

Family Lesson 69

Principle: Faith in Christ covers the worst of sinners

Bible Character(s): Jesus and the criminals on the cross

Scripture Reference: Luke 23:32-43

1. Worship - Choose your favorite songs from the [Spotify playlist](#) found on the curriculum resource page. Have fun, sing loudly, and follow along with the motions!

2. Bible Lesson - Read through the lesson with your family. The bold font is meant to be read aloud along with the Scripture references.

Bible Lesson

Review the timeline (found on [GCK Resource Page](#)) of Jesus' life. Today, we will look at Jesus' response to those around him and the criminals' response to Jesus. We will focus on one criminal's belief as well as the forgiveness and grace given to him.

Last week, we talked about Pilate—do you remember what Pilate did? (He turned Jesus over to the crowd.) **Did Pilate believe Jesus was guilty?** (No, he knew Jesus was innocent, but he agreed that Jesus could be crucified.) **Why didn't Pilate do what was right?** (Pilate gave into the pressure of those around him. He cared more about what the people thought of him than honoring God.) **This was sin. We learned that giving into peer pressure can be sin.**

Today, we will begin by reading the Bible in Luke as the soldiers bring Jesus to the place where he will be crucified. Let's begin reading now.

Luke 23:32-33

³² Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. ³³ When they came to a

place called *The Skull*, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.

Both of these criminals deserve their punishment. They have done bad things. Jesus is innocent, yet he is being nailed to the cross just like these criminals. Can you imagine having a nail hammered through your wrist and into a wooden cross? The physical pain would be unbearable. This is happening to Jesus, yet he has done nothing wrong to deserve this!

Let's continue reading our passage from the Bible.

Luke 23:34

³⁴ Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they are doing." And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.

How does Jesus respond to being crucified? (Allow responses.) **Jesus forgives those who mock him and have nailed him to the cross. Even here, when Jesus is in horrible pain, he chooses to show compassion and love to others. Do you respond this way when people hurt you?** (Allow responses.) **Let's continue reading the Bible.**

Luke 23:35-38

³⁵ The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. "He saved others," they said, "let him save himself if he is really God's Messiah, the Chosen One." ³⁶ The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. ³⁷ They called out to him, "If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!" ³⁸ A sign was fastened to the cross above him with these words: "This is the King of the Jews."

All of these people are making fun of Jesus. He is dying on a cross, in excruciating pain, and these people are still making fun of him. But Jesus continues to endure this pain to pay for our sin. He loves us so much that he goes through that intense amount of pain for us. Let's read more in Luke.

Luke 23:39-43

³⁹ One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!"

⁴⁰ But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?" ⁴¹ We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." ⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

⁴³ And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

When we believe and trust in Jesus, our sins are also forgiven because of Jesus' death on the cross. He washes our hearts clean when we have faith in him. His death paid for our sins because he was without sin, but he took on the sin of the world to pay the punishment for our sin. Jesus died for the criminals hanging beside him. One criminal believed that Jesus is the Son of God and was promised paradise; the other criminal did not believe and was not offered paradise. We are also offered paradise if we choose to believe and trust that Jesus died for our sins.

Talk with your child about some ways that they sin, and discuss ways they see other children their age sin. **We are all sinners. God is holy and he cannot be around sin, so our sin separates us from God. Jesus paid the price for our sins, so now we do not have to be separated from God. We can live forever with him if we put our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God wants us to live a life that brings glory to his name. Because we are sinners, we still struggle with sin in our hearts. God wants us to understand how we sin so that we can repent and turn away from that sin. We have talked about different ways that we**

sin. We have seen the sin in our hearts. Now, we have the chance to repent of our sin and allow God to change our hearts so that we can become more like Jesus. We will spend some time now quietly praying. We can thank God for his gift of forgiveness on the cross and ask for his help as we repent and turn from our sin and open our hearts for him to change us. Ask God to help change your desires and choose to honor him instead of sin.

Help your child grasp the idea of sacrifice. Ask them to close their eyes. Read through the following illustration:

Imagine that you are in big trouble at school. You are in the principal's office for cheating on a test. You admit it. You were copying an answer from another person's paper. Imagine how nervous and scared you would feel in the principal's office. However, imagine how you would feel when you hear the principal say, "I have found a way to deal with your mistake. I can't forget about it, because that would not be fair. I can't pretend you didn't do it, because that would be a lie. But here's what I can do. In our school records, I found a person who has a spotless past; he has never gotten into any kind of trouble at all. No talking in class, no arguing with classmates; he has never broken any rules or made any mistakes. He has volunteered to trade records with you. I will take his name and put it on your record. We will punish him for what you did wrong. You, who did wrong, will get his clean, spotless record."

Can you imagine such a thing happening to you? How would you feel? Who would trade places with you like that and take your punishment? Now, imagine that it was the principal who switched records with you and took your punishment. Jesus loves you so much that he was willing to sacrifice his innocent life to take your punishment.

John 15:13 says, "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." Jesus laid down his life for us. He was perfect and did not deserve death, but he paid the punishment

for our sin by dying on the cross. He did this because he loves us that much. We can have faith in a God who was willing to give up his only Son so that we could be made right with him.

Prayer

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close your family time. Ask God to help each of us recognize our sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life.

Activity

“Weight of Sin Compared to Depth of Forgiveness” Sheet- (found on [GCK Resource Page](#)) Let’s take a look at the differences between these two criminals. The purpose of this activity is to see the response of the criminals.

Supplies:

Worksheet (found on [GCK Resource Page](#))

Red and black crayons/markers

1. Ask your child to give a description of each criminal’s response to Jesus and write it under the two criminals’ crosses. (Criminal 1: made fun of Jesus, did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God; Criminal 2: realized that he deserved his punishment, knew Jesus was innocent, believed Jesus was the Son of God.)
2. Have your child draw a heart above each criminal’s cross. (Criminal 1’s heart should be colored black to represent his heart that did not believe. Criminal 2’s heart should be colored red to represent his heart that believed and whose sin was covered by Jesus’ blood.)

One criminal recognized that Jesus was innocent. He also knew that he was a sinner. He realized that Jesus did not deserve to die and believed that Jesus was God. This criminal was definitely a sinner, yet because of his belief, God forgave him. The other criminal did not see Jesus as the Son of God. He mocked Jesus, just like the soldiers and many of the people watching did too. They did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God, so they did not receive God’s forgiveness.

