



STORY 69

Confessing Christ

MATTHEW 16

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 16.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

The Bible is filled with questions: "Did God really say?" "Am I my brother's keeper?" "Are you the king of the Jews?" "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" But it's not just the Bible that's filled with questions, life is as well: Do you want fries with that? Is your room cleaned? What is your favorite show? Why did you do that? What color are your eyes? Where is the farthest place you have traveled? Where do babies come from? Do you like video games? Do you feel sad? Does God love us? So many questions!

That last question is a very important one, isn't it? In today's lesson, we hear another important question: Who is Jesus? How would you answer that question right now? Was Jesus just a great teacher, a good man, an amazing

1
Read

2
Teach

miracle-worker, or another God-sent servant like Abraham, Moses, and David? Or was he something (someone!) more? Let's find out the right answer.

TELL THE STORY

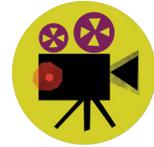
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the Bible passage together



Read from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*



Play *The Biggest Story* video

TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

Big Truth
Jesus is the Christ, who came to suffer, die, and rise again.

One day Jesus and his disciples traveled to a place with a *big* name: Caesarea Philippi. It was a *big* name because it was named after some important people: the Roman Emperor (Caesar) and the Jewish ruler of that region (Herod Philip). But its importance didn't stop there. It had not one but two temples. One was the Temple of Augustus built to honor a Roman Emperor. The other was a temple to the Greek god, Pan. Not Peter Pan, just Pan—the god of the goats. Yep, the god of the goats! Anyway, it was in this *big* place—a place filled with worship of the wrong rulers and dead idols—that Jesus asked his disciples a *big* question: Who is Jesus?

First, he asked, “Who do *people* think I am?” The disciples replied: “Some people say you are John the Baptist risen from the dead. Others think you are the prophet Elijah who has returned. We've also heard people say that you are another prophet like Jeremiah or Isaiah” (see Matt. 16:13–14). Then Jesus asked a second question, “But who do *you*—my close followers—say that I am?” (see 16:15). Peter, who was like that kid in class who always raises his hand first, answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (16:16). A great answer; the right answer! But there was one important element Peter was missing.

He understood Jesus was the Christ, but he didn't yet understand what Jesus came to do. He thought the Christ (the long-awaited King) would rule like most earthly kings ruled—with power and might. The farthest thing from his mind

was that the Christ would be killed on a cross. But that's precisely what Jesus told him was about to happen. "I must go to Jerusalem," Jesus said, "to suffer and die" (see 16:21). Peter didn't like this direction one bit. "No!" he rebuked Jesus. "This shall never happen to you" (16:22). Peter was upset. But Jesus was more upset. He was sad Peter's mind was so far removed from the mind of God. Peter's plan was that the Christ would rule in power now, without any suffering and death. God's plan was that his Son would rule in power *through* his sufferings, death, and then resurrection. It's good to know that Jesus is the Christ. It's better to know how this Christ would rescue his people.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.
{5 minutes}

A lot of questions we ask are not life or death questions. Your answer to the question of your favorite ice cream flavor doesn't determine if you'll live forever. But there is a question that does—Jesus's question: "Who do you say I am?"

The gospel clearly teaches that Jesus is the promised Messiah and the always-existing Son of God. We need to know *who* Jesus is, just like Peter did. But we also need to know *what* he came to do. Did he come to rule as earthly kings ruled? No. Jesus came to suffer and die; Jesus also came to rise from the dead. And through his suffering, death, and resurrection he took the penalty we deserve and brought the kingdom of heaven down to earth. First comes the cross, then comes the crown. If we trust in Jesus—that he came for us, suffered and died for us, and rose from the dead for us—we will live forever in his perfect kingdom.

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

1. QUESTION: What were some questions you were asked before you came to church today? What's the most important question in our story? What was Peter's answer to that question? Why is that the most important question?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God.

2. QUESTION: What did people think the Messiah would be like? How was Jesus different than they expected? What do you think you would have ex-

3

Engage

pected the Messiah to be like? Why is God's plan of Jesus's coming to suffer and die better?

TAKEAWAY: God's ways are better than our ways.

Memory Verse

You are the
Christ, the Son of
the living God.

MATTHEW 16:16

3. **QUESTION:** When Jesus told his disciples he would suffer and die, what did Peter do? Jesus rebuked Peter because he knew Satan was tempting him to skip the suffering and go straight to ruling as king. What would have happened if Jesus had decided to skip the suffering and death on a cross? Who would pay for our sins?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus came to suffer, die, and rise again for sinners.

4. **QUESTION:** What are some ways that Satan might tempt you to take the easy path? Jesus resisted Satan and took the hard path to the cross. If Jesus suffered, do you think we will too? What will we receive if we follow Jesus even if it involves suffering or death?

TAKEAWAY: Following Jesus often means suffering before blessing—the cross before the crown.

ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from TheBiggestStory.com, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Charades

Supply List: none

Select a child to act out a person or thing of choice (e.g., firefighter, doctor, elephant). The child has thirty seconds to act it out while the remaining children guess who or what it is. Whoever guesses correctly has the option to either be the next person to act or to choose which student goes next. Remind children that we don't have to guess who Jesus is—God's word tells us.

Option 2: Rock Stacking Relay

Supply List: tables, bowls, rocks

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set up tables on the far end of the room and place a bowl with five smooth, flat stones on each table (one table per team).

Divide children into teams, and have each team line up single file. On “Go” the first child runs to his team’s table and stacks the five rocks on top of one another. The rocks must stay stacked for three seconds. If the rocks fall, the child must try again. The child then puts the rocks back in the bowl and runs back to tag the next person in line, who repeats the process. The first team to have all team members finish wins. Remind children that though following Jesus can be hard and slow it still is the way to go.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Rock, Paper, Scissors

Supply List: masking tape

Before Class: Using masking tape, divide the room in half and mark a safe zone on each side.

Divide children into two teams. Teams will play “Rock, Paper, Scissors” using their bodies. For “rock,” children cross arms on their chest with closed fists on opposite shoulders. For “paper,” children put arms straight up in the air with palms flat. For “scissors,” children put arms out in front, crossed at the wrists. Have each team meet briefly to decide if they will be rock, paper, or scissors. Then have the teams line up facing each other on either side of the masking tape. When a leader says, “Rock, Paper, Scissors, Show,” both teams must show their choice. Rock beats scissors, paper beats rock, and scissors beats paper. The team that loses must run to their safe zone before being tagged by someone from the other team. If tagged, the child joins the opposing team for the next round. Play continues until one team is eliminated. Remind children that Jesus defeated Satan every time he was tempted by him.

Option 2: Never Have I Ever

Supply List: none

Have children sit in a circle and hold up five fingers. Ask children to think of something they have never done that most people have done. Then pick a child to start, who will say, “Never have I ever . . .” (been on an airplane, gone on a roller coaster, gone fishing, etc.). Everyone who *has* done the named thing must put down one of his or her fingers. Continue around the circle with children taking turns making “Never have I ever” statements. Once a child has put all five fingers down, he is out. The last person remaining wins. Remind children that Jesus did something no one else has ever done when he lived a perfect life and died on the cross for our sins.

CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

Option 2: Name Rocks

Supply List: large, flat, smooth rocks (one per child); permanent markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Each child chooses a rock, draws a cross on it, and writes his or her name under it. On the other side have children draw a crown with Jesus's name under it. Then they can decorate their rocks. Remind children that when we follow Jesus, the cross comes before the crown.

3rd–5th

Option 1: Craft Stick Frame

Supply List: paper plates, colored craft sticks, glue, jewels, sequins, foam shapes, magnets

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Give each child a paper plate to use as his or her workspace and to aid in carrying the craft home if still wet. Place remaining supplies on tables. Have children choose twelve craft sticks and lay them side by side lengthwise. The children then cover two additional sticks with glue and place one across the top of the twelve sticks and one across the bottom. Once the frame is secure, children can carefully flip it over and decorate the edges using provided supplies, leaving space in the center for a picture. Have children attach a magnet to the back. Encourage children to glue a picture of themselves to the frame as a reminder that we want other people to see Jesus when they look at us.

Option 2: Known and Loved

Supply List: paper, colored pencils, markers

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.

Set supplies on tables. Children should write their name in large block or bubble letters in the center of a piece of paper and then decorate their names. Next, children can walk around the room and write one word to describe the child whose name is on each paper. Encourage children to write kind, descriptive words with creative lettering.



Visit TheBiggestStory.com for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.