

LESSON 3

**HOLY WEEK**

### LESSON AT A GLANCE

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

**SCRIPTURE:** [John 12-13; 19](#)

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** After God's people waited many years for Him to rescue them from sin, Jesus shows God's great love by dying on the cross. His death brings life.

**Free Play**

**Declaration**

**Worship**

**Snack**

**Prayer and Blessing**

**God's Big Story**

**Activity: Egg Roll**

**INVITATION**

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

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.

## Free Play

### As kids arrive...

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church. As kids enjoy toys and activities during free play, be sure to get on their level and play right alongside them!

## Clean Up

### At the end of free play...

Play the Clean Up video and encourage kids to help clean up toys to prepare for worship, snack, and story time. After working together to clean up, gather kids on sit spots to begin the lesson.

## Declaring God's Wonder

**Welcome to church today, friends! I'm so glad you're here. Stand up and repeat after me:**

**Thank You, God, that You made me!** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Make prayer hands, then point up to God and to yourself.

**And I am Your kid!** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands on your hips.

**Jesus loves me so much;** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

**His love for me is big.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

**The Holy Spirit leads me,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Bring your arms down from the sky, making a path in front of you.

**And I can follow You.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

March like you're following the leader.

**My life can tell Your story,** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

**I'm a wonder; this is true.** *(Kids repeat words and motions.)*

Put your hands up, shaking your fingers, celebrating ("praise hands").

**SUPPLIES:** paper hearts

Before kids arrive, cut several large hearts out of paper. Then place them around the room. Make sure you have enough for each kid to find at least one heart. Keep one heart for yourself.

**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.**

**We'll learn about it in our story today, and we'll remember it with our Wonder Truth for today.**

**Our Wonder Truth today is **JESUS LOVES US AND GAVE HIS LIFE FOR US.****

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

**JESUS**—*Point Up.*

**LOVES US**—*Wrap arms around yourself in a hug.*

**AND GAVE HIS LIFE**—*Hold arms out on either side of your body.*

**FOR US.**—*Point to self.*

## Worship

**SUPPLIES:** Worship music videos

**Today we're learning that Jesus loves us and gave His life for us! We'll learn in the God's big story how Jesus loves us so much that He was willing to die for us. Let's sing to him now.**

Play songs and encourage the kids to sing and dance with you.

## Snack

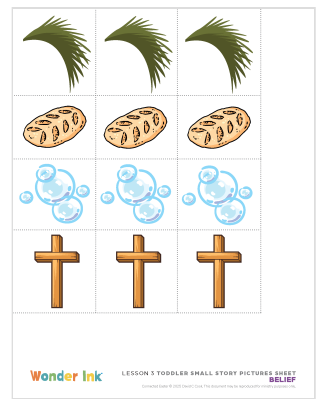
**SUPPLIES:** small paper cups, cheerios, pitcher of water

Gather kids around tables and serve snack. After praying, begin the Bible story while kids are busy eating.

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, plastic eggs (4) filled with [Toddler Story Pictures](#)

Print the [Toddler Story Pictures](#) and cut apart the pictures. Place each of the pictures inside a plastic egg. Number the eggs as follows: palm branch—#1; loaf of bread—#2; soap bubbles—#3; cross—#4.



**Our story today is a great story from the Bible about Jesus and something very important that happened to Him.** Encourage the kids to say, “Jesus.” **Let’s find out from the Bible what happened to Jesus!**

**Jesus traveled to a town called Jerusalem, and a lot of people came to welcome Him as their king.** Open the first egg and show the kids the picture of the palm branch. **They held palm branches and shouted, “Hosanna!” (John 12:13). Say it with me! That means “Save us, please!” Jesus came to save people, but it was not how they thought.**

**Some people were very unhappy with Jesus. They wanted to put an end to Jesus! And Jesus knew He was going to die soon.**

Open the second egg and show the kids the picture of the loaf of bread. **Jesus was eating with His friends One of them was named Judas. Jesus loved His friends but He knew He was going to leave have to leave them soon.**

Open the third egg and show the kids the picture of the soap bubbles. **Jesus got up during the meal and washed their dirty feet. Say Peeeee-eeeeww! But Jesus did this to show that He loved them.**

**At first, one disciple named Peter told Jesus not to wash his feet. But Jesus said, “Unless I wash you, you can’t share life with me” (John 13:8). Jesus was not talking about just washing dirt off of his feet. Jesus washed His followers’ feet to show that He was also going to wash their hearts clean from sin.**

**After they ate, Judas left to turn in Jesus to the people who hated Him and then, those people arrested Jesus. They hurt him and beat Him up.**

Open the fourth egg and show the kids the picture of the cross. **They nailed Jesus to a cross. It hurt Him a lot, and He died. It was the worst thing that ever happened. But it was also the very best thing that ever happened. Jesus was going to show that death does not get to win! When Jesus died, he made the way for our hearts to be washed clean of all the bad things we do and he did that because he loves us. Jesus gave up his life for us!**

## Prayer and Blessing

**Let’s talk to God. God, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to save us. Thank You for loving us. In Jesus’ name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

**Blessing:** **May you know the deep, never-ending love of God—a love so great that Jesus gave His life for us. Now and always, may you live loved and free!**

## Activity: Egg Roll

**SUPPLIES:** plastic egg

Gather kids together and have them sit on the floor in front of you. Hold up the plastic egg.

**Look at this egg! We are going to play a rolling game with this egg. I will roll it to each of you and tell you something important. Then you can roll it back to me.**

Roll the egg to each child while saying, "Jesus loves (child's name)!" Encourage the child to roll the egg back you.

**Jesus loves all of you! He loves you so much that He was willing to give His life for you!**