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The Cross Of *Christ*

Cross in the Old Testament



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show how Jesus and the Cross are reflected in the Passover of the Old Testament.
- To motivate children to get rid of the ‘yeast’ in their lives.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Exodus 12; John 6:54-58; 1 Corinthians 5:7



MEMORY VERSE

1 Corinthians 5:7: “Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

Materials Needed

Laptop (to play the video clippings)



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 wisdom and eloquence, 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

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKwFHRLxV4o&feature=related>

Duration: 3 minutes and 03 seconds

Ask

In the animation movie, what does the white vapor represent?

It represents the Angel of Death.

Why did the Angel of Death not enter some of the homes?

(Encourage the children to explain the details.)



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! In fact God launched this salvation plan into action, in the Garden of Eden itself. (You would have studied this in detail at the Primary and Junior Levels.) After launching His plan, the Lord began to place many 'shadows' along the way, all of them pointing towards Jesus who would come one appointed day.

The Shadow of an Object helps us understand what the Real Object looks like.

The First Passover, which took place in Egypt, was like a shadow. This incident pointed towards Jesus, who would Himself become the Passover Lamb one day.

We will study this event in greater detail today.

Final Night in Egypt—the Passover Lamb

In Exodus Chapter 12, the Lord explained to the Israelites what they were to do on the final night in Egypt.

A lamb was chosen

Exodus 12:3: "... on the tenth day of this month each **man is to take a lamb for his family**, one for each household."

The lamb was slaughtered

Exodus 12:6: “Take care of them until the fourteenth day of the month, when all the people of the community of Israel must **slaughter them at twilight.**”

Blood was applied on doorframes

Exodus 12:7: “Then they are to take some of the blood and **put it on the sides and tops of the doorframes** of the houses where they eat the lambs.”

Slaughtered lamb was eaten with Bread without Yeast

Exodus 12:8: “That same night they are to **eat the meat** roasted over the fire, **along with** bitter herbs, and **bread made without yeast.**”

Angel of Death “Passed Over” after the meal

Exodus 12:12: “On that same night **I will pass through Egypt and strike down every first-born** of both people and animals, and I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord.”

Bread without Yeast eaten for next Seven Days

Exodus 12:15: “For **seven days** you are to eat bread made without yeast ...”

Festival of Unleavened Bread to be celebrated every year

Exodus 12:17: “Celebrate the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because it was on this very day that I brought your divisions out of Egypt. **Celebrate this day as a lasting ordinance** for the generations to come.”

Because of the Lord’s command, the Festival of Unleavened Bread was sincerely celebrated every year, right up to the time of Jesus. It is even celebrated today, by Jews all over the world.

The First Passover was a SHADOW

The Shadow of an Object helps us understand what the Real Object looks like.

The First Passover, which took place in Egypt, was like a shadow. This incident pointed towards Jesus, who would Himself become the Passover Lamb one day.

1 Corinthians 5:7 says, “Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

This verse connects the Passover Meal and the Festival of Unleavened Bread directly to Jesus Christ.

The REAL OBJECT—Jesus the Passover Lamb

The Festival of Unleavened Bread was celebrated by the Israelites every year, **in the first month of Abib**, also called Month of Nisan.

We see many similarities between the Original Passover Story and the events that took place 1470 years later, at the time of Jesus’ Death:

One Important Fact You Should Know:

Jewish days start and end at sunset.

Day	Passover (lasts seven days)	How Jesus celebrated the Passover
Saturday, Abib 9 (dusk Friday-dusk Saturday)		Jesus arrived in Bethany.
Sunday, Abib 10 (dusk Saturday-dusk Sunday)	The Passover Lamb is selected.	Jesus rode into Jerusalem.
Monday, Abib 11 (dusk Sunday-dusk Monday)	The Passover Lamb is kept until the day of sacrifice.	

Tuesday, Abib 12 (dusk Monday-dusk Tuesday)		
Wednesday, Abib 13 (dusk Tuesday-dusk Wednesday)		Jesus had His last meal with His disciples.
Thursday, Abib 14 (dusk Wednesday-dusk Thursday)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus was betrayed by Judas. • Jesus was taken prisoner. • Peter denied Jesus 3 times. <p>(all before dawn)</p>
	Preparation Day for the Passover Festival.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ examined by chief priests. • Christ handed to Pilate / Herod
	Faultless lambs were killed. Passover meal eaten at dusk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ was crucified (9 am) • Christ died (3 pm) • Christ was buried before sunset. • Women went home to prepare spices and ointments.
Friday, Abib 15 (dusk Thursday-dusk Friday)	Passover meal completed. (1st Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)	
Saturday, Abib 16 (dusk Friday-dusk Saturday)	Weekly Sabbath (2 nd Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.)	The women stayed at home, to observe the Sabbath.
Sunday, Abib 17 (dusk Saturday-dusk Sunday)	3 rd Day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. (Day of First fruits)	Christ is resurrected (before dawn) The women arrive at the empty tomb. Jesus appears on Emmaus road (late afternoon).

During the First Passover, the Angel of Death “passed over” the houses, whose doors were covered with the Lamb’s blood. He did not enter to kill the first-born son in those homes.

Similarly today, Death “passes over” those people whose hearts are covered/cleansed by the Blood of Jesus Christ. The moment they die, they are united with God in heaven forever and ever.

During the First Passover, the Angel of Death entered every house whose doors were NOT covered with the Lamb’s blood. He entered and killed the first-born son in those homes.

Similarly today, Death does NOT pass over those people who are unprotected by the Blood of Jesus Christ. The moment they die, they immediately find themselves in hell, separated from God forever and ever.



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.

Hebrews 13:11 says, “The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp.”

Why do you think the Passover Lamb was burnt ‘outside’ the city, after the sacrifice?

The Passover Lamb was supposed to be a ‘Shadow’ of Jesus Christ, representing Him. So God ordered that the Passover Lamb must always be burnt outside the city gates—so that it would correctly point to Jesus Christ, who was crucified outside the Jerusalem city gates.

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUrgYoSJ-Kc>

Duration: 6 minutes and 42 seconds

The Passover Festival is one of the most important festivals of the Jews today. Yet many of them don't even know the meaning of the ceremony!

Why do you think the Passover bread is broken? What is your answer?

The Passover bread is broken to show us that Jesus' body too was broken in the same way.

What do you think is the connection between Jesus' broken body and us? How did the breaking of His body help us?

According to the Bible, anybody who broke the Laws of God would be broken:

- Their physical bodies would be broken by sickness and disease.
- Their heart and mind would be broken by guilt and emotional traumas.
- And, their lives would be permanently broken in hell, totally cut off from God.

This is the punishment which should come upon each of us, because we have all broken God's Laws.

- However, Jesus' body was broken so that we can have victory over sickness and disease.
- He was broken in His heart and mind, so that we may know peace and joy.
- And, He was cut off from God, so that we can be united with God forever.

So Jesus was BROKEN to make us WHOLE.



APPLICATION

The Jewish people eat a Passover Lamb each year, even today, not realising that it is just a ‘Shadow’ of Jesus.

However, 1 Corinthians 5:7 orders us to celebrate the Passover in a different way today:

“Get rid of the old yeast, so that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”

The ‘yeast’ represents ‘sinfulness.’ The Bible urges us to get rid of all our sinfulness, and follow the Passover Lamb with holiness.

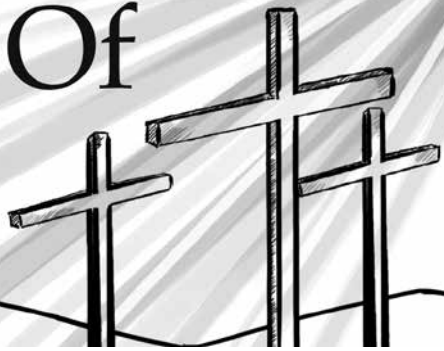
Have you gotten rid of all the yeast in your life? Today, make a fresh commitment to do so!



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Jesus Talked About the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus compared His crucifixion to the “lifting up” of the bronze snake.
- To explain why Jesus was willing to compare Himself to a snake.
- To motivate a response of faith in, and obedience towards, Jesus Christ.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Numbers 21:4-9; John 3:1-20; Galatians 3:13 (The Bronze Serpent)



MEMORY VERSE

John 3:14-15: “Just as Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life.”

Materials Needed: Laptop (to play the video clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Which ‘Shadows’ of the Cross do we see in the Old Testament?
- What is the “new way” in which we must celebrate the Passover today? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (1 Corinthians 5:7).



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?

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: Sssnake Riddles

The Student Workbook contains a “Match the Following” Activity consisting of Snake Riddle One-liners. It also includes a “Connect the Dots” Activity. (*Give the children five to ten minutes, to finish these fun tasks*).

Ask

Are snakes evil?

(Ask the children for their opinions.)

Explain

The Bible describes Satan as a “Roaring Lion.” However, the Bible does not regard all lions as evil creatures. In fact Jesus is called the “Lion of Judah.”

In the same way, Satan is described as a snake in many portions of the Bible. However, the Bible does not regard all snakes as evil creatures. In fact Jesus advised His 12 disciples to be “as wise as snakes” (Matthew 10:16).

If snakes are not evil, then why do Christians have such a bad impression about them?

(Ask the children for their opinions.)

Explain

Christians probably have a bad impression about snakes because of the Garden of Eden incident. On that occasion, Satan took possession of a snake, to make his appearance before Eve.

God cursed Satan because of this, by declaring that Jesus would crush his head one day. He also placed a curse on the snake itself, as an illustration.

- This illustration clearly showed that the curse on the snake will one day be the fate of Satan himself—One day, Satan too will be humiliated and judged, just like the snake.

So, Christians tend to think of the snake as a ‘cursed’ creature, and don’t like to have anything to do with it.



TEACHING CONTENT

What Jesus Said About the Cross

Jesus compared His crucifixion to the “lifting up” of the bronze serpent in the desert:

- Why did Jesus compare Himself to a snake? Why not a more pleasant animal?
- When did Jesus talk about this comparison?
- What was He trying to teach when He made this comparison?

We will discover the answers to these questions in today’s session.

The Bronze Serpent of the Old Testament—Numbers 21:4-9 (Taken from “Bible School Materials”)

When the Israelites were wandering in the desert, they started to complain and grumble. They blamed God and they blamed their leader, Moses, for their unhappiness. Because they spoke against God, God punished them by sending poisonous snakes to bite them! So the people ran to Moses and begged for help, “We’re sorry! We were wrong. Pray to God, and ask Him to make the snakes go away.” Moses did pray to God, but God didn’t take the snakes away.

Instead, He told Moses what to do, to keep the people from dying of the poison. He told him to make a metal snake, and put it up high on a pole, where anyone could see it. God said that if someone was bitten by a snake, they should look at the metal snake on the pole, and then they wouldn’t die. And because God said it, it worked: when

people who were bitten by the snakes looked at the metal snake, they didn't die. But people who didn't look at the metal snake died from the snakebites. It was their choice. They had to believe God and trust in His ability to save them.

Looking at the snake on the pole didn't work because metal snakes are magic. If you get bitten by a poisonous snake today, you wouldn't go looking for a metal snake. You'd look for a hospital. So why did looking at the snake on the pole work for the Israelites?

The snakes weren't their real problem. **Their real problem was that they needed to trust God. That's why God sent them the snakes in the first place: because they needed to trust God.** Looking to the snake, like God said to do, was something they could do to show that they were trusting in God to save them. Metal snakes don't save people from snake-bite venom. But God can.

Jesus—the Cursed Serpent of the New Testament (John 3:1-20)

In the New Testament, a man named Nicodemus came to talk with Jesus, because He knew that Jesus was from God. The Lord told Nicodemus that he needed to be born again, but Nicodemus didn't understand what it meant.

So Jesus explained: In the same way that Moses lifted the serpent in the desert, so that people could have something to see and then believe, it is necessary for the Son of Man to be lifted up—and everyone who looks up to Him, trusting and expectant, will gain real life, eternal life.

Jesus was saying that in order to be saved from our sins, we have to trust in Him, just as the Israelites in the desert, who needed to be saved from snake poison, had to trust in God's ability to save them, by looking at the metal snake on the pole.

Jesus explained to Nicodemus that He was going to be lifted up on the cross, and when we look to Him and believe that God can save us through Him, we can be saved from our sins.



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.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rL-wsfEI0gE>

Duration: 1 minute and 29 seconds

Based on the video, can you make a wild guess as to why Jesus compared Himself to a snake?

For instance, why couldn't God order Moses to make a "bronze lamb," instead of a bronze snake?

Give a Hint:

- In the Garden of Eden, did God 'curse' a lamb or a snake?
- Which was the cursed creature? The lamb or the snake?

(Encourage the children to make guesses.)

Why did Jesus compare Himself to a snake?

Jesus took our place and our penalty. He decided to become 'cursed' by God, so that we would not be cursed by God.

Therefore He compared Himself to a snake because the snake was a 'cursed' creature that had been cursed by God.

Galatians 3:13 says, "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."

So God ordered Moses to make a bronze snake, rather than a bronze lamb and place it on a pole. This would serve as a 'shadow' for the Israelites, pointing towards Jesus Christ.

Following the same line of thought, can you guess why Jesus cried out on the cross, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

First, guess why God forsook Him.

Second, guess why He addressed His Father as ‘God.’ On all previous occasions, He had addressed Him as ‘Father.’

A cursed person is a person utterly separated from God. The Lord will not have anything to do with a cursed person.

When Jesus became a ‘curse’ for us, on the cross, God forsook Him completely. In those terrible moments which we cannot even picture in our minds, God rejected His Son and no longer considered Him a son!

What an amazing sacrifice God made for us!

According to the video, does salvation come by doing good works?

The video explains that we are saved by the “good works of Jesus” on the cross—not through our own good works.

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.”

Why do you think people regard the message of the cross as foolishness?

Because it is too simple!!!

Most religions of the world teach that we must do lots of good works to earn God’s favour. Only the God of the Bible preaches that good works cannot help us.

The only way we can enter heaven is by believing in Jesus’ work on the cross, on our behalf. And if we simply believe, we will be accepted into heaven, without making any kind of payment!

People feel that this is an over-simplistic and foolish message because it's too simple! This is why many people perform a lot of rituals and "good works"—because they cannot believe that 'simply trusting' in Jesus is enough.

If believing in Jesus is enough to gain salvation, should we give up doing good works? What does the video say about this?

We don't do good works to gain God's favor and enter heaven.

Rather, we do good works to express our gratitude to God, because He was willing to take our place, and become a 'curse' for us.



APPLICATION

The Egyptians worshipped snakes, regarding them as symbols of fertility and power. However, the Israelites saw snakes very differently; they thought of them as the creatures that God had 'cursed.'

So you can imagine their surprise when Moses commanded, "If you look at the bronze snake, your life will be saved." They must have wondered why Moses wanted them to put their trust in a 'cursed' snake!

Today however, we know why Jesus compared Himself to something so 'cursed' and 'rejected!'

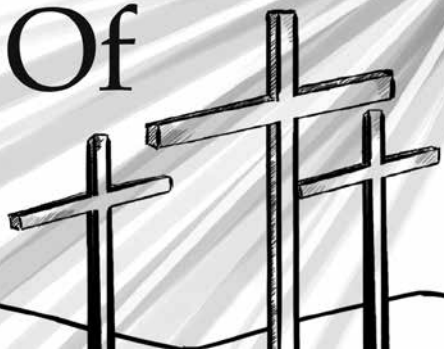
- In response, are we willing to believe in Jesus and be saved?
- And are we willing to do "good works" to show our gratitude?



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Wisdom of the Cross—Redemption



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show how Jesus took our place, and freed us from the control of sin.
- To teach why Jesus chose to become the Second Adam.
- To motivate children to feed their spirit rather than their flesh.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Romans 5:12, 19; 7:25–8:6; 1 John 3:5-6; Titus 2:13-14
(Jesus—Second Adam)



MEMORY VERSE

Romans 5:19: “For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.”

Materials Needed:

Laptop (to play the video clippings)



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why did Jesus compare Himself to a bronze snake? Why didn't He choose a more pleasant animal to compare Himself to?
- If believing in Jesus is enough to gain salvation, should we give up doing good works? Why or why not?
- Give examples of some good works that you did this week.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (John 3:14-15).



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



ATTENTION GETTER

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aLrgHaKpucg>

Duration: 1 minute and 05 seconds

Ask

Why do you think Jesus calls Himself ‘Adam’ in the Skit?

(Ask the children for their opinions.)



TEACHING CONTENT

How God’s Wisdom was Displayed

First Adam

Adam and Eve’s sin in the Garden of Eden had far-reaching consequences. Not only did their disobedience harm their own lives, but it messed up things for the rest of their descendants as well.

Adam brought sin into this world, causing the entire human race **to sin and suffer death:**

Romans 5:12: “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned ...”

Second Adam

Jesus Christ chose to become the Second Adam, so that He could set right the damage caused by the First Adam. On the cross, Jesus **defeated the power of sin and death**, thereby launching a great restoration process.

In this way, God displayed His great wisdom—using the Cross to undo all the damage caused by the First Adam. We will now study this in greater detail.

First Adam vs Second Adam

What the First Adam did to Us

When Adam sinned, “sin entered the world.” (Romans 5:12) As a result, we all became infected with a sinful nature.

Have you ever wondered who teaches a three year old to speak lies? The simple fact is that nobody teaches her! She automatically begins to sin because of the “sinful nature” inside her.

The Bible clearly teaches that we are born with a sinful nature.

David says in Psalms 51:5, “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”

Because of our sinful nature, the only future available to us is a life of sin followed by punishment in hell. We are unable to live righteous lives because of our sinful nature. And we are unable to earn entry into heaven by being completely holy.

Ecclesiastes 7:20: “There is not a righteous man on earth who does what is right and never sins.”

James 2:10: “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.”

So the First Adam ‘gifted’ us with:

- A sinful nature that makes us sin.
- And all our sins make us end up in hell, separated from God forever.

What the Second Adam did for Us

Jesus became what we are, by taking our place. We call this 'Substitution.'

Only a Perfect Man could become a substitute for sinful man. Man who was already a sinner could not become a substitute for other men, because He would have to die for His own sins.

So there had to be a Second Adam like the first Adam—only this second Adam had to be perfect.

The only way there could be a Perfect Man, was if God would become man. So God came down in human form and lived among us, so that He could 'substitute' for us.

On the Cross, Jesus substituted for us in two ways:

- **First**, He took all our sins upon Himself, and suffered the punishment for them.
- **Second**, He defeated the power of sin and death over our lives.

Power of Sin and Death Broken

When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, He gives us a new nature that desires to obey Him.

2 Corinthians 5:17: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

Philippians 2:13: "... it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

So, the Bible explains that while the First Adam made all of us sinners, the Second Adam is making all of us righteous, by becoming our substitute and taking our place.

Romans 5:19: "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous."



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.*

1 John 3:5-6: “But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.”

According to these verses, believers DO NOT continue to sin. But we know of Christians who live in habitual sin, unable to give up their sinful habits. Does this mean such Christians never truly became believers? If they are true believers, then why are they unable to break out of their habits?

(Ask the children for their opinions. They can jot down their answers in the Student Workbook.)

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nfYozOjI30Q&feature=related>

Duration: 4 minute and 38 seconds

According to the video, was Paul living in habitual sin? How can we explain his words in Romans 7:19?

Romans 7:19: **For what I do is not the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing.**

The video explains that Paul was NOT living in habitual sin. Paul told the Roman Church that he kept on doing evil only as long as he followed his sinful nature. But when he began to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit instead, he stopped sinning.

He explains this in Romans 7:25 – 8:2: “Thanks be to God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God’s law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin. Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.”

He explains that as long as he is following the leading of the Holy Spirit, his sinful mind has no control over him.

Romans 8:5-6: “Those who live according to the flesh have their minds set on what the flesh desires; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace.”

So those who stay focused on the things of the Spirit do not live in sin, on a regular habitual basis.

The video talks about Christians who “feed the flesh?” What does this term mean?

“The flesh” is simply an old-fashioned term for the “sinful desires” in our mind and body. It is the rebellious, unruly and obstinate part of our inner self that is operative all the time. It hates to be under God’s authority or to have to yield to anything other than its own wishes and desires.

Apart from “the flesh” we also have something called the “human spirit.” When we accept Jesus as Lord and Savior, our spiritually dead “human spirit” is brought back to life by Him. So our spirit is that part of us which is open to God, which desires Him and is drawn to Him. It is that part of us which is attracted by goodness and truth.

- Every time we do something that doesn’t please God, we “feed the flesh,” and it becomes stronger.
- But every time we say ‘No’ to our sinful mind, and instead do what pleases God, we “feed our spirit.” Every time we obey God and feed our spirit, our spirit grows stronger.

So, depending on whether the flesh or the spirit is **getting fed more**, we will either be spiritually strong or spiritually weak.

How do Christians usually feed the flesh? Can you think of some common examples?

Example 1

Some Christians spend a lot of time in front of the TV. The more time they spend watching TV programs, the greater are the chances of absorbing the worldly values shown in them. Doing this “feeds their flesh.”

If such people spend only a few minutes on Bible Reading and Prayer, then their spirit barely gets any spiritual food. God will not be able to counteract the worldly things they have absorbed during their TV time, because He doesn’t get enough time to work on them and renew their worldly thinking.

Example 2

Some Christians spend a lot of time grumbling about the bad things God is allowing into their lives. The more they do it, the more the flesh gets fed.

On the other hand, if they focus their minds on God’s goodness and keep praising Him, in spite of the negative circumstances in their lives, then their spirits gets fed.

Example 3

Some Christians do not commit big sins like murder and bank robberies. But they entertain a whole lot of small sins like lying, gossiping, copying in the exam, etc. Every time they practice these little sins, it is equal to feeding their flesh a tasty little snack. In this way, the sinful desires in their minds grow big and strong, while their spirit remains weak.

Then one day, when a big temptation hits them, their spirit is too weak and starved to handle it. The sinful desires, which are stronger than the spirit, take control and they give in to the big temptation.

How does the Cross help us to grow spiritually strong? What is the connection between the Cross and our spirits?

The Cross makes it possible for us to live a new and different life.

Jesus sacrificed His life on the cross so that He can give us eternal life. Eternal life begins the moment when we accept Jesus as Lord and Saviour. In that moment we are “born again.” Jesus brings our spiritually dead “human spirit” back to life, and we are “born again” into a new creation. Then, God places inside our “born again” spirit, the desire and the power to “trust and obey Him.”

So Jesus’ primary goal on the Cross was to give us a new and different life.

1 Peter 2:24: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

Jesus took our place on the cross so that we can become like Him ... so that we too can be pure, holy and eager to do good. This is the purpose of the cross.

Coming back to the first question, why do some Christians live in habitual sin, unable to give up their sinful habits? How can they break out of their sinful cycle?

Christians, who spend a lot of time and effort feeding their flesh, have a very strong sinful nature in their minds and bodies. It controls them, and they are unable to give up their sinful habits.

They need to start feeding their spirit, so that it grows strong.

1. They must pray to the Lord, asking Him to give them His power to resist sin.

2. They must give up contact with worldly things and worldly people that are tempting them to sin.
3. They must start responding obediently every time the Holy Spirit whispers in their hearts to do/not do certain things.
4. They must start strengthening their spirit through regular Bible study and prayer.
5. They must fellowship with believers who can help them grow in God.

Even as they do these things **on a regular basis**, the spirit will start growing stronger. And they will be able to resist the temptations that come against them. They will no longer continue living in sin.



APPLICATION

The First Adam made all of us sinful.

But Jesus became the Second Adam so that He could make all of us holy.

When we feed our sinful desires, we continue to be like the First Adam.

But when we feed our spirit we start becoming more and more like the Second Adam.

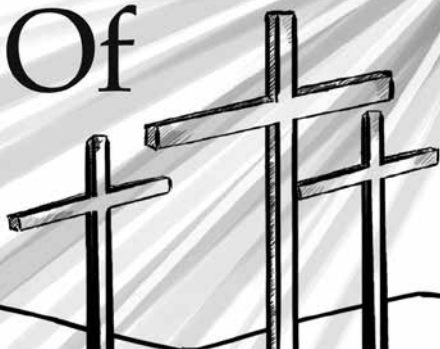
Reflect: What are some choices you can make this week, to feed your spirit and help it to grow strong?



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



Power of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Christ annulled Satan's power over our lives.
- To explain what kind of authority we possess over Satan.
- To instruct on what we must do to grow in Spiritual Authority.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Hebrews 2:14-15; Colossians 2:14-15; 1 John 3:8; John 14:12 (Spiritual Authority)



MEMORY VERSE

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



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why do some Christians live in habitual sin, unable to give up their sinful habits?

- What are some choices you can make this week, to feed your spirit and help it to grow strong? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (Romans 5:19).



INTRODUCTION

Through the Fall, mankind became a slave to sin and Satan. Sin and Satan 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 we can personally benefit from what Jesus has done for us.

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

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5GEKUQokN9c>

Duration: Play only the first 2 minutes and 22 seconds (The rest of the video is not very relevant to our discussion.)

Ask

Thayreen's mother gave her some advice on what to do with the demons troubling her. What was the advice?

(Ask the children to recollect.)

Explain

Thayreen had two choices:

- She could choose to cry out to Jesus every night, when the demons came to trouble her; and Jesus would help her every night.
- Or she could ask the demons to leave her room and never return again.

The first choice required her to call out to Jesus for help; and every time she called out, the Lord helped.

But her mother suggested something even better. She asked Thayreen to use her spiritual authority to permanently get rid of those demons. And when Thayreen fasted and prayed, this is when she received ... permanent relief.

Because of what Jesus did on the cross for us, we have spiritual authority today. We can limit the interference of demons in our lives by exercising this authority. We will learn more about this today.



TEACHING CONTENT

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94DWOKr-laE>

Duration: 4 minutes 04 seconds

(Play the first “1 minute 40 seconds” and discuss.)

As explained in the video, why did Satan lose the spiritual authority given to him?

Satan wanted to take God’s place, by becoming God. So God took away all the authority given to him.

When man was originally created, who had more authority? Man or Satan?

Man had more authority. Satan didn't have any, because God had taken away all of his authority.

Why did man lose his authority?

Authority is based on obedience. As long as Adam obeyed God, he had authority. But when he disobeyed, he lost his authority.

Why did man's lost authority get shifted to Satan?

When man sinned, he placed himself under Satan's control. So Satan was able to steal all of the authority which had been given to man.

(Play video clipping from 1:40 to 2:40 and discuss.)

Why couldn't Satan gain control over Jesus?

Satan gained control over man because Adam sinned. But Jesus never sinned. So Satan could never gain control over Jesus.

Why did Jesus allow Himself to be killed?

When Jesus died, Satan thought he had won. But Jesus came back to life, thereby defeating death and stripping Satan of the authority which he had stolen from Adam.

Jesus died on the cross and rose again, so that He could take back the authority from Satan and give it to us humans.

According to the video, who has the spiritual authority now? Satan or humans?

Humans

(Play the last portion of video and discuss.)

Do ALL humans enjoy spiritual authority over Satan, now?

Only those who have accepted Jesus as Lord and Savior have passed **out of** the Kingdom of Darkness and **into** the Kingdom of Light. So only they enjoy spiritual authority over Satan.

According to the video, what is the position of people who haven't entered the Kingdom of Light? Do they have any authority?

Because unbelievers are still under the control of sin, they are still under Satan. He is able to control them fully. So they cannot exercise any kind of authority over him.

What the Scriptures Say

Hebrews 2:14-15: “Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”

According to these verses, why did Jesus become a human being?

Jesus wanted to be fully human like us so that He could help us.

- The first human, Adam, had placed all of us under Satan's control. Jesus became the Second Adam so that He could set us free from Satan's control.
- The first Adam gave away the spiritual authority of humans to Satan. The Second Adam won back this authority and returned it to humans.

Colossians 2:14-15: “... having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.”

According to these verses, what was standing against us and condemning us?

We sinned against God. This placed us under Satan's control. It's as if we had got into debt, and we were unable to pay it off. Until the debt was fully paid, we were under the control of the jailer, Satan.

Every time people tried to break away from Satan's control over them, he would point out our sinfulness and declare that he had legal authority over us.

Jesus finally made the payment for us, and set us free from Satan's control.

The Scriptures specifically teach that we have Spiritual Authority in the following areas:

1. We have Authority over Demonic Works

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

Sometimes the sickness and disease we face is not just the work of a virus or bacteria that we accidentally picked up. It may have been brought directly by the demons. We have authority to destroy such satanic works, in the Name of Jesus.

2. We have Authority over Demonic Influences

2 Corinthians 4:4: "The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God."

Sometimes we may sincerely share the Gospel with a loved one, but fail to see any change in them. That person is unable to joyfully accept the Gospel because Satan has blinded them from grasping the beauty of what you are sharing. You can exercise your spiritual authority to pray that their blinded eyes will be opened.

3. We have Authority over Circumstances and Situations

Mark 4:39: "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."

John 14:12: "I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father."

When Jesus and the disciples were travelling in the boat, it was not the right time for any of them to die. God still had many unfulfilled plans for each of their lives. It was not His will for them to die yet. So Jesus took charge of the situation and commanded the wind and waves to calm down.

Later Jesus told the disciples that they would be able to do the same kind of things that He had been doing. They too would be able to exercise spiritual authority if something or someone obstructed God's will. So if something is obstructing God's will in your life, you have the authority to cancel it in Jesus' Name.



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.*

1. We have Authority over Demonic Works

If we have the spiritual authority to cancel demonic works like sickness and disease, why are so many Christians sick?

Many Christians live their whole lives with sickness and disease because they do not know they have spiritual authority over such things. On the other hand, some who is exercising it correctly may have not yet seen the results, because God provides the victory in the appointed time. They need to hold on and continue to exercise their spiritual authority.

However, some people are unable to overcome demonic works due to sin or unbelief.

- If there is sin in my life, it provides Satan control over my life. Then I will be unable to defeat his works.
- In the same way, if I am unable to believe that Jesus has indeed given me authority against my unbelief, this gives Satan a level of control.

Those who get rid of sin and unbelief from their lives can enjoy high levels of spiritual authority in their lives.

2. We have Authority over Demonic Influences

If I have the spiritual authority to pray that “spiritual blindness,” which is a demonic work, be removed, why do some people continue resisting the Gospel in spite of my prayers?

There are many sincere people who are unable to see the truth of the Gospel because demons have spiritually blinded them. When we use our spiritual authority to pray for the opening of their spiritual eyes, these people will genuinely be able to understand the Gospel message and be saved.

However, some people do not really have a desire to know the truth. They enjoy the sins of the world and have no desire to change. Some of these people may not appreciate the truth even if the blindfold is removed from their eyes. Such people are under the control of demons because they have placed themselves under Satan’s control.

In such cases, we may not be able to destroy Satan’s work in their lives, because they are personally granting Satan permission to continue exploiting them.

3. We have Authority over Circumstances and Situations

Can we control all situations and circumstances through our spiritual authority? For instance, if a teacher at school has been treating me badly, can I use spiritual authority to transform the situation?

Spiritual authority works only when we are in line with God’s will. If I am in any way responsible for the “ill-treatment” that I have been receiving, then God will not support me in the matter. For instance, if the teacher dislikes me because I am always whispering in class, I cannot expect her attitude to change.

However, if I am being discriminated against, even though I have done nothing wrong, then God will work on my behalf. He wants his purposes to be wholly fulfilled in my school life.

So I can use my spiritual authority to bind those works of Satan that are preventing God's will from being accomplished in my school life; and God will back me up.



APPLICATION

We need Four Essentials to effectively exercise Spiritual Authority. They include:

- Intimacy with God
- Obedience
- Faith
- Fasting Prayer

These four things draw us closer to God, helping us grow spiritually. When we grow in God, we are able to exercise greater authority.

Reflect on how you can incorporate these four things into your life.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*

From the Cross to the Throne



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach that Jesus is now our Mediator and Intercessor.
- To explain why and how Jesus intercedes for us.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Job 9:32-35; 2 Corinthians 5:21, 8:9; 1 Peter 2:24; Galatians 3:13-14; Revelation 12:10; Romans 2:3-11; Isaiah 59:1-2; Psalms 66:18; 1 Peter 3:7, 12 (Jesus Our Mediator and Intercessor)



MEMORY VERSE

Romans 8:34 : Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What Four Essentials do we need to effectively exercise Spiritual Authority?
- This week, what did you do to draw closer to God? Give examples.
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week (1 John 3:8).



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 as 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

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bSUyi4PYt7s&feature=related>

Duration: Play from 3:26 to 5:15 (The rest of the video is not very relevant to our discussion).

Ask

As seen in the video, what did Job’s friends accuse him of?

(Ask the children for a recap of each friend’s accusations.)

**Do you think Job’s friends were correct in their accusations?
Was Job really harboring any unconfessed sins?**

No! Job was not living in sin. The suffering in his life was not due to hidden sins.

In the video, what does Job wish that God would do?

He wishes that God would come and speak for Himself.



TEACHING CONTENT

The Mediator

Even though Job insisted again and again that he was innocent—that he was not hiding any sins—his friends continued to accuse him.

Their false accusations made Job wish he could stand before God face to face and prove his innocence. However, at the same time, he also felt scared at the thought of standing in front of an all-powerful, utterly holy God.

Job realised, “[God] is not a man like me that I might answer him, that we might confront each other in court” (Job 9:32).

This made him wish he had someone who could help ... someone he could send to God to discuss his case—because he lacked the courage to face God by himself.

Job said, “If only there were someone to arbitrate (mediate) between us, to lay his hand upon us both, someone to remove God’s rod from me, so that his terror would frighten me no more. Then I would speak up without fear of him, but as it now stands with me, I cannot” (Job 9:33-35).

Such a person is called a ‘mediator.’ The mediator assists the weak, helpless person by speaking on his behalf.

Jesus Our Mediator

In New Testament times, Jesus came to the earth to serve as our mediator.

Jesus is Equal with Humans

Because Jesus became completely human in every way, He is able to understand our difficulties and problems very well.

On earth Jesus ‘experienced’ first-hand the deep pain of watching a loved one die. His stomach rumbled when there wasn’t enough food at home. His own bothers used to make fun of Him and call Him a crazy fool. And on one occasion, He struggled so hard to overcome temptation that He sweated drops of blood!

By becoming human, Jesus experienced first-hand the pains and hardships that we face every day. This is why Jesus is an excellent Mediator. He is able to speak with God on our behalf in a knowledgeable way, because He too went through the same experiences that we are going through.

Jesus is Equal with God

Jesus is also a perfect mediator for us because He is equal with God! He does not need to feel scared about facing God, the way Job did, because He is equal with God!

So He talks to God like an equal, and presents our case before Him. He reminds God that He has finished taking the punishment for all our sins. So He argues on our behalf, telling God to treat us like holy and innocent people.

Jesus Our Intercessor

Because Jesus became a sacrifice and took our punishment upon

Him, now God looks upon us as clean and holy. So God listens to Jesus whenever Jesus intercedes on our behalf.

Jesus is now sitting at the right hand of the Father interceding for us. He wants to give us everything He has, all the riches of glory, through His death.

- He was made sin—so we could be righteous and receive forgiveness (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- He took our sickness—by His stripes we are healed (1 Peter 2:24).
- He became poor—so that we can be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).
- He took the curse—so we could receive all His blessings (Galatians 3:13-14).

So Jesus is now both a **perfect mediator** and a **perfect intercessor** 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.*

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yJNr4zLVRz4>

Duration: 2 minutes 5 seconds

According to the video, why do we need an intercessor?

Revelation 12:10 explains that Satan constantly accuses believers before God. He constantly keeps reminding God of our sins, and demands God to punish us.

Because God is absolutely holy and cannot tolerate sin, He should listen to Satan and punish us severely. However Jesus, who is seated at the right hand of God, comes to our defense as our mediator and

intercessor. He immediately reminds God that the punishment for these sins has already been paid up.

As a result, again and again, God chooses not to punish us. In fact God sent Jesus to the earth for this specific purpose ... to become our mediator and intercessor, so that He wouldn't have to hurt us. What a loving God we have!

Does this mean we can get away with any sinful deed? Will the Father simply forgive us—irrespective of what we do?

The Father sacrificed His Son on the Cross just so that He can forgive us! That's the amazing extent of God's love!

Because God's love and forgiveness is so great, there is a 'condition' attached.

Romans 2:4 says, "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realising that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?"

God forgives us so that we may 'repent' and turn away from our sinful deeds. But if we continue to live in sin, ignoring His love and kindness, it will lead to divine punishment at the hands of God.

Romans 2:3-11: "So when you, a mere man, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God will repay to each person according to what they have done. To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. There will be trouble and distress for every human being

who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; but glory, honour and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For God does not show favoritism.”

In the video, Satan whispers to the preacher after he has sinned, “You hypocrite, do you think God will hear your prayers?” Does God hear our prayers when we are living in sin?

In Old Testament times, God made it very clear that He preferred not to answer the prayers of people who lived in habitual sin.

Isaiah 59:1-2: “Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.”

Psalms 66:18: “If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.”

In the New Testament, we read that there are certain things which can block our prayers from being answered.

1 Peter 3:7: “Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives ... so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

1 Peter 3:12: “For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer, but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

So the fact remains that even though Jesus is our intercessor, we cannot afford to live in deliberate, continual sin. If we do so our prayers will be ‘hindered.’ The answers will get delayed.



APPLICATION

God is more than willing to forgive us of even the worst sins. All that He wants us to do is admit we have sinned, and promise Him not to repeat it again. If we simply do this, God will forgive and forget all that we have done.

Take a few moments to reflect on your life in the recent past. Have you been harbouring any sins? If so, now is the time to confess them frankly before God and repent.

If you do this, Jesus will intercede for you before the Father, and give you a fresh, brand-new start.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*

Blessings of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To show the children what amazing blessings God has for them.
- To make them aware of the Blessing-Stealers that could rob their blessings.
- To stress the importance of believing in, and claiming, God's Promises for us.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Deuteronomy 28:1-14; Hebrews 8:6; Isaiah 26:3-4, 53:5
(God's Covenant Blessings)



MEMORY VERSE

Hebrews 8:6 : "But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is founded on better promises."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- Why do we need Jesus' intercession?
- Why do we call Jesus a perfect mediator? What makes Him so appropriate for this role?
(As He was completely human like us, He is able to present our case before the Father perfectly.)
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week. (Romans 8:34)



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

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K3Vqzk7nxKk>

Duration: 39 seconds

Ask

According to the ad, they will give you a free iPhone. Do you think this is a genuine offer?

Activity: Fake Offers

Ask the children to look at the three advertisements included in the Student Workbook, and identify the Ad which is making a genuine promise.

Explain

(After the video and activity.)

All three ads are making big promises to catch the attention of the viewer. However, none of the three fulfills their promises as expected. There are conditions attached, and the offers in fact cost a lot of money.

For instance, the first ad claims that if we pay Rs.49, we will be allowed to order food worth Rs.500. But the truth is that the Rs.49 allows you to register at 'Foodpanda.in.' This website offers information about delivery restaurants that are willing to deliver food, if you place an order for Rs.500 or more.

So in reality, even though the Ad promises one thing, the truth is something else.

A lifetime's experience with disappointing ads like these, makes many Christians believe that the Bible too is a hyped-up ad! They think the Bible makes Promises and Offers that are exaggerated and not real.

For example, if an ad promises free food worth Rs.500, in reality all you really receive is a website membership that costs Rs.49. So if the Bible promises complete healing and wholeness, you may end up receiving healing from a headache on one rare occasion.

This is the false view that most Christians hold about the lavish and extravagant promises mentioned in the Bible.



TEACHING CONTENT

New Covenant with Better Promises

Deuteronomy 28:1-14 lists the blessings that the Lord wishes to grant a person walking in obedience. Read through the list of blessings, and choose any three which you would like to claim for yourself during the following week.

Blessings I am claiming for this week:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Explain

These promised blessings are so wonderful!

- The Lord promises to bless everything we put our hands to. He will bless us in our studies and in all the challenges that we take up.
- The Lord says He will grant us abundant prosperity.
- The Lord promises to defeat our enemies for us. We no longer have to fear people who are working against us. However hard they try, they will not be able to harm us.

As we can see, these promises are truly amazing! However, Hebrews 8:6 says something even more amazing! It says, “But the ministry

Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and is founded on better promises.”

The lavish promises mentioned in Deuteronomy belong to the Old Covenant. Under the New Covenant which Jesus established by His death on the cross, the Bible guarantees to provide us with even better promises!

This being so, every believer should be filled with joy! Yet we see many believers ridden with worry and anxiety. They find it difficult to believe what is said in Deuteronomy 28:1-14 and Hebrews 8:6.

Ads almost always have a hidden catch, and most Christians feel that God’s promises too, have a hidden catch. So they don’t believe and claim for themselves what the Bible offers.

Shalom

Isaiah 53:5 explains what Jesus did for us on the cross:

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

According to this verse, Jesus took our punishment upon the cross. As a result, God no longer holds our sins against us; He is no longer angry with us. In this way, “the punishment that brought us peace” was put on Jesus.

All Christians believe this truth. They truly believe that Jesus established peace between God and us, by taking our punishment.

However, the word ‘peace’ mentioned in that verse doesn’t just talk about how God is no longer angry with us. The Hebrew word used is ‘shalom.’ Shalom signifies wholeness and completeness; it indicates a person who is ‘flourishing’ in every area of life—physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, socially, etc.

So Jesus didn't just take our punishment on the cross, to earn us a free ticket to heaven. He did so much more!

He died so that we can "flourish abundantly" in every area of our lives.

- So people no longer have to live with emotional hurts and wounds inflicted by others. They can be healed emotionally.
- They no longer have to struggle with broken family relationships. The Lord can help them to become whole in their family lives.
- They no longer have to struggle for money. They can be whole and complete in their finances.

These are the kind of promises that the Bible makes to us. All these promises can be truly ours because Jesus died on the cross to win them 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.

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u10sQsdnxaQ>

Duration: 1 minute 50 seconds

According to this video, when won't God's promises be fulfilled in our lives?

When we are living in disobedience.

Isaiah 59:1-2: "Surely the arm of the LORD is not too short to save, nor his ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

What could be some other reasons why we don't see God's promises fulfilled in our lives?

In John 10:10 Jesus said, "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

Jesus makes it very clear that He came to the earth to give us a full and abundant life. However, He also points out that Satan's chief goal is to steal, kill and destroy.

Satan usually uses three main methods to steal our blessings.

FIRST, most Bible promises are accompanied by a command that needs to be obeyed. Satan will try his best to stop us from obeying these commands, so that the promises remain unfulfilled.

For example, Romans 8:28 promises, "... in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Even if negative things happen to us, God promises to work them out for our good. However, there's a condition attached—this promise will be fulfilled only for those who love God. So Satan will try hard to make you love the world more and more ... to ensure that your love for God dies out.

SECOND, if we are carefully fulfilling the commands attached to the Bible promises, then Satan will try to make us give up hope too soon.

For example, Abraham was sincerely following God's commandments. But Satan made him lose hope about having a son through Sarah. Abraham gave up too early and chose to marry Hagar, which led to many complications. However, if he had waited long enough, he would have seen God fulfilling His promise minus all the complications.

Many promises remain unfulfilled, or get fulfilled after painful complications, because we lose hope too quickly. We don't wait trustingly until the promise is fulfilled. We assume that God didn't mean what He promised, and we give up.

THIRD, Satan tries to use our feelings, thoughts, and circumstances to make us believe that a certain Bible promise applies to others, but not to us.

For example, a person suffering from migraine headaches may start thinking that God doesn't want to heal him. The continuing pain in his head, the negative diagnosis of his doctor, etc., convince him that healing won't happen for him. He may believe that the cancer-patient next door will get healed through the cross of Jesus, but he does not believe that the cross of Jesus applies to his own migraines.

If we guard ourselves against these three blessing-stealers, we can see all of God's promises fulfilled in our lives.

How can we begin to enjoy the Shalom that Jesus won for us on the cross?

Isaiah 53:5 plainly says that Jesus died on the cross so that we could have 'shalom'—so that we could 'flourish' in every area of life.

We begin to experience this Shalom in our personal lives when we sincerely obey three key-sets of verses:

- **Isaiah 26:3-4:** "You will keep in perfect peace him whose mind is steadfast, because he trusts in you."
- **Proverbs 3:5-6:** "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."
- **Romans 12:18:** "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

We fail to have Shalom:

- When we allow Satan to fill our minds with worries and doubts.
- When we find it difficult to trust God about something and so choose to disobey Him.

Blessings of the Cross

- When we refuse to forgive and forget the wrongs done to us by others.

When we make a conscious effort to follow God in these three areas, we will begin to find ourselves ‘flourishing richly’ in every area of life - physically, emotionally, mentally, financially, socially, etc.



APPLICATION

Identify the ‘Blessing–Stealers’ in your life that may be robbing you of God’s Promises. Deal with them, so that God can fulfill his promises in your life.

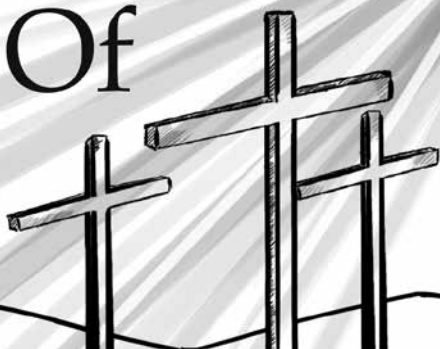
Also, identify the blockages in your life that are preventing you from enjoying the Shalom that Jesus won for you on the Cross.



CLOSE WITH PRAYER



The Cross Of *Christ*



The Way of the Cross



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- To teach about the Offense of the Cross.
- To explain that Christ expects us to suffer on behalf of others.



SCRIPTURE PORTIONS

Galatians 5:11; Colossians 1:24-26; Philippians 3:10
(Sharing in Christ's Sufferings)



MEMORY VERSE

Philippians 3:10 : "I want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of sharing in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death."



RECAP

- What did we learn about last week?
- What are the three blessing-stealers that Satan uses against us?
- What must we do to enjoy the Shalom that Jesus won for us on the cross?
- Recite the Memory Verse for last week. (Hebrews 8:6)



INTRODUCTION

Over the last few weeks we have been studying the Cross of Christ in great detail. On the cross, Jesus became our Passover Lamb; His body was broken for us. He became a curse for us so that we can enjoy His blessings. He delivered us from the power of sin, and is interceding for us even today. 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

Offense of the Cross

Ask

In Galatians 5:11 Paul says, “Brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case the offense of the cross has been abolished.”

What according to you is the “Offense of the Cross?”

(Encourage the children to give their thoughts and ideas.)

Explain

The Jews of Paul’s time suggested that a person must observe the Jewish rituals mentioned in the Old Testament if they wished to go to heaven. However, Paul preached again and again that under the New Covenant only Jesus can save us and take us to heaven; no ritual will do us any good.

This greatly angered the Jews and they persecuted Him severely for His beliefs. This is the ‘offense of the cross.’

What we believe about the Cross may upset people and cause them to persecute us.

Offense of the Cross Experienced by Indians

1. Story of Ps. Lal Mani Prasad

Photo 1 in the Student Workbook shows Ps. Prasad covered in blood.

On October 21st, 2012, Ps. Lal Mani Prasad of North West Delhi was beaten on the head with a steel water bucket until he became unconscious. The Hindu activists broke his son’s hand, and also severely beat up his wife and daughter.

The 30-minute attack took place while the pastor was preparing for the Church Service. The beatings were encouraged by nearly a dozen other Hindus who earlier hurled stones and other materials at the pastor's family home.

Ps. Prasad was taken to the local hospital, and given 18 stitches to the head. Though the hospital released him, he had to be re-admitted a second time due to internal bleeding.

His kitchen, bedroom and motorcycle were completely destroyed. When the believers of his church asked for police help, the police agreed to take action only if he personally went to the police station and testified. But the pastor was too badly injured to travel all the way to the police station.

2. Story of Ps. Sarath Pargy

Photo 2 in the Student Workbook shows thirty-five year old Ps. Sarath in the hospital after he was mercilessly beaten up by twenty RSS workers on November 30th, 2012.

Ps. Sarath of Boothpada Village (Madhya Pradesh) was conducting a Friday Prayer Meeting when four policemen came and asked him to leave immediately. He left on a motorcycle along with another pastor. Some of the believers wanted to go along with the pastors, but the policemen ordered everybody to stay in the room.

As they went down the road, twenty RSS activists chased the pastors, captured them, and beat them up. Ps.Sarath was wounded on his head, face and many other parts of his body.

Later, the believers came to rescue the pastors. They took Ps.Sarath to a hospital in Bajana. As the condition of the pastor was very bad, the doctor advised them to take him to a bigger hospital. Accordingly they took him to Ratlam, about 50 kms from the village, and got him admitted to the Ratlam Government Hospital.

The whole thing seems to have been set up by the RSS activists in support with the policemen.

3. Story of Ps. Kalappa Chandrakanth Chavan

Photo 3 in the Student Workbook shows Ps. Chavan who was stripped and beaten in front of his wife and three-year old daughter.

On January 23rd, 2012, dozens of Hindu activists of the RSS attacked 20 Christians of the Fellowship of New Life in a private house, 3km from the town of Haliyal (Uttar Kannada, Karnataka).

After stripping and beating Ps. Chavan, the activists dragged him in front of the whole village. Finally, the attackers tied him to a tree near a Hindu temple and called the Haliyal police.

The police arrested Ps. Chavan and Ps. Kishore, imprisoning them for 24 hours, leaving the RSS activists to roam free.

What we believe about the Cross may upset people and cause them to persecute us.



TEACHING CONTENT

Every month, Christians in different parts of India bear the “Offense of the Cross.” You and I may not be beaten up as they are, but in our own way, we too are called to bear the “Offense of the Cross.”

Suffering for What We Believe

What do we generally believe about the Cross?

- We believe that Jesus is the only way to enter heaven.
- We believe that the love demonstrated on the cross should compel us to share this Good News with everyone.
- We believe that God has not called us to a life of comfort but a life of service, even if it involves suffering.

- We believe that only those who take up their cross and follow Jesus are true disciples—the rest of the Christians are fake.

These are some of the basic beliefs that emerge out of the cross. And if we try to sincerely practice these beliefs, we will definitely end up offending many people—including even many Christians.

Are we willing to bear this “Offense of the Cross” willingly and gladly? If we truly believe in the Cross, then we must be willing to do so.

Fellowship of His Sufferings

Read Aloud

Colossians 1:24-26: “Now I rejoice in what I am suffering for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness—the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord’s people.”

Explain

Paul says there’s something lacking in Christ’s sufferings. He is going to make up for this lack by suffering for Christ.

This is a shocking statement! What could possibly be lacking in Christ’s sufferings for us?

The explanation is simple. Jesus did everything that was needed to redeem us from sin and death; He suffered to the point of death to accomplish this for us.

Now it’s our turn to bear the suffering. He expects us to go out and share the Gospel with non-Christians. He expects us to warn people of the dangers of hell. And He expects us to serve the believers in Christ’s family with a servant-heart.

Doing these things will involve suffering. The question is, are willing to suffer for Christ in reaching the lost and serving the believers?



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 Philippians 3:10 Paul says that he wants to know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.

What do you think Paul means when he says that he wants to have a “fellowship of His sufferings.”

(Encourage the children to give their opinions regarding this question. Ask them to write out their answer in the Student Workbook.)

Video Presentation

Video Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BjupdIvz3hg>

Duration: 2 minutes and 20 seconds

(After playing the video, repeat the previous question.)

Based on the video, what do you think having a “fellowship of His sufferings” means?

Fellowship is a term related to friendship. When two friends spend time together, they are said to be having fellowship.

Paul is basically saying that he wants to be with Christ not just when Jesus is blessing him, but he wants to be with Christ even when this involves suffering. He is saying, “I want to share with Christ not only in the blessings but also in the sufferings.”

In other words, like Francis Chan, he says that he is willing to leave all his comforts and go outside the city gates, to be mocked and persecuted along with Jesus. He is willing to have fellowship with him even outside the city gates, where they would be considered social outcasts.

Name some specific things that you and I can do to share in the sufferings of Christ?

(Ask the children to name practical things that they can really practice in school or in their neighborhoods.)

We are expected to not only minister to non-Christians but also serve the Body of Christ. Name some specific things that you and I can do to serve other believers.

(Ask the children to name practical things that they can really practice at church or in their cell group.)

What kind of suffering do you think you may face while serving Christ in these two ways?

- Non-Christians may criticise you for insisting that Jesus is the only way to heaven.
- People may make fun of you and call you over-spiritual.
- You may lose a few friends when you take a stand for Bible values and refuse to do wrong things.
- You may even face trouble with your teachers at school if you effectively share your testimony with non-Christians, and they begin to feel drawn to Christ.
- You will have to give up time with friends, to sit with a classmate who wants to know more about Jesus.
- You may have to spend money from your pocket to buy someone a Bible.
- You will have to sacrifice some of your week-end activities to create time to pray and intercede for non-Christian friends.
- When serving at church as a volunteer, you may get criticised by other Christians for one reason or another.

We must be willing to suffer some of these things if we truly wish to share in the fellowship of Christ's sufferings.



APPLICATION

Reflect on what you can do for Christ this week. How can you reach out to your friends about the truth of the Cross? How can you serve in your church?



CLOSE WITH PRAYER

