

He's **Alive!**

- Large and Small Group Sessions for Kindergarten-Grade 3 and Grades 4-8
- Two Dramas
- Songs
- Complete Palm Sunday and Easter Program
- Crafts, Games, and Other Photocopiable Pages

LEADER'S GUIDE K-8 EASTER BOOK 3

He's Alive!



Grand Rapids, Michigan

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Walk With Me

Grades K-8

Easter Book 3: He's Alive!

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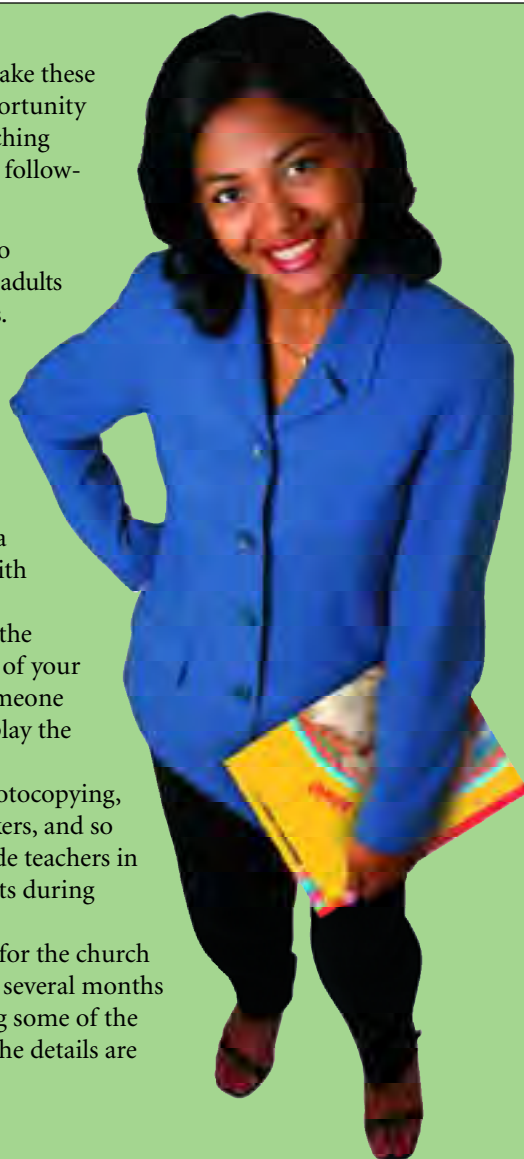
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Ways to Get Others Involved

You'll need the talents of many people in your congregation to make these two sessions come alive for your children. What a wonderful opportunity to involve adults and teens who usually don't take part in the teaching ministry of the church! Consider using volunteers in some of the following ways:

- *Drama Team.* You'll want to find actors to play the roles in the two dramas. Your middle school kids could take these roles. Or invite adults and older teens to prepare and present one or both of the dramas.
- *Sets Person(s).* Whether you want a very simple set with a few props for the dramas or a more elaborate backdrop and set, you will probably want to find one or more people who have visual gifts to plan and prepare these for you. If you plan to use any kind of lighting, you'll want to find a volunteer to manage that too.
- *Costume Gatherer.* Simple costumes will add a lot to the drama presentation. Look for a volunteer who'd be willing to work with others or alone to plan and prepare what the actors will wear.
- *Musicians.* Whether you plan to present an Easter program to the church and community or just to enjoy songs together as part of your opening worship on these two Sundays, you'll want to find someone with musical gifts to teach the songs to children, someone to play the accompaniment (or the CD), someone to lead the singing.
- *Materials Gatherers:* Look for people who are willing to do photocopying, gather craft materials such as pipe cleaners, paper punch, stickers, and so on, cut flags out of fabric—anything you might need to provide teachers in the small groups as they work with children on specific projects during these two weeks.
- *Program Planners.* If you have the children present a program for the church and community, you'll want to appoint a planning committee several months ahead of time—people who will take responsibility for making some of the content decisions, scheduling rehearsals, and making sure all the details are attended to.



How to Use This Book

Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”

—Matthew 26:26-28

The challenge you face is huge: planning a two-week program that will communicate to the children the amazing truth that Jesus died for us and lives again. Jesus died for us so that we can have life. And he’s alive! Hallelujah!

The two sessions in this Easter unit are like bookends for the Easter story—and each of them involves a meal—the Passover dinner Jesus celebrated with his disciples in the upper room and his visit with the travelers on the road to Emmaus after he had risen. Our hope is that through these sessions the children will come to know more about Jesus, that they will believe that Jesus is alive, and that they will look forward to joining the rest of the church at the communion table.

This book offers a variety of ideas and options for large group sessions, small group sessions, and an Easter program. Use the ideas and options that work best with your church school. Ideally, the large group session would take about 15-20 minutes; then the children would break up into their small group for about 30-45 minutes. You may also need to schedule an extra practice time or two if your church is planning on doing the Easter program.

Finding time to do everything in this book may be difficult, so choose what you think your group will be able to handle. You will need one copy of this book for each of your leaders. As the purchaser of this book, you are granted permission to photocopy the drama and the patterns and activities on reproducible pages.

Getting Started

Because these materials suggest a different format and approach than the regular *Walk With Me* units, you’ll want to spend some extra time planning and preparing to teach these sessions. Although we realize that each church situation is unique, you may find some of the following suggestions helpful:

- In the early winter, appoint a small committee to read through this book and decide which of the many suggestions would work best for your church.
- After the committee makes its recommendations, recruit actors, song leaders, accompanists, and teachers as necessary.
- Recruit volunteers who are willing to gather materials for these special sessions. Give them plenty of time for this task (a month or two) since they will likely want to ask the congregation to save and/or gather some of the items.
- Schedule rehearsals for the drama team.
- If you’re planning an Easter program, schedule a large final rehearsal that includes drama, singing, recitation, and so on.

Large Group Sessions and Easter Program

The large group session materials in this book contain a drama for each week and a list of songs to learn as a whole group. All the songs are included on the CD that comes with this book. Each drama takes about eight minutes and requires four or five actors. Costumes and sets may be as simple or as elaborate as you like (see suggestions on p. 10).

You’ll probably want to choose either middle schoolers or a team of older teens or adults to play these roles. Either way, be sure to schedule ample rehearsal time.

The dramas and songs can be used not only for the large group session but also for an Easter program. You'll find a sample program along with ideas for organizing and producing it on pages 69-70.

Small Group Sessions

Small group sessions will give you the opportunity to help connect the story to the children's lives. If you are unable to present the story in a large group setting, you can still use the drama or another form of the story in the small group setting. It's a story you want children to hear!

Each small group session opens with a *Hello* step designed to catch the children's interest and get them thinking about the lesson's theme.

Next comes the *Know* step (telling the story). If the children have already heard the story in the large group session, you'll want to use this time to review the story with them. If you did not participate in the large group session, either use the drama or another interesting way to present the story to the children (see sessions for suggestions).

The *Grow* step will help children understand what the story means for their lives, and the *Show* step will guide them to respond to what they learned in this session.

The small group session includes many options for activities and crafts that leaders (or the committee you appointed earlier) should carefully consider well ahead of teaching these materials. Once you've decided which crafts and activities to use, you may want to appoint two or more volunteers (possibly parents of children in the group) who will spend the time needed to gather materials, cut out patterns, and assemble all the items you'll need.

Above all, we hope you'll enjoy planning these Lent/Easter sessions. We trust that you and your congregation will come to see and know that Jesus is risen indeed!

Scheduling Rehearsals

1. Let cast members know rehearsal times when you ask them to participate. Stress that agreeing to participate means making a commitment to come to all practices.
2. Schedule two to four well-planned all-cast rehearsals.
3. Request that all lines be memorized by the first rehearsal.
4. Build community at rehearsals. Pray, practice, and enjoy a snack together.
5. If you are presenting the dramas as part of an Easter program, use your final rehearsal to go through the entire program including music, recitations, and so on.
6. Transitions can be tricky, so make a special point of practicing how you will move from one aspect of your program to another.

Tailoring Your Sessions to the Ways Children Learn

How do children learn? The answer to that question can be almost as varied as the children in your group. Some learn best through words. Others through music. Still others through nature or through movement.

Sessions in the *Walk With Me* curriculum try to respect the many ways children learn. *Walk With Me* sessions include a wide range of activities that speak to children with the following types of intelligence (based on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences). Within each session, the icons below highlight the learning styles represented by each activity. As you teach, you'll begin to get a sense for how the children in your group learn best. Children who are



Word Smart

learn best through verbal activities (listening, reading, or speaking), including discussions, worksheets, writing, reading, storytelling, and word games.



Number Smart

learn best by exploring patterns and relationships through activities such as problem solving, logical puzzles or games, making charts and graphs, or putting things in sequence.



Picture Smart

learn best by visualizing concepts. These kids enjoy viewing maps, slides, pictures, videos, and diagrams; making jigsaw puzzles; and expressing their ideas with shape, color, and design.



Body Smart

learn best by using their bodies, acting things out, using puppets, moving—anything hands-on.



Music Smart

learn best through sound, music, and rhythm—playing musical instruments, writing their own songs and raps, listening to recordings, singing, and so on.



People Smart

learn best through doing things with others, cooperating and working in small or large groups, role playing, conversations, brainstorming, and other interactive exercises.



Self Smart

learn best by working independently through such things as writing in a journal, meditating, reading, and reflecting.



Earth Smart

learn best through activities connected to living things and natural phenomena, through nature walks, examining plants and animals, nature experiments, and activities that focus on ecology.

—The ideas on this page are based on material from the following resources: *Multiple Intelligences in the Classroom* by Thomas Armstrong, © 2000, and a chart prepared by Donald L. Griggs, Livermore, California.

The Last Supper

Scripture

Matthew 26:17-30

Memory Challenge

Matthew 26:26

Focus

Through the Last Supper, Jesus shows that he is the one who will die for us.

WORDSearch

Think About It

When we need to remember something really important, we write it down. But how did Jesus' first followers remember his teachings when most of them were illiterate and laptops weren't even a distant dream?

In one instance Jesus reached back to a way of remembering that God's people had used for hundreds of years. He gave his disciples a ritual that believers ever after could perform on a regular basis to recall and celebrate something vitally important to all of us: the salvation he gained for us on the cross. Forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life.

That's the heart of Matthew's account of Jesus' last supper with his disciples. The occasion was the Passover, a feast that God's people had celebrated ever since they left Egypt—a feast that reminded them of how God saved their ancestors from slavery. It also reminded them of the sacrifice of a lamb that spared their households when God came to punish the disobedience of the Egyptians.

Pray About It

Pray that in this session your kids will not only be *reminded* of Jesus' great gift for us, but will also *experience* his rich grace in the telling.

In this supper Jesus takes some of the elements of the meal and gives them a whole new spin. The disciples knew that unleavened bread was to remind them of the haste with which the Israelites had left Egypt. Jesus now gives it a very different meaning: "Take and eat; this is my body" (Matt. 26:26). And the wine, which was drunk by all to toast God's great salvation for freeing the Israelites, now becomes the symbol of "my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. 26:28).

The older and newer forms of this ritual meal have much in common. Both symbolize God forgiving his people and setting them free. What's different about this new way of celebrating God's salvation is that it does not have animal sacrifice at its center but the sacrifice of God's own dear Son, our Lord. That's brand new. Jesus died to restore our relationship to God. That's what he means by saying that the wine symbolizes "my blood of the covenant."

So when we participate in the Lord's Supper, we experience two very strong and very different emotions. On the one hand, we're sad that Jesus had to suffer so much and die on the cross for us. On the other we're ever so grateful that he willingly offered up his life to save us. Which of those feelings should prevail?

We don't have to feel sorry for Jesus. He did not remain dead. He is now Lord of lords and King of

Tell About It

You may be tempted to dwell too much on the symbolism of the Lord's Supper. But especially the little kids may not be able to catch all that. So focus on the sacrifice Jesus made for us and its main effect: our sins are forgiven so that we may enjoy life with our good God forever.

kings. So we no longer call this meal “Passover.” We call it “eucharist”—which means “thanksgiving.” That’s our clue.

Planning the Session

Today you have the opportunity to present to all the children in your church school—from kindergarten through fifth grade—the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection, and the way we remember and celebrate those events together in the Lord’s Supper. What a thrill!

The outline and suggestions that follow may help you plan and schedule the 15-20 minutes you have together. You’ll need to decide which suggestions would work most effectively for your group. Then set the plan in motion!

A possible schedule for your session might look like this:

- Singing (5-10 minutes)
- Drama (8 minutes): “Something to Remember” (pp. 43-44)
- Litany (2 minutes): “His Love Endures Forever” (p. 73)

If you are planning to present an Easter program, you may want to use the large group session each week (in addition to other rehearsals as needed) to help the children prepare. You’ll find suggestions for program planning on pages 69-70.

The suggestions that follow assume that you’ll be telling the story of the Last Supper to children and young teens in this large group session and preparing them to respond to it in their small groups.

Singing

You may want to ask someone with musical gifts to lead the singing and teach new songs to the children during these two weeks. Be sure to share the tips in the box “Introducing a New Song” with that person.

Most of the songs you choose for these two sessions will likely be the well-known Lent and Easter songs that children love. The following songs (included on pages 47-68 and on the CD) are among those you may want to sing. They were selected for their ties to the themes of the drama and the Last Supper/Easter story.

- “Eat This Bread” (track 1)
- “Christ Is Risen” (track 2)
- “You Are My All in All” (track 3)
- “Oh, How He Loves You and Me” (track 4)
- “Were You There” (track 5)
- “You Are My King” (track 6)
- “There Is a Redeemer” (track 7)
- “The Wonderful Cross” (track 8)
- “Above All” (track 9)



If you are planning to use these songs as part of an Easter program, you will probably want to start teaching them to the group in early winter so that they know them well by the time you present the program.

Introducing a New Song

The way you introduce a new song is crucial—be sure you know the song well and have thought through ways to introduce it. Here are a few ideas to keep in mind:

- Many kids learn mainly through rote and repetition. Listen to the CD or play the tune and encourage kids to join in on a line or phrase at a time. You may want to start by teaching them a phrase that repeats often.
- Make up motions that go along with simple words to help them remember the words.
- Be enthusiastic! Model your love of singing instead of being concerned about performance.


—Sherry Merz, *Walk With Me* Music Editor



Drama

Rehearsing and presenting a drama can be a fun and rewarding experience—both for the actors and for the people who view the drama. For this week’s drama, “Something to Remember,” you will need four actors. You’ll want to find a team of actors, either teens or adults, and begin working with them early. This could be a wonderful gift for your middle school group to offer to the younger children (see tips for scheduling rehearsal on p. 5). You’ll also want to begin thinking about costumes and props—consider asking someone to help you gather the things you will need.

Costumes



Plan early for costumes, but remember that they don’t have to be fancy. All the characters should be dressed as Israelites. This can be done by cutting a 12" by 4' (30.5 cm x 1.25 m) rectangle of fabric and hanging it over the actor’s shoulder. If you would like a more elaborate costume, patterns for Israelite clothing are available at your local fabric store. Use what you have available and what you can find to create your own scene. Here are some general principles to remember:

- Use a variety of fabrics with different textures.
- Choose earth tones—brown, tan, moss green, rust, taupe, and so on.

Props

As with costumes, you can do as much or as little with props as you’d like. If you have a talented artist or designer, you may want to create a whole backdrop of a room in Jerusalem. You might also want to use special lighting. But the following simple props are all you really need for an effective presentation:

- Table with four or five chairs (or benches the length of the table)
- Suitcase or duffle bag
- Sign: Ben’s Place

Sound

One of the most important parts of presenting a drama is making sure the audience can hear the actors! Portable microphones can pick up actors’ voices and allow them to move freely. Giving each actor his or her own microphone is also acceptable. Because holding microphones can often be noisy, it is best if the microphone is on a stand. Keep in mind that the most important thing is for actors to be heard and their words understood.

Litany

At the end of the Passover celebration, the disciples and Jesus sang a hymn. Psalm 118, which you will be reading in litany form (reproducible page 73), is one of the songs/readings that is commonly used in the celebration of Passover.

For the litany you will need two adults or older students to read the leader parts. (Be sure to give the readers the litany in advance so they can become familiar with their parts.) You will also want to invite the children to practice their refrain: “His love endures forever” and ask a leader to give them a signal whenever they are to repeat this refrain.

If you plan to present an Easter program for the congregation and/or community, this litany could be part of the program.



If the litany will be used in worship, practicing the spoken response is a good idea. There is nothing wrong with practicing for a time of worship! Help children understand that we can be loud and enthusiastic without yelling or being irreverent. We want to express how happy we are that Jesus came to earth, died, and rose for all of us. His love endures forever!

Small Groups

After the drama, children will meet in small groups. If your regular leaders are present for these two weeks, it would probably work best to have children meet with their groups as usual or to combine several groups together. Note that we have included two session plans—one for children in grades K-3 and another for children in grades 4-8. Each leader will need to adapt the plan to the needs of his or her children.



1

Small Group Session: Kindergarten-Grade 3

The Last Supper

Scripture

Matthew 26:17-30

Memory Fun

Matthew 26:26

Focus

Through the Last Supper, Jesus shows that he is the one who will die for us.

WORDSearch

See Large Group Session (p. 8).



HELLO

Remembering the Story

Body Smart
 Word Smart

Picture Smart

Goal

Welcome the children and help them to see that things can help us remember people or events.

Time

5-10 minutes

Materials

- Band-Aids, one per child
- An object that serves as a reminder of something or someone (such as a wedding ring, vacation souvenir, scar)

As the children enter the room, greet each one by name. Gather the group in a circle and give each child a Band-Aid. Say something like this: **Sometimes certain things help us remember. I wonder if you remember a time when you needed a Band-Aid. Maybe you fell and scraped your knee or maybe you got a cut on your finger.**

Ask each child where she once needed a Band-Aid. If the child is willing, help her apply the Band-Aid to the place she was hurt as a reminder of what happened.

After each child has had a chance to put on a Band-Aid, let him or her tell the story of what happened.



Body language is important!
When you greet the children, sit in a chair or get on your knees so you can greet them with your eyes on the same level as their eyes. This is one way to show your respect for the children and to demonstrate that you are working with them, not talking down to them.



Some kids may be reluctant to do this. If so, don't force it. Let the child put the Band-Aid in her pocket. Or, instead of placing the Band-Aids on the kids, have them create a picture of themselves, color it, and put the Band-Aid in the appropriate place on the picture.

When all the children have had a chance to talk, say, **Isn't it wonderful how sometimes things like these Band-Aids can help us remember?** Then show the "reminder" object you brought and tell how that item helps you remember some event or some person.

(Perhaps a trophy from winning a contest, a present from a friend or family member, a memento you bought on a special trip, and so on.)

Explain that our Bible story today is about something Jesus gave us to help us remember how much he loves us.



KNOW

Remember Me



Goal
Tell what Jesus told the disciples at the Last Supper.
Time
10 minutes
Materials
Bible Plate, cup, bread (or cracker or matzoh) and grape juice Tablecloth

Gather the children around a table or sit them in a circle on the floor. If they saw the drama in the large group session, remind them of the special meal Jesus had with his disciples during a celebration called Passover. Take a moment or two to invite the children to tell what they remember from the drama.

Explain that you'd like to tell them a little more about that special meal Jesus had with his disciples—and that you'd like their help as you tell the story: Whenever you ask **Why?** and hold up your hand, you'd like them to say **Because he loves us.**

Practice the signal and the refrain a time or two. Then place your tablecloth on the floor or on a table the children are gathered around and lay the bread (or matzoh) and cup of juice on the cloth. Tell the story as follows:

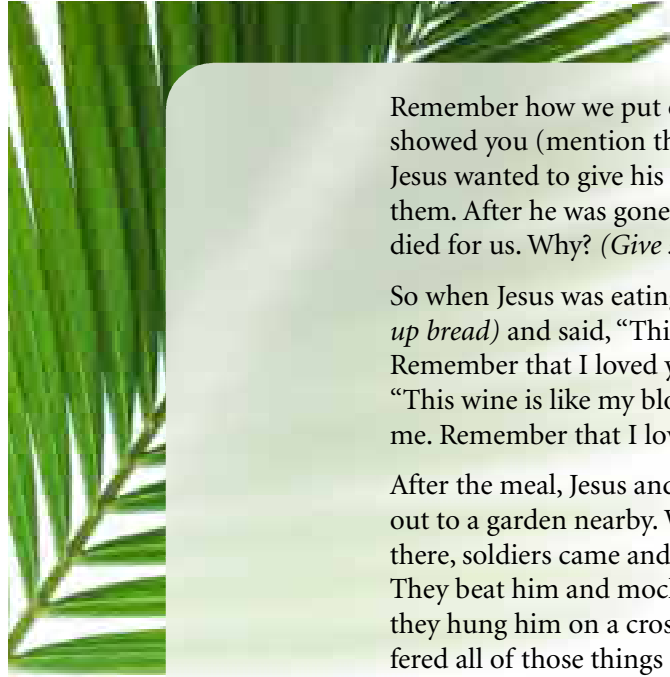
This story is from the Bible. (*Show children your Bible opened to Matthew 26.*) It's the story of a very special meal that Jesus and the disciples had together, a meal called Passover.

Each year on Passover God's people celebrated and had special meals together—like our families do on Christmas and Easter. On Passover God's people remembered how God had saved them long ago. They remembered how God brought them out of Egypt, a faraway land where God's people once were once slaves. And they thanked God for saving them and for loving them.

That's what Jesus and his friends were doing on this special Passover—celebrating and remembering. But Jesus knew something his friends didn't know. Jesus knew that soon he would suffer and die. **Why?** (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.** Yes! Because he loves us.

Jesus knew there were people who wanted to put him in jail and even kill him. These people weren't happy that he was teaching and helping people. But even though Jesus knew that these people would soon arrest him and hurt him, Jesus didn't run away. **Why?** (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.**

Jesus knew that he had to suffer and die so that you and me and all people who love him could be forgiven for the wrong things we do. He knew that if he died on the cross, we could one day be with him in heaven. So that's what he decided to do. **Why?** (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.**



Remember how we put on Band-Aids to remember times we were hurt? And how I showed you (mention the item you brought and what it helped you remember)? Well, Jesus wanted to give his friends something to help them remember how much he loved them. After he was gone, he wanted them—and us—to remember that he suffered and died for us. Why? (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.**

So when Jesus was eating the Passover meal with his friends, he took some bread (*hold up bread*) and said, “This bread is like my body. When you eat this, remember me. Remember that I loved you and died for you.” He also took a cup of wine and said, “This wine is like my blood. (*Hold up glass of juice.*) When you drink this, remember me. Remember that I love you and died for you.”

After the meal, Jesus and his friends went out to a garden nearby. While they were there, soldiers came and arrested Jesus. They beat him and mocked him. And later they hung him on a cross to die. Jesus suffered all of those things for you and me. Jesus died. Why? (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.**

But you know what? Just a few days after he died, Jesus was alive again! We’ll hear that wonderful story next week. He did it all for you and me. Why? (*Give signal.*) **Because he loves us.**



Children in your group who regularly attend church may recognize the similarity between the Passover meal and the Lord’s Supper. Thank them for being good listeners and agree that in the Lord’s Supper we do just what Jesus told the disciples to do. We eat bread and drink juice or wine to remember that Jesus loves us and that he died for us.



It may seem like a good idea to serve the children bread and grape juice, but you will want to be careful with this. We don’t want to give the children the impression they are taking part in the sacrament in your classroom! So when you are finished telling the story, consider serving grapes and cubes of mozzarella or Swiss cheese instead of bread and juice. These foods have the same color and attributes, but they aren’t communion foods.



GROW

Reminders

Goal

Realize that Jesus died for us too.

Time

10-30 minutes

Materials

See individual projects for lists

During this part of your session, you’ll want to choose one or more of the activities below that will help the children know that Jesus died for us too. No matter which activity you choose, begin by telling the children that Jesus didn’t only die for his friends, the disciples. He died for **each one of us**—because he loved us so much.

Tell the children that today they’ll have the chance to make or participate in something that will remind them of how much Jesus loves them. Then walk them through the steps of one or more of the following activities.

Time

10-15 minutes

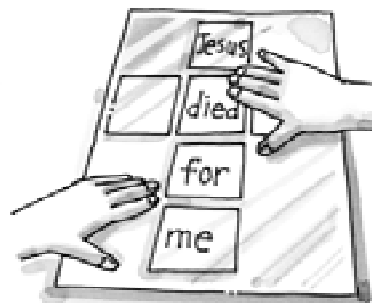
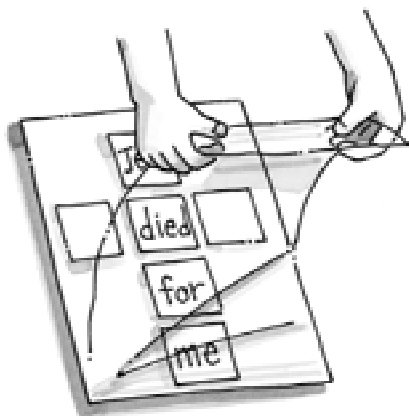
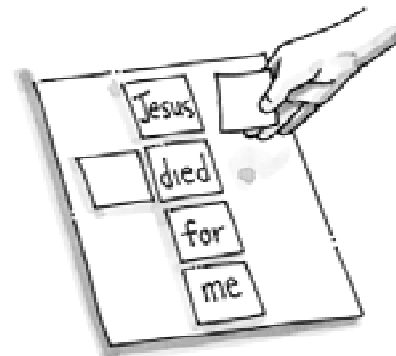
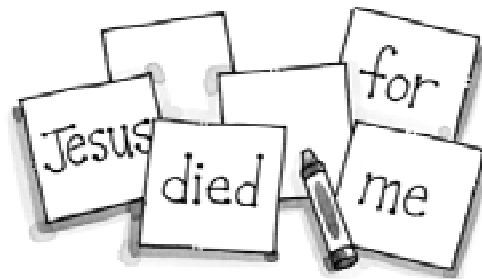
Materials

1½" (4 cm) squares cut from colored cardstock (purple if you use the church year colors; brown is also a good choice), six squares per child
 Clear Contact paper cut in 9"x10" (22.5 x 25 cm) pieces, two per child (flatten these under a pile of books for a couple of days so the contact paper doesn't roll up when you want to use it)
 Story card: "A Special Meal" (reproducible page 74) copied on cardstock, one per child

tip If you are working with young children, you will want to do some of the steps ahead of time (such as writing the words on the squares), and you'll want to try to get several helpers to work with the children on this project.

Explain that kids will make a cross to help them remember that Jesus died for us all. Guide the group through these steps:

- Take four squares. Write the following words, one on each square: Jesus, died, for, me.
- Arrange these squares in a vertical row that reads "Jesus died for me."
- Give each child a piece of clear Contact paper, sticky side up. Older children can take off the paper backing themselves, but you will want to do it for the younger children.
- Place the four squares close together (but not overlapping) in a row down the center of the contact paper.
- Take two more squares and place one square on each side of the square with the word "died" on it. The squares should now be in a cross shape.
- Give each child a second piece of clear Contact paper. Place it on the first sheet of contact paper, sticky sides together. (Younger children will need help with placing the Contact paper. Let the child help guide the sheets together.)
- Have children rub the sheets together. Cut off excess Contact paper.



- Give each child a copy of the story card (reproducible page 74) to take home with the cross.

The Cross in Your Sanctuary



Number Smart



Picture Smart



Body Smart

Time

10 minutes

Materials

None needed

The symbol of the cross is often repeated many times in church architecture, especially in traditional church buildings. This is a good time to take the children to the church sanctuary and look at all the crosses. The children will enjoy counting the crosses, especially if there is one on each pew. (Songbooks also often have a cross on them.) Remind the children that every time they see the cross, they should remember that Jesus died for them.

Or talk about the size of the cross: **When you look at the front of your church, what do you see? What is the largest thing you see? Sometimes our eyes are drawn up to the cross.**

If you can't get into the sanctuary, consider taking a look at the outside of your church or the church sign. Is the cross placed where others can see it?

Bookmark Cross



Picture Smart



People Smart

Time

15-20 minutes

Materials

Quilting template transparent plastic sheets, extra thick (available at fabric stores)
Cross pattern (reproducible page 75)
18" (46 cm) pieces of embroidery floss, four per child
Red or brown cardstock
Paper punch
Scissors
Pencils

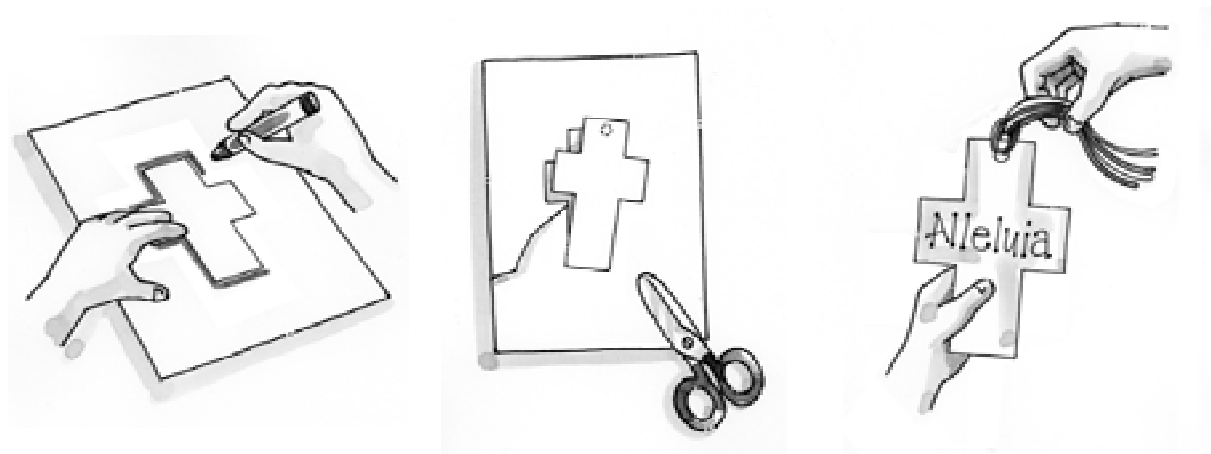
Ahead of time place the quilting template material over the cross pattern (reproducible page 75). Copy the pattern onto the template material with a pen and cut out the template (one per child).



If you are working with small children, you may want to skip the template step; simply trace the cross outline from the reproducible page directly to the cardstock. You'll also probably want to cut the crosses out before the session. Older children will enjoy using the templates to trace and cut out their own crosses.

Say something like this: We want to remember that Jesus died for us. We want to remember it every day—when we lie down and when we wake up; when we are at home or when we are at school. Today we will make a bookmark to remind us that Jesus died for us. We can use this bookmark at school or at home—any place where it will help us remember what Jesus did for us.

- Give each child a template (or pass the template around so each child gets a chance to use it). The child traces around the cross template on the paper. Very young children may need help with this.
- Have child cut out the cross shape (be prepared to help young children).
- Punch a hole near the top of the cross that you just cut out.
- Fold the embroidery floss in half. Insert the folded end into the hole on the cross. Pull it out about 1" (2.5 cm) to make a loop. Pull the ends of the floss through the loop.



Instead of plain cardstock, you can use Christmas cards or get-well cards. The children can then decide where on the card they would like to place the cross shape before they trace the template on the paper. The children can make the crosses to give to the congregation on Easter morning. On the back of the crosses the children can write things like "Alleluia, He Lives!" or "What a Savior!" As the children hand out the crosses, encourage them to say "Happy Easter," "Jesus Is Alive," or "We Serve a Risen Savior."

Litany: His Love Endures Forever

AA Word Smart

People Smart

Time

5-10 minutes

Materials

Litany: "His Love Endures Forever (reproducible page 73)

If you did not use the litany in the large group, read it now with the children responding. See suggestions for use on page 10.

4 SHOW

Thank You

Goal

Thank Jesus for dying for us.

Time

25 minutes

Materials

See individual projects for lists

Use one or both of the following activities to help the children thank Jesus for dying for us.

Time

10 minutes

Materials

None needed

Say something like this: Jesus died on the cross so that we don't have to be punished by God for our sins. That makes us happy—because it means we won't be punished. But it also makes us sad—because it means Jesus had to die. We can sometimes feel both happy and sad at the same time. We're going to think about that together. I'd like us to learn three signs together.



Jesus

Because dying on the cross is such an important thing Jesus did for us, the sign for Jesus is to take our middle finger and touch the middle of the palm of the opposite hand (like the nails that went into Jesus' hands). Do this with both hands.



I'm sorry

Close your right hand like a fist and place your hand on your heart. Then move it in a circular motion over your heart.



Thank you

Place the fingertips of your right hand on your mouth and then move them forward—almost like you're blowing a kiss.

Now that we know these signs, we will use them as we pray to Jesus. Sometimes we can pray with our eyes open. We'll do that today because we want to use these special signs that we have learned, but we'll have to remember that we're talking to God and not to each other. Each time I say the words *Jesus* or *sorry* or *thank you*, we'll make the signs we just learned.

Jesus, we are happy that you are alive again. Today we learned about how you died for us.

We are sorry for the bad things we do.

We are sorry that we say mean things to others.

We are sorry that we don't always tell the truth.

We are sorry that you had to die on the cross for us.

Jesus, we love you.

Thank you for giving us a church where we can learn about you.

Thank you for loving us so much that you would die so that we can come and live with you in heaven. Amen.

These words could be used also as a closing prayer or as part of an Easter worship service.

“Oh, How He Loves You and Me” with Motions



Music Smart



Body Smart

Time

5 minutes

Materials

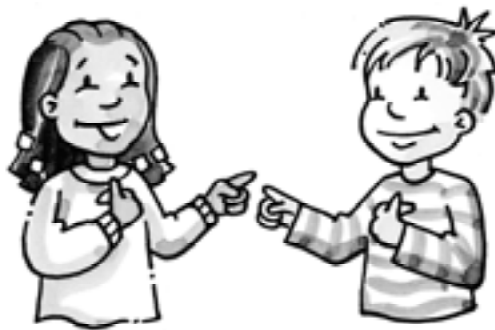
Song: “Oh, How He Loves You and Me” (p. 50, CD track 4)
CD player

Teach the first stanza of the song “Oh, How He Loves You and Me” to the children as follows:

- Play the song from the CD, asking the children to listen carefully and count the number of times they hear the word *love*. (Five.) Compliment them on their good counting.
- Invite the children to sing along with the first stanza.
- Explain that you will sing the song together again, but this time, you want them to do some motions along with the words. Say, **Every time we sing the word “love” we’re going to make this sign for the word. Bend your arms at the elbow and cross them at your wrists. Then hold these crossed arms up to your heart.**



Every time we sing “you and me” what do you think we’ll do? That’s right, we’ll point to you and me just like this.



When we sing “He gave his life, what more could he give?” who are we singing about? That’s right, Jesus. We make the sign for Jesus by taking the middle finger and touching the middle of the palm of the opposite hand. Do this with both hands. We’ll make the sign for Jesus two times: once when we sing “he gave his life” and then again for “what more could he do.”

- Sing the song through a time or two with the motions.

You can use this song to close today’s meeting. You may also want to include this song (and motions) in your Easter program, if you choose to have one.

Small Group Session: Grades 4-8

The Last Supper

Scripture

Matthew 26:17-30

Memory Challenge

Matthew 26:26

Focus

Through the Last Supper, Jesus shows that he is the one who will die for us.

WORDSearch

See Large Group Session, page 8.



HELLO Time Capsule

Picture Smart

People Smart

Word Smart

Goal

Welcome the children and remember a story.

Time

10 minutes

Materials

An assortment of things that tell something about today's culture, your neighborhood, schools, and church: DVDs/CDs, newspaper, candy bars, McDonalds bag, magazines, iPod, church directory, school sweatshirt, Bible, sports equipment, and so on (choose a variety of items; have at least a few more items than the number of kids in your group)
Box labeled "Time Capsule"
Index cards
Pencils

When all the kids have arrived, draw their attention to the items you've brought and arranged on your table. Explain that you have a challenge for them today. Show them the box you've labeled "Time Capsule." Their job is to choose items that will tell people who live two hundred years from now what people today are like. (You may want to narrow this to people in your city/town, people in your church, and so on, depending on which items you chose to bring.)

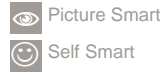
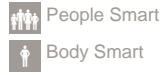
Comment that you couldn't bring everything! If they think something important is missing, invite them to name that item on an index card. Tell the group they have three minutes to make their decisions. They may include one item for every person who is in the group, choosing the things that would best help people in the twenty-third century to get the picture of what life in the twenty-first century was like.

After the three minutes, debrief. Invite group members to tell you why they chose the items they did. Comment that our Bible story today is about things Jesus gave us to help us remember him and what he did for us.

2

KNOW

Stop-action Story



Goal

Tell why Jesus gave the bread and wine to his disciples.

Time

10-15 minutes

Materials

Digital camera (optional)

Invite feedback from the group about the drama you saw together in large group. Explain that the Bible story today will be about what happened at that long-ago Passover meal. Tell the group that just as you created a time capsule together to tell people two hundred years from now what people today are like, Jesus left a reminder for his disciples and for all the people who love him—in all times and places. It’s a reminder of what he did for us.

Explain that today you’ll be taking a look at the story together in a stop-action format. First you (or a volunteer) will read a portion of the story. Each time you come to the words *Make a picture here*, you will stop your reading and group members will form a picture of what is going on in the scene. As they make their “pictures,” encourage kids to think about who the characters are, what each character is thinking or feeling, and how they can show those thoughts or feelings through their body language and facial expressions. Before you begin reading, assign roles to students or invite them to choose a role.

If you have a digital camera, you may want to take a picture of each scene and show the children what it looked like. These can be posted on the wall of the classroom or even on a church bulletin board, along with a copy of the biblical text, for all to enjoy. Even without a camera it is worth the time and energy to make these “photos” in the classroom because it gives the group a chance to talk about what is going on in the biblical account and to think about who is present and what their reactions are to each scene.



Give students as much opportunity to form the picture on their own as they can handle. Older students can do it almost completely on their own; younger ones will need more help. If students need help getting organized, assign one person to be the “director” for each shot. Give different students a chance to direct each scene.

Either read the text yourself, or ask children to take turns reading, stopping at the points where you see the words *Make a picture here*.

The story follows:

This story is from the Bible. It’s found in the book of Matthew.

On the first of the Days of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Where do you want us to prepare your Passover meal?” (*Make a picture here.*)

He said, “Enter the city. Go up to a certain man and say, ‘The Teacher says, “My time is near. I and my disciples plan to celebrate the Passover meal at your house.”’” The disciples followed Jesus’ instructions to the letter, and prepared the Passover meal. (*Make a picture here.*)

After sunset, he and the Twelve were sitting around the table. During the meal, he said, “I have something hard but important to say to you: One of you is going to hand me over to the conspirators.”

They were stunned, and then began to ask, one after another, “It isn’t me, is it, Master?” (*Make a picture here.*)

Jesus answered, “The one who hands me over is someone I eat with daily, one who passes me food at the table. In one sense the Son of Man is entering into a way of treachery well-marked by Scriptures—no surprises here. In another sense that man who turn him in, turns traitor to the Son of Man—better never to have been born than do this!”

Then Judas, already turned traitor, said, “It isn’t me, is it, Rabbi?”

Jesus said, “Don’t play games with me, Judas.” (*Make a picture here.*)

During the meal, Jesus took and blessed the bread, broke it, and gave it to his disciples: “Take, eat. This is my body.” (*Make a picture here.*)

Taking the cup and thanking God, he gave it to them: “Drink this, all of you. This is my blood, God’s new covenant poured out for many people for the forgiveness of sins. (*Make a picture here.*)

They sang a hymn and went directly to the Mount of Olives. (*Make a picture here.*)

—Matthew 26:17-30, *The Message*

Option to
step 2

option opt
option opt

Drama: Something to Remember Word Smart Body Smart

Time

10 minutes

Materials

“Something to Remember” (pp. 43-44)

If you do not have a large group session before you meet together as a small group, consider reading through the drama together today. (Make copies ahead of time from pp. 43-44.) Ask for volunteers to read the various roles; then walk and read your way through the skit or have the kids read it as reader’s theater. Be sure to give cast members a few minutes to read through their parts before beginning the drama.



GROW

Celebrating the Supper

 Word Smart

 People Smart

Goal

Realize that Jesus died for us too.

Time

5 minutes

Materials

None needed

Ask your group if the words Jesus used during the Passover meal reminded them of anything in our worship services today. Agree with them that we use these words of Jesus in the Lord’s Supper. Then challenge them to think about why we might do that with questions like the following:

- What did Jesus say the bread and wine should remind his followers of?
- Who do you think he meant that reminder for? Just his disciples?
- How do you think that reminder might help Christians today?



If your group includes kids who are new to the church, you may want to explain to the group that today we celebrate a supper in our worship that uses the same words Jesus used at the meal with his disciples a couple of thousand years ago.

You may want to use this opportunity to tell the group about your own experience with the Lord's Supper—perhaps a time when taking the sacrament had extra meaning for you. Comment that each time we take the sacrament together, Jesus is reminding us of what he did for us. And we're remembering together that Jesus died for us.

Conclude the step by going around the circle and having each person say to the person next to him or her, **Jesus died for you, [name].**

"Above All" Music Smart Word Smart

Option to
step 3

Time

10 minutes

Materials

Song: "Above All" (p. 59; CD, track 9)
CD player

Listen to the song together. Then discuss the following questions with the group:

- In the first stanza we hear "You were there before the world began." Who is the "you" in that line?
- In both stanzas the first three lines each start with the words "above all." Can you summarize what three things are mentioned?
- How is Jesus "like a rose trampled on the ground?"
- In the last line of the chorus we hear "and you thought of me, above all." What does that mean? Do you think that the author is saying that Jesus thought of you individually as he was being crucified? What else could he mean?
- What word or words do you think describes the author's attitude when he was writing this song?

SHOW Saying Thanks

Goal

Thank Jesus for dying for us.

Time

10-25 minutes

Materials

See individual projects for lists

During this part of your session, you'll want to choose one or more of the activities below—activities that will help the children know that Jesus died for them.

Another option would be to have your group (especially middle schoolers) help out in one of the classrooms of younger children, working one-on-one with a child who is creating a cross or bookmark.

Communion Mosaic Banner



Picture Smart



Body Smart



People Smart



Word Smart

Time

25 minutes

Materials

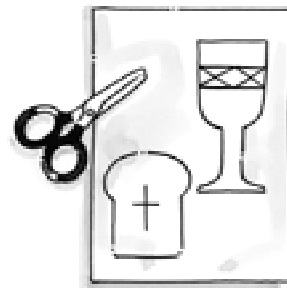
White felt 11" x 20" (27.5 x 50 cm), one per student
Purple and tan felt, ½ yard, 36" (90 cm) wide
Dowel, 12" (30 cm) long, one per student
Tacky glue
Straight pins
Scissors that will cut felt
Ribbon for hanging (18" or 45 cm), one per child
Bread and wine chalice patterns (reproducible page 76)

Before class cut the purple and tan felt into half-inch (1.25 cm) square pieces. You will also need narrow strips of felt (about ⅛" wide)—about 10" (25 cm) of the tan felt and 18" (45 cm) of the purple felt for each child. The easiest way to get accurate squares is to use a rotary cutter and a cutting board. (These are tools used by quilters.)

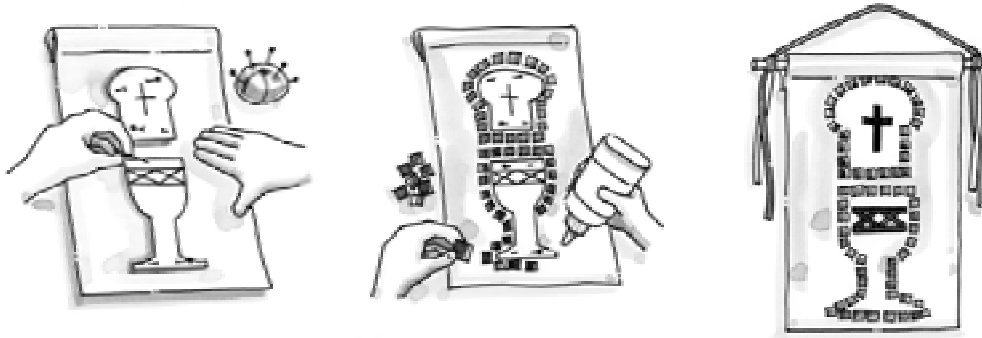
Introduce the activity by telling the group that they will be making a banner that they can take home to remind them that Jesus died for us—just as the bread and juice or wine remind the congregation of Jesus' death during the Lord's Supper. (If you didn't discuss the relationship between the Last Supper and the Lord's Supper in the previous step, do so now.) Tell the children that the banner will also serve as a reminder to thank Jesus for what he did for us.

Then guide them through the following steps.

- Begin by making the pocket for the dowel to hang the banner. Place glue on the top edge of the banner. Fold the glue side over about 2" (5 cm). This can dry while you work on the rest of the banner.
- Cut the bread and the wine chalice shape out from the pattern page. Place the bread pattern on the top of the banner. Place the chalice pattern on the bottom of the banner. Leave 1½" (3.75 cm) of space at the bottom of the banner and the same amount between the bread and wine chalice. Pin the patterns in place.



- Glue the squares of tan fabric around the bread pattern to create an outline of the bread. Glue purple squares to create an outline of the chalice pattern.
- Remove the patterns. You may wish to add a cross to the center of the piece of bread and a decoration in purple to the chalice, using thin strips of colored felt.
- Put the dowel through the pocket of the banner. Tie the ribbon to the ends of the dowel.



When the banners are complete, take time to thank Jesus together for his sacrifice. Encourage the children to hang the banners somewhere at home that will remind them to give thanks to Jesus often.

Confession and Gratitude in Sign Language



Body Smart



Word Smart



Self Smart

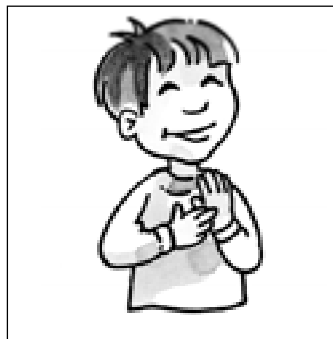
Time

10 minutes

Materials

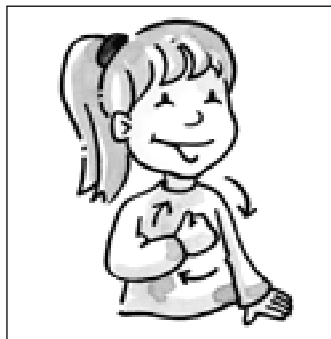
Newsprint and markers (optional)

Say, Jesus died on the cross so that we don't have to be punished by God for our sins. That makes us happy that we are not going to get punished but it makes us sad that Jesus had to die. We can sometimes feel both happy and sad at the same time, can't we? We're going to think about that together. I'd like us to learn three signs together.



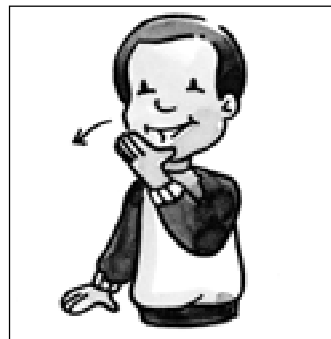
Jesus

Because dying on the cross is such an important thing Jesus did for us, the sign for Jesus is to take our middle finger and touch the middle of the palm of the opposite hand (like the nails that went into Jesus' hands). Do this with both hands.



I'm sorry

Close your right hand (like a fist—but in sign language this is the letter “a,” the letter that starts the word *apology*) and place your hand on your heart. Then move it in a circular motion over your heart.



Thank you

Place the fingertips of your open right hand on your mouth and then move them forward—almost like you're blowing a kiss.

Now that we know these signs, we will use them as we pray to Jesus. Sometimes we can pray with our eyes open—we'll do that today because we want to use these special signs that we have learned, but we'll have to remember that we're talking to God and not to each other. When I say the words *Jesus* or *sorry* or *thank you*, we'll together make the signs we just learned.

Also explain that kids will have the opportunity to add words to the prayer. Each time you say "We are sorry for . . ." someone in the circle can complete the sentence. Do the same with "Thank you for . . ." You may want to go around your circle and give each student the opportunity to mention something we are sorry for and something we thank Jesus for.



Before the prayer begins, give your group an example of how they might complete each of the petitions: We are sorry for being untruthful, hurting other people, and so on. We thank you for a church where we can learn about you, friends, and so on. Let kids know that they can feel free to "pass" if they'd prefer not to participate!

You may also want to brainstorm ideas for the prayer ahead of time, write the responses from the group on newsprint, then pray the prayer together with signs. You could use this written prayer as part of your Easter program or service, if you plan to have one.

Jesus, we are happy that you are alive again. Today we learned about how you died for us.
We are sorry that you had to die on the cross for us.

We are sorry for . . .

We are sorry for . . .

We are sorry for . . .

Jesus, we love you.

Thank you for loving us so much that you would die so that we do not have to be punished.

Thank you for . . .

Thank you for . . .

Thank you for . . .

Thank you for . . . Amen.

Elder Visit Word Smart People Smart Self Smart

Time

10 minutes

Materials

Communion set (optional)

Tools for cutting the bread or filling the cups (optional)

Invite the pastor or elder(s) to your class to talk about your church's celebration of the Lord's Supper.

You may want to give the elder these questions to think about before he or she comes to class.

- Who buys and prepares the bread and the wine or juice? When is it prepared?
- Is any special equipment needed?
- Who serves communion?
- Who can eat the bread and drink the wine or juice?
- Can children take communion?
- When can a child begin to take communion?

Encourage the elder to bring parts of the communion set to class. In some churches a special tool is used to fill the individual cups. Does your church use any special tools? Ask the elder to bring this tool and let the children try to use it with water. Communion sets are sometime donated by families or made by individuals in the church. Does your communion set have such a history?

This is a great time for the elder to invite the children to make profession of faith or to prepare for confirmation. He or she can explain how the process works in your church. Thank the pastor or elder for coming and offer a prayer thanking Jesus for dying for us.