



STORY 80

A Meal for the Ages

MATTHEW 26

BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read Matthew 26.*
- *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}

One of the most important jobs God's people have is to remember. Last lesson, Jesus said that we should remember what Mary did when she anointed his body with expensive perfume. That special act symbolized his burial. In the Old Testament God's people were supposed to remember the Passover, when God rescued them out of Egypt. The angel of death passed over the firstborn sons and didn't kill them. They remembered by throwing a big feast! At a typical Jewish Passover meal they would have three main things: lamb, flatbread, and wine. They ate lamb because it was the lamb's blood on the doorway that kept them safe from the angel of death. They remembered how God saved them when they trusted him and cried out to him. They ate flatbread to remember that there wasn't time

1
Read

2
Teach

for bread to rise because they had to leave Egypt so quickly. And they drank wine to remember how God had freed them and would bring them into his kingdom.

In our lesson today we'll learn how Jesus celebrated that Passover feast with his disciples—but with some important differences. Those differences will link the Passover with Mary's perfume. And they will leave us with a very important way for Christians to remember what Jesus has done for us.

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
Every time we
take the bread
and cup of the
Lord's Supper,
we celebrate
that Jesus died
for our sins.

Jesus and the twelve gathered to celebrate the Passover. As the sun was setting and the meal was about to be served, Jesus made an announcement: "One of you will betray me" (Matt. 26:21). The twelve couldn't believe their ears! How could one of Jesus's closest friends betray him? They were super sad and seriously surprised. They had no idea who would do such a terrible thing. One after the other they asked, "Is it me?" When it came to Judas and he said, "Is it me?" Jesus replied, "Yes, it is you." Soon after, Jesus said, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer" (Luke 22:15). He then took some flatbread, blessed it, broke it, and handed pieces of the broken bread to each disciple. "Take and eat," he said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me" (Matt. 26:26; Luke 22:19). He didn't mean that his body somehow turned into thirteen pieces of bread. He meant that that bread symbolized what would happen to his body—it would be broken, in a way. He would suffer and die! And each and every time they celebrated this meal in the future it would be a reminder that he died for them.

After they ate the bread, Jesus took a cup and said, “Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins” (Matt. 26:27–28). They all drank from the cup, and as they drank they may have had some questions. They certainly didn’t think they were actually drinking Jesus’s blood (he hadn’t even died yet). But they would soon understand—after Jesus died and rose again—that the red wine poured out of the cup was a symbol of Jesus’s blood being poured out on the cross. Instead of forgiveness coming from the blood of bulls and goats, it would come from Jesus’s blood. If we have faith in Jesus—who is the only sacrifice we need—all our sins have been forgiven. Nothing could be more important! No wonder Jesus commanded Christians to continue that meal “in remembrance” of him.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

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

Right before Mary anointed Jesus with perfume, he announced to his disciples, “The Passover is coming, and when it comes the Son of Man [Jesus!] will be delivered up to be crucified” (see Matt. 26:1–2). And right before Jesus was handed over to be crucified, he celebrated the Passover meal with his disciples. Why? He wanted them, and all Christians throughout all time, to make an important connection. Jesus is the perfect Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for our sins. Our sins are *passed over* only because he died in our place! And like those Israelites in Egypt who believed what God said and took the lamb’s blood and smeared it on their doorway, we believe that the blood of Jesus saves us now and that God will pass over us on judgment day. Jesus wants us to remember this gospel message. So he established the Lord’s Supper (or *Communion*). As we eat the bread and drink the cup together, we remind each other that Jesus’s body was sacrificed and his blood shed for us. We *commune* with each other, which means we are joined to each other and to Jesus. When we eat and drink, God strengthens and feeds our faith!

DISCUSS THE STORY

Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}

- 1. QUESTION:** What were special things about the Passover meal that Jesus had with his disciples? What was going to happen the very next day?

3

Engage

TAKEAWAY: The Passover was the Last Supper Jesus had with his disciples before he was crucified.

2. **QUESTION:** When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, what did they have to do so the angel of death would spare their firstborn sons from death? When they celebrated the Passover meal to remember how God spared them, what was the focus of their meal? When Jesus celebrated the Passover with his disciples, why don't you think he talked about the lamb? Whom was Jesus revealing as the Lamb that would be sacrificed to save people from sin?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus is the Passover Lamb, who was sacrificed for the forgiveness of sins.

Memory Verse
This is my blood
of the covenant,
which is poured
out for many for
the forgiveness
of sins.

MATTHEW 26:28

3. **QUESTION:** What did Jesus say the bread in the meal was? What did that mean? And what did he say the cup was? What did he want them to remember? Did Jesus only want the disciples to remember his death? Who else did he want to remember his death and what it meant?

TAKEAWAY: Jesus wants all Christians to remember his sacrifice by eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper.

4. **QUESTION:** What does Jesus do when Christians eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord's Supper?

TAKEAWAY: When Christians eat the bread and drink the cup of the Lord's Supper, Jesus strengthens them and feeds their faith.

ACTIVITIES

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

K–2nd

Option 1: Run for Your Supper

Supply List: none

Have children stand in a circle and hold hands. Choose one child to be "It." "It" walks clockwise around the circle, stops at random, separates the hands of two

children, and yells, “Run for your supper!” The two players whose hands were separated run around the circle in opposite directions while “It” takes one of their spots. The runners race to claim the second empty spot where they were previously standing. The child who arrives last is the new “It.” Play continues as time allows. Remind children that the Lord’s Supper was a special meal Jesus had with his disciples.

Option 2: Cups Up, Cups Down

Supply List: large plastic cups (at least two per child)

Before Class: Gather supplies. Place plastic cups around the room, with an equal number of cups facing up and down.

Divide children into two teams: a “cup up” team and a “cup down” team. Have children line up randomly around the perimeter of the room. On “Go” each child runs to place the cups up or down depending on his or her team’s objective. After three minutes, tell players to freeze and count how many cups are facing each direction. The team with the most cups facing in their direction wins. Play additional rounds as time permits. Remind children that at the Last Supper, Jesus said the cup would be a way to remember Jesus’s blood shed for them—and us!

3rd–5th

Option 1: Team Memory

Supply List: sixteen coins (four pennies, nickels, dimes, and quarters), sixteen opaque plastic cups

Before Class: Gather supplies. Set sixteen coins on the floor (four of each type). Place coins in random order in a four-by-four grid. Cover each coin with a cup so it is not visible.

Divide children into teams and have each team line up single file. Assign each team a coin type. On “Go” the first player from each team runs to a cup and looks under it without revealing the coin type to anyone else. If the coin matches his team’s type, he brings it back to his team. If not (or if the coin is gone), he puts the cup down, returns to his team empty-handed, and tags the next player to go. The first team to find all four of its coins wins. Remind children that the most important thing to remember is Jesus and his sacrifice on our behalf.

Option 2: Hurry Waiter!

Supply List: paper plate (one per team), ping-pong ball (one per team)

Before Class: Gather supplies.

Divide children into equal teams, and have them line up single file with about 2 feet between each person on their team. The first person on each team is the first “waiter.” Give each waiter a plastic plate with a ping-pong ball on it. On “Go” have the waiter hold the plate with one hand while weaving in and out among his teammates. If the ball or plate falls, the player must start over from the beginning. When the child reaches the end of the line, he must hold the plate and ball with both hands while he runs back to the front. He then passes the plate and ball to the next person in line, saying, “Dinner is served!” before running back to the end of the line empty-handed. The new waiter repeats the process. Play continues until everyone on the team has had a turn to be the waiter. The first team to finish wins.

CRAFTS

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

K–2nd

Option 1: Supper Time!

Supply List: paper, scissors, crayons, glue sticks, construction paper, grocery ads

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a fork, knife, spoon, and plate. Make a sample craft.

Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children color the place setting, cut each item out, and glue all items to a piece of construction paper. Have children find pictures of food they like in the grocery ads, then cut them out and glue them to their plate. Remind children that the Last Supper was a supper to remember forever.

Option 2: Passover Lamb

Supply List: cardstock, scissors, cotton balls, glue sticks, crayons

Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, make copies of a lamb template. Make a sample craft.

Set copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children take a lamb paper and cut out the lamb. They then glue cotton balls to the lamb's body, pulling the cotton balls to stretch them out, if desired. Have them color the face of the lamb with crayons. On the back of the lamb have children write, "Jesus is our Passover Lamb."

3rd–5th

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Option 2: The Last, Best Supper

Supply List: paper, scissors, construction paper, colored pencils, glue sticks, red and brown tissue paper

Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a picture of a glass (goblet style) and a loaf of bread. Make a sample craft.

Place copies and remaining supplies on tables. Have children cut out the glass and bread and then glue them to a piece of construction paper. Have them write the Big Truth underneath the glass and bread. Instruct children to tear the red tissue paper into small pieces and glue them "inside" the glass to make it look like wine. Then they can tear the brown tissue paper into small pieces and glue them to the loaf of bread. Remind children that the Last Supper was a supper to remember forever.



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