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The Cross Of *Christ*

Cross in the Old Testament



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To reveal what the Old Testament says about Jesus and the Cross.
- To explain the concept of ‘Shadows’ and ‘Types.’
- To motivate children to crush Satan’s head on a daily basis.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Genesis 3:15; Luke 24:27; Acts 1:2-3; Matthew 6:10 (Shadow of the Cross)



MEMORY VERSE

Romans 16:20: “The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week.



INTRODUCTION

The central message and ministry of the Church is the Cross of Christ. 1 Corinthians 1:17-18 says, “For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the gospel—not with words of human wisdom, lest the cross of Christ be emptied of its power. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

In fact the very reason why Jesus came to the earth was, to die on the Cross. So we will attempt to make a detailed study of the Cross, and how it can change our lives, over the next seven weeks.

Note to the Facilitator

We see many ‘Shadows’ of the Cross of Christ in the Old Testament. We will be covering only three of them during these sessions:

- **Primary Level:** God’s Prophecy about Jesus in the Garden of Eden.
- **Junior Level:** Slaughter of innocent animals to clothe Adam and Eve.
- **Senior Level:** The Passover Lamb and Jesus.









ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Shadows

Ask the children to identify different objects based on their shadows. The Original Objects and their Shadows are given below. (The Student Workbook contains only the shadows).

Objects	Shadows
Fire Extinguisher	

Flag	
Man	
Egyptian Mummy	
Piggy Bank	
Pushpin	
Tree	

Show

After the completion of the activity, display to the children the Original Objects given in the Teacher's Handbook.

Explain

It's not always easy to identify an object based just on its shadow. Usually the original object is much bigger, brighter and more beautiful than the shadow. However, the shadow does give us an idea of what the original object looks like.

In the Old Testament we see many 'shadows' of Jesus Christ and the Cross. We will try to understand this concept in greater detail in today's lesson.

**TEACHING CONTENT****Introduce Topic to the Children**

Many people think that Jesus accidentally died on the Cross when things got out of control, and the religious leaders had Him killed. But this is wrong thinking!

God planned to sacrifice Jesus (so that He could save us); and He prepared this plan even before the world was created!

The first time God mentioned this salvation plan of His, was in the Garden of Eden. So we will take a closer look at the Creation Story of Adam and Eve, and discover for ourselves how Jesus' sacrifice is mentioned even in the Garden of Eden!

Story Sequencing

The Story of Adam and Eve is depicted in a series of pictures, in the Student Workbook.

Ask the children to number the pictures in the right sequence. Encourage them to briefly explain the story, in the correct sequence, based on the pictures.

Note: The purpose of this exercise is to avoid monotony, as most of the children will already be familiar with the story. Prompt them by asking questions like these:

- Who were Adam and Eve?
- Why did God make them?
- Where did they live?
- Who was the snake?
- What is sin?
- What is God's promise to mankind?

Explain

God put a curse upon Satan because he led Adam and Eve into sin. The Lord said, "... I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel" (Genesis 3:15).

In other words, God said to Satan, "One of the woman's descendants will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." When the Lord spoke these words, He was in fact speaking about Jesus and the Cross.

In the same way that a snake tries to kill people by striking them with its poisonous fangs, Satan would also try to kill Jesus by having Him nailed to the cross. But the Lord predicted that when Satan tried to do this, he would only end up having his ugly head crushed! Meaning that Satan's power over man would be ended by Jesus' death on the cross.

Exactly as predicted, 4000 years later, Satan made his attempt at killing Jesus permanently. However, Jesus rose up victorious from the grave, **defeating both sin and death.**

Sin and Death Defeated

Sin and death are the two primary weapons that Satan has always used to defeat humans. 'Death' included not just physical death, but

also eternal separation from God in hell. This is the punishment that comes to all those who listen to Satan and sin against God.

However, after Jesus defeated Satan, and his weapons of sin and death, His followers received a new power from God. God gave them the power to overcome sin and temptation, so that they could live holy lives.

Moreover, death could no longer separate them from God, because Jesus has defeated death. So now after death, His followers live with Him forever and ever, in heaven.

In this way, Satan's plans to destroy Jesus, and destroy Jesus' followers, was completely crushed.

Shadows Explained

So, God's words to Satan, in the Garden of Eden, were a 'shadow.' They were a shadow of what Jesus would do on the Cross 4000 years later.

The Old Testament is filled with many such 'shadows.' There are many people, objects and events mentioned in the Old Testament, which act as 'shadows,' pointing towards Jesus and the Cross.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.

If the Old Testament included so many 'shadows' about Jesus and the Cross, why were the disciples so heart-broken when Jesus was crucified? Why didn't they realise that Jesus would successfully defeat sin and death?

Shadows are not very clear. During our Opening Activity, we realised that it's not always easy to correctly understand a shadow.

In the same way, Jesus' disciples didn't understand the Old Testament 'shadows' properly. They were familiar with the words God spoke to Satan in the Garden. But they didn't understand the meaning of these words properly.

This is why, after Jesus rose from the dead, He remained with them for forty days, teaching and explaining to them, the meaning of all these shadows.

Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself."

Similarly Acts 1:2-3 records, "Until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen. After his suffering, he showed himself to these men and gave many convincing proofs that he was alive. He appeared to them over a period of forty days and spoke about the kingdom of God."

In the Garden of Eden, God told Satan that Jesus would one day crush his head. If God's words are true, then why is Satan so powerful today? Why are so many people still under his influence? Do you think his head was really crushed?

The key lies in Matthew 6:10 which says, "... your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

Jesus has finished crushing Satan when He defeated him on the cross, ending the power of sin and death over people. Ephesians 1:22 says, "And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church."

But God doesn't force His Will upon us. We have to choose to allow Jesus to take control of our lives. And when He does, Satan's hold over us is broken. Unfortunately, many Christians seem to prefer partnering with Satan in sin rather than crushing him.

If we prefer not to resist but yield to temptations, Satan gains power over us, even though his head is crushed. However if we are 'Willing' to put up a fight, then the Lord will provide us with all the power needed to defeat him.

Romans 16:20 assures us, "The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you."

Likewise, Hebrews 4:16 encourages us saying, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

God's will of crushing Satan has already been accomplished in heaven. If we want this will to be accomplished here on earth in our own lives, all we need to do is ask the Lord to help us do this; and He will give us the power to crush Satan every time a temptation comes.

Can you think of some practical things we can do, to crush Satan's head on a daily basis?

One of the main mistakes Adam and Eve did was allowing Satan into tempting them to please themselves. They chose to please themselves by eating the forbidden fruit. They did NOT think about pleasing God or making Him happy.

Pleasing God vs. Pleasing Self

If we make a conscious choice every day to please God, instead of pleasing ourselves, it will become easier to crush Satan's head. For example, the Lord Jesus asked the new Christians in Jerusalem to share their belongings with one another. I'm sure many of them didn't feel like giving away their hard-earned money to others. But they chose to please God rather than to please themselves.

Because of their new unselfish attitude, new believers were added to the church every day!!! The church increased in size every single day, and Satan's head got very badly crushed.

So choosing to please God, rather than please ourselves, is one very effective method of crushing Satan's head.

Saying 'No' to Temptation

Another simple way of crushing Satan's head is by saying 'No' to temptation. Every time we say 'No' to Satan, we crush his head, and he is unable to harm us.

Not accepting Sickness/Poverty

Moreover, we must refuse to let Satan harm us with sickness or poverty. If we constantly fall sick, or if our family is having a lot of financial hardships, we mustn't simply accept the situation and adjust to it. Instead we must pray and claim Gods' help.

God wants us to have an abundant life. So we must hold on in faith to God and pray until we see the sickness and poverty wiped out of our lives. Many Christians mistakenly accept sickness and poverty because they do not realize they have the power to crush Satan by praying against him.

1 John 3:8 says, "... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work."



APPLICATION

The very first Shadow of the Cross in the Bible talks about how Jesus would crush Satan's head. Reflect on how you can make this effective in your own life this week.

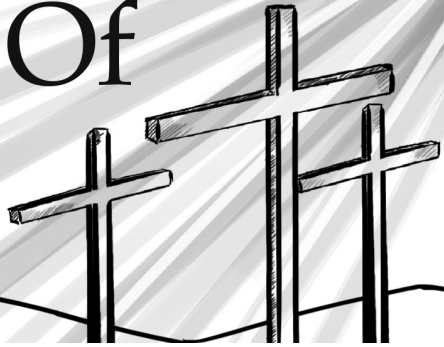
What are some of the steps you will take this week, to crush Satan's head? Come back with testimonies next week of how Jesus helped you accomplish this.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Jesus Talked About the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus compared His crucifixion to the dying of a Wheat kernel.
- To motivate children not to be “Pretend Christians.”



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

John 12:24-26; Romans 12:1; Matthew 10:38-39 (Death of a Wheat Kernel)



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 10:38-39: “... anyone who does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

Materials Needed

- Fruit/vegetable
- Knife
- Paper plates
- Wet tissues or Finger-bowl to wash hands if necessary



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Which 'Shadow' of the Cross do we see in the Garden of Eden?
- Did you allow the Lord to crush Satan under your feet this week? Give examples of your victories.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Romans 16:20)



INTRODUCTION

Have you ever wondered whether Jesus knew what would happen to Him, when He came to the earth? Do you think He knew that He would be crucified? Do you think He knew when He would die? Do you think He knew about the horror of it all?

The fact is, Jesus openly discussed His death on many occasions while living on the earth. When talking to outsiders, He referred indirectly to His death on the cross. But when speaking to His disciples and close followers, He described His upcoming death in great detail.

Last week, we looked at what the Old Testament had to say about the Cross. This week, we will look at what Jesus Himself had to say about it.

Note to the Facilitator

Jesus talked about the Cross on various occasions, during His time on earth. However, we will look at only three aspects during these sessions:

- **Primary Level:** Jesus compared Himself to a Wheat Kernel.
- **Junior Level:** Jesus compared Himself to the Temple.
- **Senior Level:** Jesus compared Himself to a Bronze Serpent.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Many Seeds from One Seed

Items to take to the class;

- Fruit/vegetable
- Knife
- Paper plates
- Wet tissues or Finger-bowl to wash hands if necessary

Take a fruit/vegetable that contains many seeds inside it (eg., pomegranate, orange, maize, guava, bitter gourd, etc.) to the class. Cut it into smaller portions and give the portions to different students.

Give the children **exactly thirty seconds**, and challenge them to count the total number of seeds contained in the single fruit or vegetable. (If it's a pomegranate, or a cob of maize, they may be unable to count the total number).

Ask

It's amazing to see the large number of seeds contained in one single fruit. To grow one plant/tree of this fruit, how many seeds do you think we must put into the ground?

Say

A plant grows out of one single seed. One single seed can produce thousands of seeds when it is buried under the ground.

Explain

A single seed can produce a tree containing lots of fruits with lots more seeds. And each of those seeds in that tree contain the potential to produce many more seeds!

However, for all of this to happen, the first seed must be willing to die!

A seed is placed in the ground or falls to the ground, and as it receives water, it begins to die, meaning that the seed begins shedding its outer shell. It then swells up and bursts open. From this death, something amazing happens. New life begins. That dying seed begins to send out a root.

That root grows down into the ground. Then, that dying seed begins to poke through the ground and grows up, up, up towards the sun. How amazing! Something living comes from something that died!



TEACHING CONTENT

What Jesus Said About the Cross

Jesus compared His death on the cross to the dying of a wheat kernel under the ground.

- The life hidden inside the wheat kernel is released outside and grows into a plant only when the kernel dies.
- In the same way, Jesus wanted to show that the divine life hidden inside Him would be released and imparted to all of us only if He was willing to die.

Jesus Compares Himself to a Grain of Wheat (John 12:24-26)

Jesus said, “Listen carefully: Unless a grain of wheat is buried in the ground, dead to the world, it is never any more than a grain of wheat. But if it is buried, it sprouts and reproduces itself many times over” (John 12:24 this verse is taken from the Message Bible).

Jesus said this to bring out a very important truth.

The Seed Was Willing to Die

Watching a plant grow is always exciting! But that is just the beginning. That one plant that comes from one seed produces more than just the one seed. And you know what? I bet that seed, when it went into the ground, didn’t scream and cry and say, “No, not me! I don’t want to die. I want to stay just like I am. I don’t care if I can do more by dying and turning into a plant!”

No, that seed does exactly what it was made to do. The seed was planted in order to enjoy all that it could produce.

Jesus Was Willing to Die

In that very same way, Jesus was ready to do what He came for—to die. He didn't kick and scream all the way to the cross! The human side of Him struggled, but He knew that, what would happen after His death was even more important. Jesus knew that because of His death, many people would be able to experience life—abundant life, eternal life. And all of those people who have believed in Him are like the produce (the flowers and fruits) of that plant.

Jesus died, but there are many of us who now have life! We are like fruits from the seed, Jesus.

Am I Willing to Die?

This is why Jesus said, “Anyone who holds on to life just as it is, (like an unburied seed) destroys that life. But if you let it go, reckless in your love for Jesus, you will have it forever, real and eternal. If any of you wants to serve me, then follow me. Then you will be where I am, ready to serve at a moment's notice. The Father will honour and reward anyone who serves me” (John 12:25-26 this verse is take from the Message Bible).

So the choice is ours. If we wish, we can choose to follow Jesus by giving up all the things that He is asks us to give up, even if it's painful. If we do so, the Lord will give us an abundant and full life, filled with His love, joy and peace. And, one day, He will honour and reward us in front of the whole world.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.

In the lesson that we studied today, what did Jesus compare His death to?

He compared His death on the cross to a wheat kernel dying inside the ground.

What do you think is the similarity between a wheat kernel dying in the ground, and Jesus dying on the cross? What do the two have in common?

When the wheat kernel dies, it gives birth to a plant with thousands of wheat grains. Because that one seed sacrifices its life, many more seeds are able to grow out of it.

In the same way, Jesus died on the cross, allowing the Roman soldiers to crucify Him. Because of His sacrifice, today millions of people have new life or salvation. Today all those who accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour receive eternal life because of Jesus' sacrifice.

So the sacrificial death of one seed/person leads to new life for many millions.

Jesus said, "... unless a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds." Is Jesus saying that all of us should kill ourselves and die?

Jesus wants us to be "living sacrifices" (Romans 12:1).

A living sacrifice is when you don't have to kill your body. We simply kill our desire to do whatever we wish. Instead, we humbly submit to God, and do only those things that God wants us to do.

What are some of the things that God wants us to kill in our lives?

We must kill every desire to do sinful things like lying, copying and behaving rudely.

We must also kill the desire to hold on to things that God wants us to give up.

For example:

- God may ask someone to give away their favourite toy to someone in need. They must make this sacrifice even if it's as painful as dying.
- To use another example, God may ask someone to watch less TV. They must willingly kill the desire to stay glued to the TV, and choose to obey.
- Another example would be that of God asking a person to put all their pocket money into the Offering Bag on Sunday. The person must kill her desire to hold onto the money, and be willing to give to God.

So here “killing ourselves” doesn't involve physical death.

- Rather it involves killing the desire to do sinful things.
- And it involves the willingness to sacrifice everything that God asks of us.



APPLICATION

Matthew 10:38-39 says, “... anyone who does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.”

- Some people DON'T pray the salvation prayer because they have decided to follow Jesus. They pray it simply to get a 'ticket' to heaven; they have no real intention of obeying Jesus daily.
- Such people are NOT Children of God, though they may imagine that they are.

Are you a Pretend Christian or a Real One? Make a commitment to be a true follower of Jesus, today onwards.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*

Wisdom of the Cross—Atonement



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the concept of 'Atonement.'
- To teach the principle of forgiving and forgetting the wrongs done to us.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Leviticus 16:1-34; Exodus 25:17-22; Matthew 6:14-15
(What is Atonement?)



MEMORY VERSE

Matthew 6:14-15: "For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins."

Materials Needed

- White paper
- Sticker-Sheets
- Sketch pens/colour pencils



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What is the difference between a Pretend Christian and a Real One?
- Were you a “living sacrifice” this week? Give some examples of the sacrifices you made.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (John 12:24).



INTRODUCTION

1 Corinthians 1:18 says, “For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”

Some people consider the Message of the Cross as ‘foolishness.’ How could it be that God would allow His own creatures to nail Him to a cross? Why did God use the cross as the means of delivering His people from their sin? How is it possible for life to come from death? These are some of the questions that they raise.

Today, we will look at the great wisdom that God in fact displayed, when He chose the method of the Cross to save people.

Note to the Facilitator

The Cross becomes Wisdom only when it is seen through Divine Eyes, through a Divine Gaze. The purpose of this session is to help children see the great wisdom God displayed on the Cross, by briefly acquainting them with some of the important aspects of Christ’s work on the Cross.

- **Primary Level:** God’s Wisdom in providing Atonement for humans.
- **Junior Level:** God’s Wisdom in gaining Redemption for humans.

- **Senior Level: Senior Level:** God’s Wisdom seen in Substitution, when He took our place.



ATTENTION GETTER

Prepare beforehand

Cut out squares of white paper, and deliberately create small ink-stains on them. Take a few Sticker-Sheets, and lots of sketch pens and colour pencils to the class.

Activity: A ‘Cover—Up’ Job

Ask the children to cover the ink-stains;

- by drawing colourful patterns over them, and
- by placing stickers over them

Note: Please make sure that the Activity Time does not cross ten minutes.

Explain

Let’s assume that I accidentally drop ink on my favourite T-shirt, and I can’t get the stain out. Every time people look at that T-shirt, they will all be reminded of the big mistake I made, and I will feel ashamed of myself.

If I want people to forget my mistake, I need to either wash it off somehow, or at least cover it up. One way I can do this is by painting some cool graphics over the stain, using fabric paints.

If I do that, people will no longer remember my mistake. In future, instead of criticizing me for my mistake, they will probably compliment me for my attractive T-shirt.

Don’t you think this would be a very clever and wise way to deal with my mistake? In the same way, Jesus too did something very clever and wise to deal with all the sinful mistakes we have committed.

We will find out more about this in today’s session.



TEACHING CONTENT

How God's Wisdom Was Displayed

God loved the Israelites very much and wanted to live among them. But they were a sinful people who sinned again and again.

Because God is holy and hates sin, He knew that He could not just ignore their sins. If He went to live among them, He knew He would have to kill and destroy them for their many sins.

So God came up with a very wise plan to deal with their sins, which would make it possible for Him to forgive them and live among them.

Atonement Cover and Day of Atonement

(Leviticus 16:1-34; Exodus 25:17-22)

God told Moses to set up a Tabernacle outside the Israelite Camp, so that He could meet with the Israelites there. The Tabernacle was divided into three portions: the outer court, the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place. (*Show them the Tabernacle Coloring Sheet in the Student Workbook*).

Inside the Most Holy Place, was the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a wooden box covered with pure gold. The lid of this box was called the "Kippur." On the top of this lid, at the two ends, stood two cherubim (angels) facing each other.

Why the Lid was called 'Kippur?'

The word 'Kippur' literally meant "to cover over." The lid of the Ark was called this because it "covered over" the Ark, so that nobody could see what was hidden inside. Nobody could see the stone tablets in the Ark because it was "covered over" by the Kippur.

The lid of the Ark was called 'Kippur' for one other important reason. We will study this in greater detail right now.

Yom Kippur—Day of Atonement

God ordered that on the tenth day of the seventh month all Israelites must celebrate the Festival of Yom Kippur. In Hebrew, *Yom* means *day*, and *Kippur* means *covering over*. In other words, they were asked to celebrate the “Day of Covering Over.”

This was the one and only day when the High Priest was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies and stand before God’s Ark. Nobody was allowed to enter the Holy of Holies on any other day of the year—not even the High Priest! So the people prepared themselves very carefully for this important day.

Fasting and Sacrifices

Everybody was required to fast from sunset on the day before until three o’clock on that afternoon, the hour when the offering was placed on the altar. No person could eat anything in all that time. Even children (except nursing babies) were not allowed to have any food. They had to spend their time repenting of all their sins, and then gather in front of the Tabernacle, seeking God’s mercy.

Early in the morning of that day, the high-priest offered on the altar before the Tabernacle what was called “a sin-offering,” for himself and his family. It was a young ox, burned upon the altar (*Point out the Altar in the Tabernacle Colouring Sheet*).

He took some of the blood of this ox, and carried it through the Holy Place, lifted the veil, entered into the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled the blood on the lid of the Ark.

He did this to show that he was himself a sinner, and he asked God to show mercy and forgiveness to him and his family.

Then the priest came again to the great altar before the Tabernacle. Here two goats were brought to him. On the forehead of one goat was written “For the Lord,” and on the other, words that meant “To be sent away.” These two goats were looked upon as bearing the sins

of the people. One was killed, and burned on the altar; and the priest, with some of the blood of the slain goat, again entered the Holy of Holies, and sprinkled the blood on the lid of the Ark. By doing this, he asked God to forgive the sins of the people.

Then the high-priest came out of the Tabernacle again, and laid his hands on the head of the living goat, the one whose forehead was marked “To be sent away,” as if to place upon him the sin of all the people. Then this goat, which was called the “Scapegoat,” was led away into the wilderness, to some desolate place from which he would never find his way back to the camp; and there he was left, to wander as he chose. This was to show the sins of the people as taken away, never to come back to them.

When this service was over, the people were looked upon as having their sins forgiven and forgotten by the Lord. Then the regular afternoon offering was given on the altar; and after that the people could go home happy, and end their long fast with all the food that they wished to eat.

“Covering Over” of Sins

When the Israelites performed these rituals with a sincere repentant heart, God “covered over” their sins. In other words, He “forgave and forgot” all the evil things they had done.

In the same way the lid of the Ark “covered over” the box (so that no one could see the contents inside), the blood of the sacrificed animals also “covered over” the sins of the people, so that God could no longer see or remember their sins.

The Lord accepted the blood sacrifice of these animals because He knew that one day, Jesus would ‘replace’ these animals with His own body, and sacrifice Himself on the Cross. Animal blood cannot forgive sins, but the blood of Jesus definitely can! So God accepted the animal blood, knowing that Jesus’ blood would replace it one day.

Atonement

Today we use a big English word to describe this “covering over and forgiveness of sins.” It’s called ‘Atonement.’ Atonement simply means that Jesus’ blood has “covered over” our sins.

In Leviticus 17:11 God said, “For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one’s life.”

When we humbly confess our sins to the Lord, and promise Him that we won’t repeat them, He “covers over” our sins. He forgives and forgets that we ever committed those sins.

In this way, He gives us an opportunity to start over with a clean record. He treats us as if we never, ever committed any sins! This is the beauty of Atonement!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

What does ‘Atonement’ mean?

Atonement is the “covering over, forgiving and forgetting” of our sins by God.

Can you guess why the lid of the Ark was called the ‘Kippur’ (or Atonement Cover)?

The Hebrew word for ‘Atonement’ is ‘Kippur’ which literally means “covering over.”

- The lid of the Ark was called ‘Kippur’ because it “covered over” the inner contents of the Ark, hiding them from being seen.
- The lid of the Ark was also called ‘Kippur’ because the blood of the sacrifices was sprinkled on this lid. This ‘blood’ reminded God that

Jesus' own blood would one day "cover over" and wash away all our sins.

The lid of the Ark was called "Atonement Cover" for these two reasons.

Today if we want God to "cover over" our sins, should we sacrifice oxen and goats?

We don't make animal sacrifices anymore because Jesus has finished sacrificing Himself on the cross.

In Old Testament times, the Israelites made animal sacrifices because Jesus had not yet come into the world. God accepted the blood of the sacrificed animals because He knew that one day it would be replaced by Jesus' own blood.

Now that Jesus' blood has been shed on the cross for us, we don't need any animal blood to cover our sins. God forgives and forgets our sins today because Jesus' blood washes away our sins.

The Israelites used two goats for their ritual on the Day of Atonement. In what way can we compare these two goats to Jesus?

The first goat was sacrificed on the altar, and its blood was sprinkled on the Atonement Cover of the Ark. In the same way, Jesus too sacrificed Himself on the cross for us, and His blood "covers over" our sins today.

The second goat was sent away into the desert to wander and die there, carrying on its own head all the sins of the people. Because this goat never returned, the people's sins also did not return. In other words, God forgot all about their sins once they repented and placed all their sins on that goat.

In the same way, once the blood of Jesus washes away our sins, God forgets about our sins and doesn't think about them anymore. He starts treating us as if we have never, ever sinned!



APPLICATION

When something is “covered over” it can no longer be seen. So when God “covers over” our sins He no longer sees them. He forgives us and treats us as if we have never ever betrayed Him. He pours His love upon us and treats us like sinless people.

Because God has forgiven us in this generous way, He expects us to forgive others in the same way. We must forgive people who hurt us by “covering over” what they have done. In other words, we must stop reminding ourselves of the hurtful things they did. And every time we meet, them, we must treat them as if they never, ever hurt us. We must ‘forget’ what they did.

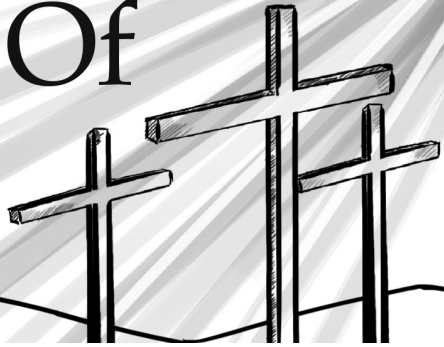
Jesus warns us in Matthew 6:14-15, “For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Power of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus ‘identified’ with us, so that we can ‘identify with Him.’
- To show that when we identify with Jesus, His power is released into our lives and situations.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Philippians 2:6-8; Hebrews 4:15-16; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Ephesians 1:19-20 (Jesus ‘Identified’ with us)



MEMORY VERSE

2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- In what way are the two Atonement Day goats compared to Jesus?
- Why must we forgive and forget when people hurt us? Did you practice this last week?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Leviticus 17:11).



INTRODUCTION

Through the Fall, mankind became a slave to sin and Satan. They gained mastery over the human race. But the power of the Cross broke the dominion of sin and Satan over our lives.

We will find out today how Jesus did this for us on the Cross.

Note to the Facilitator

On the Cross we see many aspects of God's power displayed. However, during this session, we will focus on three specific aspects:

- **Primary Level:** God's Power is released to us through Identification.
- **Junior Level:** Christ broke sin's power over our lives.
- **Senior Level:** Christ annulled Satan's power over our lives.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Who is He?

There are two pictures of Sachin Tendulkar given in the Student Workbook. The students must identify the 'genuine' Sachin. (The other person is only a 'look-alike' imitating him).

Explain

'Picture A' is a photo of Sachin. 'Picture B' is a photo of Ashok Singh who greatly resembles Sachin.

Ashok Singh used to be a gold medalist in gymnastics from GNDU, and later became a coach. However, when people started commenting on his similarity to Tendulkar, he decided to use this resemblance to make money. Soon, Ashok was being paid by people to attend a whole range of parties and functions, so that he could entertain the crowds with his looks. In this way, Ashok gained both fame and money.

Ask

- When 'performing' at the paid parties, how do you think Ashok usually dressed? Would he go to the party in expensive clothes, or do you think he went dressed in the blue uniform of the Indian cricket team?

(Ask the children for their guesses.)

- At these parties, do you think he behaved as he usually did, or do you think he tried hard to talk like Sachin and imitate his body gestures?

(Ask the children for their guesses.)

Explain

People invited Ashok to their functions because he resembled Sachin. So I'm sure Ashok always tried his best to dress up, talk, and gesticulate exactly like Sachin.

A big English word for this would be 'Identification.'

Ashok would try his best to identify with Sachin to the extent where he looked like him, talked like him, gesticulated like him, and maybe even smiled like him.

Of course, Ashok Singh did all of this simply to entertain people and earn money. But sometimes fans of a superstar try to imitate their

role-models in every way. Not only do they dress like them and talk like them, they even begin to **think and feel** like their ‘role models.’

In the UK, many schoolchildren ‘identify’ so strongly with a certain football player that they talk like him, kick the ball just like him, and even curse like him, using the same cuss-words that he uses on the sports field. By ‘identifying’ with him, they have become like him.

This is of course, a negative example of ‘identification.’ A positive example, on the other hand, would be that of a person who identifies with Jesus so much, that they begin to think like Jesus, talk like Jesus, and behave like Jesus.

The Bible says that it is possible for ordinary people like us to ‘identify’ with Jesus to this extent. We will find out today how the Cross made this a very real possibility for us.



TEACHING CONTENT

Jesus Identified with Us

Identifying with an Ant

Have you ever tried to ‘identify’ with an ant? Have you tried thinking like one, feeling the feelings that an ant would feel, eating the kind of food that it does, communicating with other ants the way an ant would, and so on?

However hard you try, you cannot “identify fully” with the ant because you are human and you are comfortably seated in a chair. You don’t crawl over large areas, bumping into stones as big as mountains. You don’t spend hours climbing over impossibly high walls, just to get a bite of food. You don’t live in a hole inside the floor. Your home doesn’t get flooded with dirty water when somebody begins to swab the floor above your hole.

To know what these things feel like, you have to really become an ant. You have to live in that cramped little hole inside the floor along with

a hundred other ants. Only then will you know what their life feels like. Only then can you “identify fully” with them.

Identifying with Humans

This is what Jesus did for us. He came into our little hole—the earth—to identify with us.

Philippians 2:6-8: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Jesus always knew what it feels like to be human. He knew that hunger is painful; He knew that travelling from one town to the other is tiring; and He knew that facing the death of a loved one is heart-breaking. He knew all these things even before He came down to the earth, because He is God and God is All-Knowing.

But when He came down to the earth, He personally ‘experienced’ hunger first-hand. In heaven, He had never felt hungry, but here his stomach rumbled when there wasn’t enough food at home. He identified with us in our hunger and thirst.

In the same way, on earth He ‘experienced’ first-hand the deep pain of watching a loved one die. In heaven, He used to be the one who joyfully welcomed the dead person into eternity ... it was an occasion for joy back then. But here on earth, He experienced how it feels to stand next to the dead body of a loved one and long for them to open their eyes one more time. By becoming human, Jesus experienced first-hand the deep pain and loss that we experience.

In this way, Jesus experienced all that we humans experience. He was able to think and feel just like us. He ‘identified’ with us FULLY!

Hebrews 4:15-16: “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been

tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.”

Why Jesus Identified with Us

Jesus went through all of this so that He could help us.

Let’s assume that you find out the ant-hole is going to be submerged in a few days. You bend over the hole and shout to the ants, “All of you must leave the hole immediately along with your food supplies. Your home is going to be destroyed in a great flood three days from now.” Most of the ants will probably not even hear you!

But if you become an ant, you can go inside the hole, and explain the danger to them. Then you can lead them out of the hole, and take them to a safer place. Jesus came down to the earth to do the same with us.

He Identified with Us—to Warn Us

Jesus came to WARN US that our sins were putting us in great danger. He warned that if we didn’t repent of our sins, then we couldn’t be part of God’s kingdom.

Matthew 4:17: “From that time on Jesus began to preach, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is near.’”

He Identified with Us—to Show Us How to Escape

Then Jesus went on to SHOW US how a repentant person thinks, acts and talks. Through His words, actions and choices, Jesus showed us how a perfect person should live.

But even after Jesus showed people how to live perfectly, they were still not able to do it.

He was so perfect! But they were so imperfect!

So Jesus offered to EXCHANGE PLACES with imperfect people:

Jesus, the perfect person, took the place of imperfect people (and suffered the severe punishment for all their imperfect, sinful actions).

1 Peter 3:18: “For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive by the Spirit ...”

In exchange, imperfect people like us can now take the place of the Perfect Jesus (and enjoy all the blessings that belong to a perfectly holy person).

2 Corinthians 5:21: “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

The Results of Identification

Jesus “identified’ with us” (by sharing our suffering) ... so that one day, we could “identify with him” (by sharing his holiness and blessings).

- Jesus **became like us** and suffered our punishment.
- Now we must **become like Him** and enjoy the rewards of holiness.

On the cross, the power of God was released in a mighty way!

When we make a conscious effort each day to ‘identify’ with Jesus—to think like Him, talk like Him and behave like Him—His great resurrection power is released into our lives. And we discover that we are able to really live like Him!

Ephesians 1:19-20: “... his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms.”

So no Christian has an excuse to continue living in sin. Because God’s power is available to us, we must “identify fully” with Jesus and start behaving just like Him.

1 Peter 2:24 says, “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness ...”



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

How can we “identify with Jesus” in practical everyday situations?

How do I “identify with Jesus” when a classmate punches me, and I feel like punching him back?

“Identifying with Jesus” basically involves believing that Jesus took my place of punishment on the cross, and that I took His place of glory.

We find it easy to believe the first part ... that Jesus took our place on the cross. Most of us have the faith to believe this.

But Satan tries very hard to stop us from believing the second part ... that **we took Jesus’ place of honor and power**. The truth is that Jesus allowed Himself to become weak on the cross so that we can become strong. Satan doesn’t want us to realise this truth.

So when a classmate punches me, I may honestly feel like punching him back. But I don’t have to! The truth is that I have taken Jesus’ place of victory; so now I’m strong enough to resist temptation, just like Jesus!

So I can whisper a quick prayer to Jesus and tell him what I believe, “Jesus I know **you became like me, so that I can become like you**. I’m now strong enough to resist this temptation. So release your power into me and help me not to hit out at my classmate.”

Firmly make up your mind and begin to walk away from the situation.

Then, in that moment, the resurrection power of God will be released into you, and you will be able to successfully resist the temptation.

Most Christians are continuing to live in sin because they haven't realised **they have taken Jesus' place** ... they have become as strong as Him!

Ephesians 6:10-11: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes."

How do I "identify with Jesus" when I feel like stealing a cookie from the kitchen?

Encourage the children to give their responses ...

Help them see that they have now taken Jesus' place of victory ... help them see that they're now strong enough to resist any and every temptation.

1 Corinthians 10:13: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it."

How do I "identify with Jesus" when the exams are nearing, and I feel terrified?

I have taken Jesus' place of honor and glory. Because Jesus gained victory both over temptation and fear, I too have gained victory over fear. So I don't need to be scared of anything, anymore.

I can confidently claim scriptures like Philippians 4:6-7: "Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."

Philippians 4:6 orders me not to be anxious about anything ... not

even exams. Because I have taken Jesus' place, I now have the power to obey this order and stop being anxious.

- In Jesus' Name **I must command the fear to leave** (and continue doing this every time the fear returns.)
- And I must remind myself of the many Bible promises which assure that God will take care of me.
- Just as Philippians 4:6 suggests, I must begin thanking God for the wonderful help He will provide in the exams.
- Also, I must begin to thank God that the fear will go away and God's peace will take control of my heart and mind.

Jesus always used Bible verses to deal with fear and temptation. I must "identify with Jesus" by doing the same. Then the resurrection power of God will flood me, and I will experience a deep sense of peace and security.

How do I "identify with Jesus" when I'm terrified of facing the bully at school the next day?

Jesus took my place so that I can take his place. Because I have now taken his place of safety and security, I don't have to be afraid of anyone.

- In Jesus' Name **I must command the fear to leave** (because Jesus will protect me).
- In Jesus' Name **I must command the doubts to leave** (doubts that maybe Jesus will not protect me).
- In Jesus' Name **I must thank God** that He will give me the wisdom to know exactly what to do at school the next day, in case there is a problem.

When I "identify with Jesus" in this way—confident that He will never let me down—the resurrection power of God will enter into my difficult circumstances and change the situation completely.

Hebrews 13:5-6: ... God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.” So we say with confidence, “The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?”



APPLICATION

We must BELIEVE that we exchanged places with Jesus on the cross;

- So now we can be as holy as He is.
- We can be as strong as Him in resisting temptation.
- We can be as fearless as Him in even the worst situations (because He will always take care of us and protect us).
- We can be as successful as Him (because He will pour His blessings upon us).

Jesus took our place and suffered for our sins ...

... so that we can take His place and enjoy holiness, power, blessings and rewards.

Reflect on how you can apply this truth to your own life, in times of fear and temptation.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*

From the Cross to the Throne



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus is our Advocate and Defender.
- To explain the role of Repentance in gaining God's forgiveness.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 1:9; 2:1-2, Revelation 12:10 (Jesus Our Advocate)



MEMORY VERSE

1 John 2:1: "... But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Jesus identify with us to the extent of becoming like us?

- How did you identify with Jesus, when tempted this week? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (2 Corinthians 5:21).



INTRODUCTION

After sacrificing Himself on the cross for us and returning to heaven, Jesus did not forget us. He continues to work on our behalf even today. We will now study in what way Jesus is ministering to us at present.

Note to the Facilitator

Jesus is seated at the right-hand of God today; and in His current position of King of Kings He is still ministering to us. We will study certain specific aspects of this ministry during this session:

- **Primary Level:** Jesus is our advocate.
- **Junior Level:** Jesus is our high priest.
- **Senior Level:** Jesus is our intercessor and mediator.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Guess their Profession

The Student Workbook contains clip art depicting different professions. The children should guess which professions are portrayed.



TEACHING CONTENT

One of the professions mentioned in the Activity Sheet is that of 'Advocate.'

Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross for us, so that He could become our 'Advocate.'

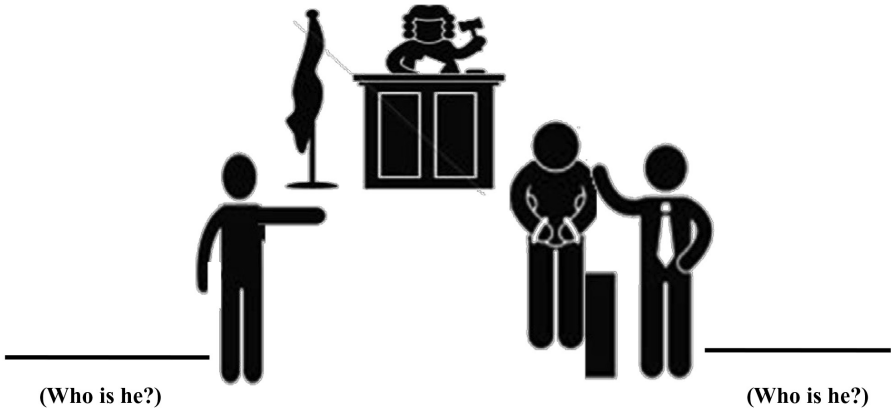
1 John 2:1: “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

Who Is an Advocate?

‘Advocate’ is generally a term used in the courtroom. When a criminal is brought to the court to be judged and punished, two persons play a very important role.

- The first is the Prosecutor. He accuses the criminal, explaining to the judge what crimes the criminal has committed. And he formally requests the judge to severely punish the criminal.
- However, there is also an Advocate present at that time. Sometimes, he is called the Defendant because he defends the criminal. He speaks on behalf of the accused person, seeking for mercy and kindness.

In the picture given below, can you guess who is the Accuser (the prosecutor), and who is the Defendant (Advocate)?



Jesus Our Advocate

The Bible uses similar Courtroom Terminology to describe our position in Christ.

Can you guess who serves as the Chief Judge (in heaven)?

God the Father.

Who do you think is the Criminal?

- What is their crime?
- What is the punishment for their crime?

Every person who has sinned against God is a “spiritual criminal.” According to the Bible, the punishment for sin is eternal death in hell.

Who do you think is the Accuser (the Prosecutor)?

Satan. He accuses us of our many sins before God.

Revelation 12:10: “... the accuser of our brothers, who accuses them before our God day and night ...”

Who do you think is the Defendant (Advocate)?

Jesus Christ

Explain

1 John 2:1-2 says, “My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.”

When we sin against God, immediately Satan accuses us before God saying, “Give me control over this person’s life because she has sinned.”

Every time we sin, we place ourselves under Satan’s’ control. Our sins make us feel guilty and separated from God, and we lose out on the close friendship which we can have with God.

- Some Christians prefer to live like this. They don’t have any desire to be friends with God. So they don’t admit that they have sinned; and they make no efforts to change their ways. (Only when a desperate personal need comes up, do they remember God once more.)

- However some Christians truly love God. They long to feel close to Him. So they admit their sins to God, and ask for His forgiveness. They promise that they won't repeat these sins again.

When a person repents of their sins, then Jesus immediately rises to their rescue. He doesn't allow Satan to take control of them. He becomes our Advocate and Defendant, and He speaks to God the Father on our behalf, saying something like this:

“What Satan says is true. This person has committed the sin that Satan is accusing him of. But I have finished paying the punishment for this sin. Therefore I ask you to forgive this person completely.”

When Jesus speaks up on our behalf, the Father listens to Him. He forgives and protects us, so that Satan doesn't gain control over us or harm us further.

One of the main reasons for Jesus dying on the cross was so that He could defend us in this way, everyday.

1 Timothy 2:5: “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Why is it important to immediately repent whenever we sin against God?

When we sin, the closeness we have with God is broken. Our sins come between God and us. Immediately, Satan begins to gain control over us. He starts doing his best to make us go more and more far away from God. He starts sending many more temptations, to increase the distance between God and us.

If we don't confess our sin and return to God quickly, we grow spiritually weaker and weaker. We will begin to find sinfulness more attractive than godly things. In fact we may finally reach a stage where our hearts grow hard and we don't care about Jesus any more. Satan will do everything in his power to bring us to this stage.

However, if we immediately confess our sins and repent, then Jesus is able to act on our behalf. He speaks to the Father for us, and God's forgiveness and protection come upon us.

This is why it's foolish to delay in repenting and returning to the Lord. We must do it immediately.

What if I commit a very horrible sin? What if I steal one thousand rupees from someone? Will Jesus speak to the Father for me, even in this case?

Jesus is ready to help anyone who repents. I may commit the worst sin; but if I repent Jesus will help me.

If I repent, Jesus will request the Father to forgive me ... and I will be forgiven.

What exactly is repentance? How does a person 'repent'?

Repentance involves two definite steps:

- I must openly admit that what I have done is a 'sinful' thing.
- Second, I must promise God not to repeat my sin.

If I believe in my heart that what I have done isn't really a bad thing, then it's NOT true repentance. For instance, many people say 'Sorry' to the Lord, for a lie they have spoken; but in their hearts they don't really believe that telling even a small lie is really 'sinful.' In other words, they don't really believe that their little lie is "a horrible sin committed as a direct act of rebellion against God's holiness."

In such a case, Jesus cannot speak to the Father on our behalf ... because we haven't really admitted that we have 'sinned.'

Moreover, I must genuinely decide not to repeat the sin. If I haven't made a sincere commitment to avoid the sin now onwards, then it's not true repentance. In such a case, Jesus cannot speak to the Father on my behalf.

Reflect back on the many times you have repented of your sins. Was there genuine repentance involved? Or were you simply saying 'Sorry' without really meaning it?



APPLICATION

Jesus can be our Advocate only if we truly repent.

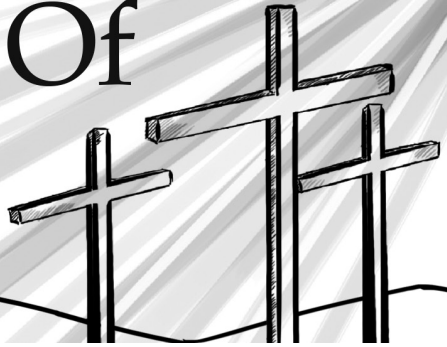
Repent of all your sins, so that Jesus can truly defend you before the Father.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Blessings of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Abrahamic Blessings became ours through the Cross.
- To explain the role of faith in acquiring these blessings.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Ephesians 2:13-14; Romans 4:16-17; Galatians 3:7-9, 13-14
(Abrahamic Blessings for us)



MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 3:14: "He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus ..."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- In what way is Jesus our Advocate?

- What exactly is repentance? How does a person ‘repent’?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (1 John 2:1).



INTRODUCTION

The four Gospels of the New Testament describe various benefits that are ours because of Christ’s sacrificial death. Each Gospel highlights some blessing that the atonement brings, and together they give us a complete picture of what Christ accomplished for us. Today we will look at one of these blessings in greater detail.

Note to the Facilitator

What blessings and what benefits, do you and I receive from what happened on the cross?

We will discuss certain specific blessings at each of the three levels:

- **Primary Level:** The blessings of Abraham.
- **Junior Level:** Forgiveness of sins; Healing from sickness and disease.
- **Senior Level:** New Covenant with better promises; Wholeness.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Spot 10 Differences

The Student Workbook contains two pictures of Boaz making arrangements for his marriage with Ruth.

- Ask the children to spot 10 differences between the two pictures.
- Explain that the person in the picture is Boaz.
- Ask them if they know anything about the special story of Ruth and Boaz.

Explain the Story briefly

Naomi grew up in Israel, but after she was married, she and her husband moved to Moab.

They had two sons. One son married a woman named Orpah, and the other son married a woman named Ruth.

Later in Moab, Naomi's husband died, and her sons died, too. When Naomi told her two daughters-in-law that she was going back to Israel, Ruth said, "I will go with you!" Naomi was old, and Ruth didn't want to leave her all alone. What a kind heart Ruth had!

Naomi and Ruth arrived in Israel at harvest time. Naomi's husband used to own land in Israel; but he had sold it to a close relative before leaving for Moab.

So now Naomi had no land of her own, and couldn't grow any crops to feed Ruth and herself. Because they had no food, Ruth said she would go gather grain that the workers had left in other people's fields.

Boaz (the owner of the field that Ruth went to) had heard that Ruth had shown great kindness to Naomi by returning to Israel with her. So he gave her plenty of grain to take home.

When Boaz continued to show kindness to Ruth daily, Naomi requested him to buy back their land for them, from the relative, and also marry Ruth.

Boaz was kind enough to spend his own money to buy back Naomi's land. Once he paid the money, the relative took off his sandal and gave it to Boaz. (People used to do this in those days to officially finalise the purchase of land).

(The picture in the Workbook shows this scene. The relative hands over his sandal to Boaz once the land—purchase is finalised.)

After the land was purchased, Boaz married Ruth, and everyone was very happy!



TEACHING CONTENT

Blessings of Abraham

When Ruth chose to return to Israel with Naomi, it changed her whole life! This is because she chose to become an Israelite and worship the God of the Israelites.

She said to Naomi, "... Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16).

When Ruth became an Israelite, she came under the blessings of Abraham. And this changed her life!

Explain

You see, God had made a special promise to Abraham. He said, "I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you, for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you" (Genesis 17:7).

According to this promise, the Israelites enjoyed special blessings that no other nation on earth enjoyed. The special Abrahamic blessings included righteousness by faith, friendship with God, financial and material prosperity, healing and wholeness ... and a lot more.

When Ruth chose to become an Israelite and worship the God of the Israelites, all of these Abrahamic blessings came upon her life.

Are the Blessings of Abraham for Gentiles too?

In Old Testament Times

In the Old Testament God explained that Gentiles too could become Israelites. If they fulfilled the rituals that God had laid down in His law, God began to consider them as Israelites (Exodus 12:48-49).

So in Old Testament times, a person had to become an Israelite if they wanted to enjoy the Abrahamic blessings.

In New Testament Times

However, after Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself on the cross for both Jews and Gentiles, the wall dividing them was broken.

Ephesians 2:13-14: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one, and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility ...”

Today, Abraham is considered the father of all those who display faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 4:16-17: “Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham’s offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. As it is written: ‘I have made you a father of many nations.’ He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls things that are not as though they were.”

Galatians 3:7-9: “Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

Galatians 3:13-14: “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

Because Jesus Christ sacrificed Himself on the Cross for us, the blessing that was promised to Abraham was taken to the Gentiles. So now everybody who accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour enjoys the same blessings that Abraham and the Israelites enjoyed!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Let us assume for a moment that Jesus has not yet come into the world to sacrifice Himself on the cross for us. If this were the situation, what blessings would we in India enjoy?

We would enjoy NONE!!!

Being non-Israelites, we would not be entitled to any of the Abrahamic blessings.

Moreover, unless somebody told us about the God of Israel, we would still be continuing our worship of other false gods and ending up in hell.

So billions of people in India, China, Germany, Iraq, and countless other countries, would have no hope of enjoying the Abrahamic blessings.

How grateful we should be for the sacrifice that Jesus has made!

Does this mean that before Jesus sacrificed Himself on the Cross, all non-Israelites had to go to hell?

The Bible says that people from distant countries heard about the mighty God of Israel and learnt that He was the true Creator—God.

As a result, many non-Israelites used to worship the Lord even in Old Testament times. (Matthew 8:10-11, 12:42; Luke 4:25-27, 11:32; 2 Kings 5:17).

These people may not have enjoyed the Abrahamic blessings because they hadn't become full-fledged Israelites; they didn't observe all the rituals laid down in the Law of Moses.

However, they did go to heaven, to be with the Lord, because they made a commitment to worship only him and not the other gods.

Some of these people might have been Indians! (During the days of Solomon, Israelites had trade contacts with India. At least some Indians must have chosen to worship the true God of Israel).

Through Jesus, what are some of the Abrahamic blessings that we enjoy today?

Mentioned below are just a few of the many Abrahamic blessings that we receive because of Christ's sacrifice;

- When we put our faith in Jesus and accept Him as Lord and Saviour, He gives us His perfect righteousness (righteousness by faith)—Genesis 15:6.
- We are given the privilege of being part of God's family, and God's personal friends (Romans 4:16).
- We receive financial and material prosperity (Genesis 17:8).
- We receive healing and wholeness (Luke 13:16).
- Through Christ, God will lift us up and honour us before the world. (the same way He did for the Israelites)—Genesis 12:2.
- He will be our shield (Genesis 15:1).
- He will give us victory over all our enemies (Genesis 22:17).



APPLICATION

Through His death on the Cross, Christ won for us the Abrahamic blessings—so that we too could be a part of Abraham's family **by faith**.

However, many of these blessings will not become ours unless we claim them **by faith**, and work towards them. So make sure that you do this!



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*

The Way of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To explain the responsibility each of us has to bear because of the Cross.
- To stress the importance of being dead to the world.
- To warn the children not to crucify Christ all over again.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Galatians 6:14; Hebrews 6:4-6 (Separation from the World)



MEMORY VERSE

Galatians 6:14: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Are the Blessings of Abraham for Gentiles too?

- Through Jesus, what are some of the Abrahamic blessings that we enjoy today?



INTRODUCTION

Over the last few weeks we have been studying the Cross of Christ in great detail. On the Cross, Jesus exchanged places with us, so that we can enjoy his blessings. Because of the Cross, the Lord has not only forgiven our sins but even forgotten them; He doesn't hold them against us anymore. Because of the Cross, we can now crush Satan's head. These are some of the benefits we enjoy because of the Cross.

Today, we will look at what our response and responsibility should be towards this Cross. When the Lord has done so much for us, what can we do for Him in return?

Note to the Facilitator

How does the Cross affect our daily lives? We will look at some of the challenges that we need to take up for the Lord, in showing our gratitude to Him. Different points will be covered at different levels;

- **Primary Level:** Separation from the world; not crucifying Christ once again.
- **Junior Level:** Living as a Friend of the Cross rather than its Enemy.
- **Senior Level:** Willingness to Suffer for the Lord.



ATTENTION GETTER

Activity: Favourite Foods

Ask

What is your favourite food?

Allow each child to name their favourite food item.

If I offered a rabbit—a bone, a carrot and some hay, which do you think the rabbit would choose?

The carrot

Explain

The same way we have favorite foods, animals too have different favorites. For example, a rabbit loves carrots best.

Can you guess the favorite foods of some of these other animals? *(The Student Workbook contains a Match the Following Activity for the children to complete.)*

Answers

honey	bear
hay	horse
milk	kitten
peanut	elephant
bamboo	panda
bone	dog
bread	duck



TEACHING CONTENT

Be Separate From the World

Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross to save us from the punishment of sin. Now He expects us to separate ourselves from the world and no longer do the sinful things that the world does. In Galatians 6:14, Paul explains to what extent God expects us to separate ourselves from the world.

Galatians 6:14: “May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.”

Be Crucified to the World

According to this verse, I must be ‘crucified’ to the world. In other words, I must be dead to the world.

Let us take the example of a cat to understand this better. Cats love milk! If you leave your kitchen window open, chances are that a cat will slip inside and finish your milk for you.

Now let’s take the example of a dead cat. How interested will a dead cat be, in milk? Even if you place a bucket of milk next to this cat, it will show no interest.

In the same way, how tempted will a dead man be if he is offered stolen money? Even if you offer him a billion dollars, he will show no interest. Similarly, we too must be that dead to sinful things!

The Lord wants us to separate ourselves from the evil things of this world to that extent! We should be so dead to this world that we do not find sinful things even remotely attractive anymore!

The World is Crucified to Us

The world doesn’t like Christians because they live differently.

- People of the world get upset when a Christian refuses to let them copy from their Answer Sheet in the Exam.
- People of the world don’t like it when we refuse to join them in doing sinful things.
- People of the world don’t like it when we tell them that the only way to heaven is through faith in Jesus.

So the world is ‘dead’ to Christians—in the sense that worldly people don’t like us and are unfriendly towards us.

The Temptation to Crucify Christ

All of us have friends who are non-Christians. Sometimes, they get upset with us when we refuse to bow to an idol, or refuse to cover for them with a lie.

If we insist on standing for the Lord, these friends may in fact leave us. They may prefer not to be friends with a person whose value system is so different from theirs.

Because of pressures like these from friends, or because of the temptations of the sinful world, some Christians choose to go back into sin. We must not do this!

Why We Mustn't Turn Back

When a person accepts Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the Lord accepts Him as His own child. From that day, the person becomes a member of God's own family. God begins to shower His blessings upon the person, and starts to help him in his studies and in every other area of life.

After experiencing so much love from the Lord, if the person walks away and returns into sin, it's a terrible thing! The Bible says this is equal to crucifying Christ once again!

Hebrews 6:4-6 (CEV): "But what about people who turn away after they have already seen the light and have received the gift from heaven and have shared in the Holy Spirit? What about those who turn away after they have received the good message of God and the powers of the future world? There is no way to bring them back. What they are doing is the same as nailing the Son of God to a cross and insulting him in public!"

According to this verse, if I turn my back on the Lord after all that He's done for me, it's like stripping Jesus and hanging Him on the cross once again. It's like mocking Him and humiliating Him in front of the whole world.

In other words, if I turn my back on Jesus it's like declaring to the world, "World, you're much better than this God. He's not worth following or serving. So I'm returning back to you."

We have no right to do this to the Lord who sacrificed His life for us!



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Note: *All discussion questions must be answered by the children, and NOT by the teacher. The guidelines given here are only meant to assist the teacher during the discussion.*

Galatians 6:14 says that we should be crucified to the world. What does this mean?

It means that we should be “dead to the world.” The same way a dead person is not at all attracted to the things in the world, we too must be so dead to sinful things that we don’t find them attractive anymore.

In other words, even if I find something sinful attractive, I must ignore it the same way a dead person would ignore it.

If we go back into sin after committing our lives to Jesus, why is it similar to crucifying Jesus a second time?

When we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour, the Father declares us to be part of His family. So we are given all the benefits and privileges of being family members.

After enjoying all of this, if we walk away, it means that we don’t appreciate anything that God did for us. It’s like declaring to the world, “I went to the Lord and I have experienced His love and kindness. And I think His love is not worth it. So I’m returning to the world.”

This is like a public humiliation of Jesus all over again—just like He was humiliated on the cross.

What are some practical ways in which you and I can separate ourselves from the world?

(Ask the children for practical suggestions which they can apply at school or with their non-Christian friends.)



APPLICATION

Examine your heart to see if you have “turned your back on Jesus” in some way. Have you taken to lying at home because it’s convenient? Have you been participating in copying at school? Have you been showing disrespect to your parents?

Repent of these things, and make a fresh commitment to honour the Lord in all you think, say and do.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



