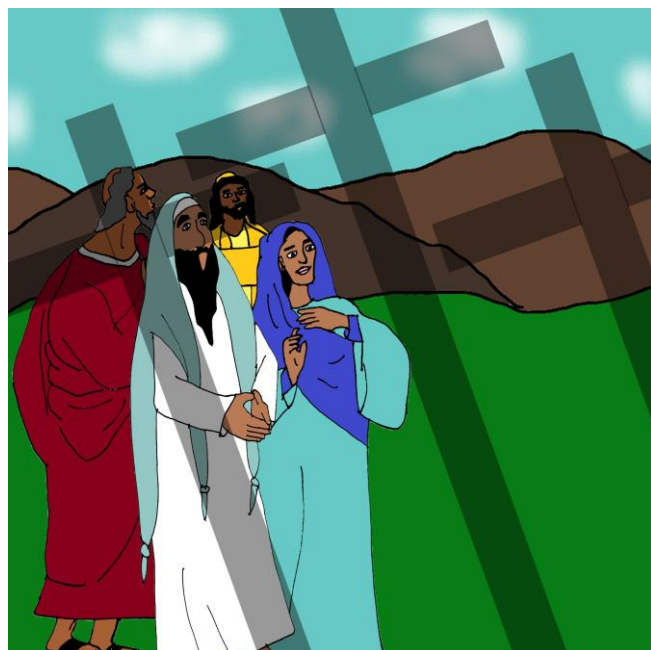
Above the cross, the Romans wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews."

Just as King David had written would happen hundreds of years before, the soldiers took Jesus' clothes and gambled for them so they would not have to divide them.



As people came to see what was happening, they shook their heads at Jesus.

"He said He was God's Son," they teased. "Well, He certainly doesn't look so powerful now, does He?" The leaders from the temple laughed at Jesus, too. "He saved others," they called out, "but He can't save Himself. If He's really our king, why doesn't He jump down from there? Why doesn't God just save Him right now?"





They did not realize that it was not the nails that held Jesus to the cross, but His love for all human beings. He had all the power to end the pain right there, but He chose to stay on the cross. He chose to become the new, permanent Passover lamb, who would carry people's sins forever, with just one, final sacrifice.



At noon the sky became dark and stayed that way for three hours, just as before the first Passover sacrifice, Egypt had been dark for three days. Jesus called out to His Father...and then He gave up His Spirit and died.

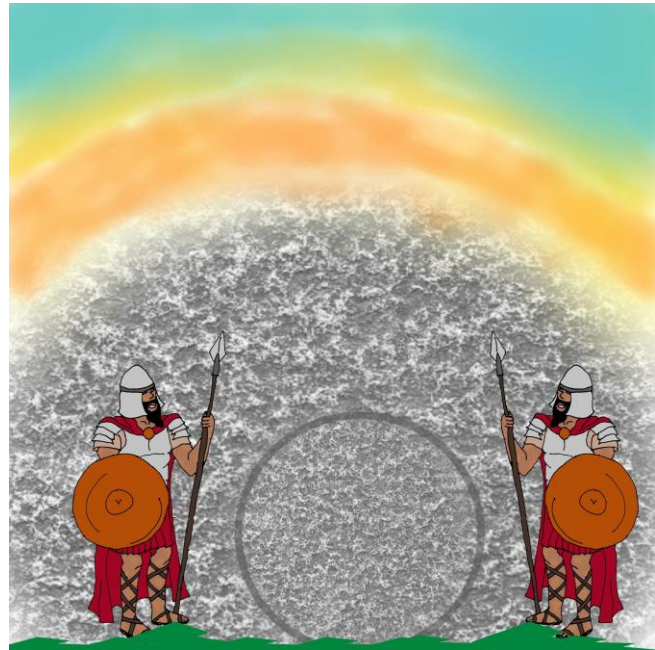
At that moment there was an earthquake. As the Roman soldiers felt this, they declared, “This man really was God’s Son!”

The curtain in the temple that hid the holiest place for worshiping God was torn apart from top to bottom, showing that all could now come directly to God, without the need of a priest to go between them.



Jesus was taken down and laid in a tomb. He was wrapped up in burial cloths. Because everyone knew He had said He would rise from the dead, the Romans and temple leaders agreed that His tomb would need to be well-guarded. They placed Jesus in a room built into rock. They rolled a heavy stone across it and put two Roman soldiers in front to guard it and make sure no one could come for Him.

But while His followers cried in confusion, Jesus was making His Father's plan to rescue all people from sin happen.



## Closing Discussion:



Discuss the crosses again. Ask children if they will think of the true meaning of the cross when they see these items next.

Why did this have to happen?

Could God have stopped it? What if He had stopped it?

Was it nails that kept Jesus on the cross? What was it?

How do you think Jesus' friends felt? What did they think?

How does this story make you feel? (sad? happy? grateful? confused? ...?)

## Craft:

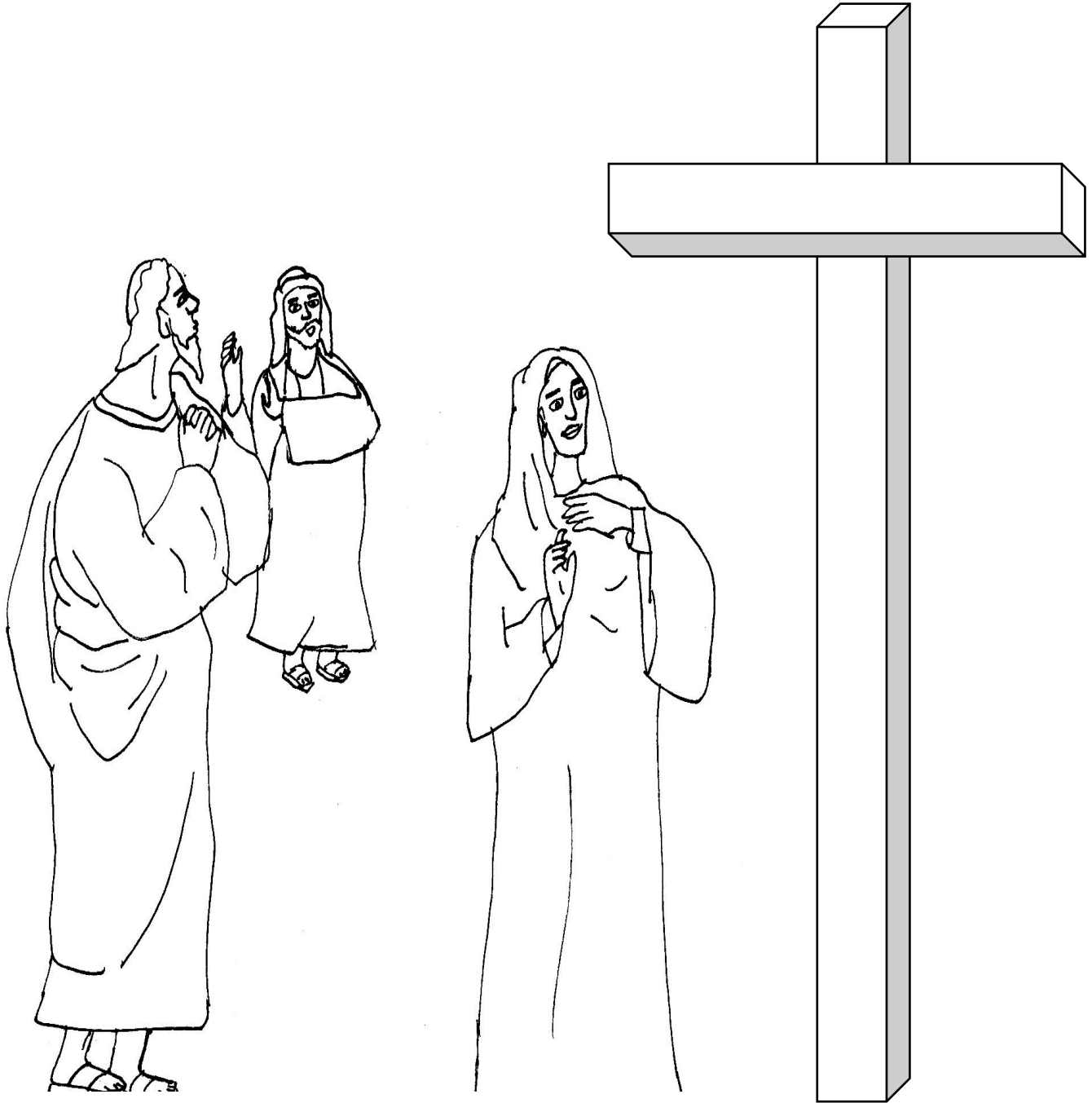
Sins being “worn” on the cross.

## Closing Activity:

God's love is deep and wide. It is bigger than anything you can imagine. Show a ruler. What things can we measure with this? Can we measure God's love with this? Have children take turns holding their pointer finger and thumb apart near the bottom of the ruler and ask them to catch it as soon as you let go of it. Measure what inch number they catch it at. Does God care if you caught it at 3 inches or 9 inches? He doesn't care how quick or smart or talented you are. He just loves you, because He is love, and His love can't be measured.

# Crucifixion

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**God loved the people of this world so much that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who has faith in Him will have eternal life and never really die.**

**~ John 3:16**

- ❖ Children color and cut out shirts
- ❖ Children glue strips of brown construction paper to make cross
- ❖ Children glue shirts onto front and back of cross
- ❖ Discuss how Jesus “wore” our sins on the cross





