Summary of Today’s Story
After the supper with his disciples, Jesus goes out to a garden, where Judas is waiting with some Roman soldiers and Pharisees to arrest him.

The soldiers take him to the high priest for questioning, then to Pilate. As Jesus had foretold, by the time the cock crows Peter has denied Jesus three times.

Reluctantly, Pilate hands Jesus over to the Jews for crucifixion, and Jesus dies on the cross with the words, “It is finished.”

Where You’ll Find Today’s Story

In the Bible
We recommend the New Revised Standard Version Bible.
John 18:1–19:42

In Children’s Bibles
If you plan to use a children’s Bible for storytelling, write the page numbers of today’s story in the space below.

In Our Sunday Lectionary
Today’s story is told in church on the following Sundays:
Years A, B, C: Good Friday; Holy Saturday
Year B: Proper 29
Weaving Our Story with the Biblical Story

This is Jesus’ hour. The waiting is over, and events begin to move quickly toward Jesus’ death. Jesus knows that this is an essential part of his work, the mission of his Father, and so he is in control here. At his arrest, he goes voluntarily with the authorities after securing the release of disciples.

Jesus is crucified on the day before Passover, at noon. This is the very hour that the paschal lambs are being slaughtered in the Temple.

The words on the plaque of the cross are intended to announce the crime of the accused. On Jesus’ cross, the plaque reads “Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.” The Jews protest this wording, but Pilate defiantly insists that the words remain intact. Thus the Gentiles (reflected by Pilate the Gentile) will ultimately uphold the kingship of Christ.

Jesus fulfills his mission to the very end, caring for his own even while dying, uniting his mother with the disciple John. Then, just before dying, the giver of living water thirsts. He drinks the wine that is given to him, declares that “it is finished,” and “hands over the spirit.” Yes, his work is finished. His hour has come, and ended, on the cross. God has died for us.

Jesus the Suffering Servant, whose hour began as a foot washing servant to pass on his mission to his disciples, now completes his time on earth. He will now return to his Father.

Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, both secret disciples of Jesus and members of the ruling class, bury Jesus. Nicodemus provides an immense amount of burial spices. The brave action of these two men in coming forward to bury the enemy of their own high priest, shows that Jesus has already begun drawing people to himself.

The Episcopal Thread

John’s account of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of Jesus is always the reading for Good Friday—such is its power.

Many people who are ecumenical in spirit and commitment, including Episcopalians, object to the anti-Judaic passages of John. So the Good Friday reading from John is sometimes substituted for a version from one of the Synoptic Gospels.

Worshipers in the Episcopal Church may also find hymns that counteract the anti-Judaic leanings of this lesson. The Holy Week hymns (Hymnal 1982, #158-173) place the blame for Jesus’ death squarely on our shoulders—we whose sins brought the Son of God to suffer and die for us.

For example, #158 says it best:

Who was the guilty? Who brought this upon thee?
Alas, my treason, Jesus, hath undone thee.
’Twas I, Lord Jesus, I it was denied thee:
I crucified thee.
Gathering
As the children enter the room, engage them in a simple activity that relates to today’s lesson. They may want to work on the maze on page 8, Jesus Goes to the Cross.

Or you might give the children a simple cross and have them decorate it with markers, sequins, flowers or whatever you have available. The cross can be made of construction paper, poster board, wood or even such materials as Styrofoam or acrylic.

For older intermediate children, you may in addition offer a brief period for them to visit with each other before the lesson begins.

After all the children have arrived and had a few minutes of activity or fellowship time, gather them together and say a simple opening prayer:

- Our heavenly Father, we give you thanks for being with us today, and for each other, as we meet to learn about you and especially about your Son Jesus Christ. For you sent Jesus your Son to be with us and to teach us how to follow you, and today we will learn how he died for us. Bless us now as we turn our hearts and our minds towards you, we pray, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Telling the Story
Read today’s story aloud from a children’s Bible, showing the pictures, or tell the story in your own words. You may use story aids such as flannel boards if you wish, but for most children except perhaps those of preschool age, the story itself is powerful enough not to need enhancement. However, you may use concrete props to enhance the story if you wish.

We recommend not using puppets or dolls for this lesson, because such “fun” props tend to bring a lighthearted touch to any story.

However, the use of concrete props such as large nails, a crown of thorns and other “realistic” reminders of Jesus’ passion and death would be both appropriate and powerful. One of the supplementary activities on page 16 at the end of this lesson gives suggestions for the kinds of props you may use for such a dramatic reading of the events of Holy Week.

When you have finished the story, ending with the death of Jesus, pause for a brief minute of quiet (you may want to ask the children to be quiet also), then move directly to the worship time, without any discussion of the story. Let the story express its own power and meaning at this time.
Prayer

Set up a small worship center in your room. You may make special preparations to reflect the spirit of this lesson.

Materials:
small table with a cloth to cover it
2 candles or a single large Christ candle
matches
Bible
cross
optional: flowers (real, artificial or handmade by the children)

Have the children set up a simple altar with the materials listed above. Invite them to place on the altar any drawings or crafts that they created during Gathering time. Then light the candles.

Before reading the scripture passages, cover the cross in black fabric—a symbol of Christ’s Passion. Drape the fabric over the top of the cross, then tie it at the bottom.

Read a verse from today’s scripture from a Bible so that the children connect the story they heard with the Bible, which is the word of God. If working mainly with older children, you might expand the reading to several verses.

Suggestions for the readings:
For younger children: John 19:30
For older children: John 19:28-30

Help familiarize the children with our liturgy by doing the reading as it is done in church. Read as follows:
Reader: A reading from the book of John:
(Read the selected passage.)

Reader: The word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

Invite the children to sit in a circle and join in prayer. Say a brief prayer yourself, then invite prayers from each child in the circle:
• Invite children to give thanks to God where they see his presence in his lives or in the world. You may encourage them by offering your own thanks to God for any specific ways in which God has been guiding you.
• Ask if any children want to offer any prayers for God’s help, either for themselves or for any other people in need or trouble.
• Recognize any birthdays and other special occasions, and give thanks to God for the opportunity to share these events with our church family.
• End by praying the Lord’s Prayer together.

Carefully extinguish the candles.
Sharing
Pass out snacks and say a simple grace, such as:
- We pray, O Lord, that you will bless this food set before us, and we give you thanks for the people who prepared it for our enjoyment. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.

This is an excellent time, while sharing a snack, to begin talking about the story that the children have just heard. Ask questions such as:
- Is this story of Jesus’ suffering and death familiar to you? Did you hear anything today that you hadn’t heard before? If so, what was it?
- What did you feel when you heard the story today?
- What did it make you think about?
- What would it have been like to be Jesus’ followers—when he was brought before Pilate and the religious leaders? When he was hanging from the cross?

Remember that the ending of this story is not of resurrection and Easter yet. It is important for the story to stand by itself, and not to hurry to the Easter message yet. To appreciate the glory of God, we need to experience his suffering. To experience the joy of the resurrection, we need to know of the pain of his death. Easter will come, but we must wait, just as the disciples had to wait.
Activities: Arts, Crafts, Games, Drama, etc.

After Sharing, begin an activity to supplement and enhance today's story. While the children are doing an activity, talk about the story so that they make the connection.

Suggested story-related activities are provided at the end of this lesson on pages 8-29.

Additional activity ideas can be found on pages 3-6 in the Appendix (also downloadable) where we’ve provided suggestions and directions for a variety of general activities that can be adapted to any lesson. Also included are outreach and service projects that can be done at any time.
Memorization
There is no passage to memorize for this lesson.

Weaving the Family of God
As your time together draws to a close, take a few minutes to help the children summarize the story and say what they learned today by asking questions such as:
- What happened to Jesus in our story today?
- What did his friends do?

Encourage the children to remember key family of God words and themes from the story, such as: crucifixion, believing, suffering, dying.

Closing Prayer
Before the children leave, say a closing prayer to send them into the church worship service or back to their homes with God’s love and blessing. Find a prayer from the Prayer Book, say a prayer of your own or pray something like the following:
- Gracious and loving God our Father, we thank you for sending your only Son Jesus Christ to live with us, to die for us, and to show us the way to eternal life with you. We pray for your guidance this week, so that we can learn and learn again to follow your way, to love you and to love each other as you commanded us to do. Send us back to our families with your blessing and with your love, we pray, in Jesus’ name. Amen.

End with a dismissal used in church, such as:
- Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

The children respond:
- Thanks be to God!
GATHERING ACTIVITY:
JESUS GOES TO THE CROSS

Jesus went willingly to the cross because God was with him.
Find the way with Jesus, in this maze.
Tissue Paper Cross
for Elementary

Children decorate a cardboard cross with colored tissue paper and glitter.

Materials:
- light cardboard or poster board
- colored tissue paper, cut into small pieces
- liquid starch*
- paint brushes
- glitter

Preparation:
Cut a cross from cardboard or poster board, one cross per child. The cross should measure around 12”-18” tall.

Directions:
Invite each child to decorate a cross as follows:

1. Brush the cross with liquid starch. You may want to cover only a small area at a time.
2. Carefully lay the tissue paper onto the starch, making sure that the paper is flat against the cross.
3. Keep applying tissue paper onto the cross until the cross is completely covered.
4. Lightly sprinkle the cross with glitter. If the starch is already dry, lightly brush with more starch before sprinkling glitter.

*Variation:
If you do not have liquid starch, you may use a liquid glue and water mixture. The liquid starch gives a more shimmery effect, but either method will work.
SUGAR CUBE CROSS
for Primary

Children use sugar cubes to make a free-standing three-dimensional cross.

Materials:
- sugar cubes, 20 per cross
- white frosting
- plastic knives
- small paper plates
  optional: tiny fake flowers
  optional: glitter

Directions:
Invite each child to make a cross as follows:

1. Use frosting to “glue” the cubes together and a plastic knife for spreading.

2. On the paper plate, glue nine sugar cubes together to make a square base. Centered on this base, glue four sugar cubes to make a second square on top of the first one.

3. Glue five sugar cubes, one on top of the other, to make the long part of the cross. Then glue one cube on each side for the crossbeam.

4. If you wish, sprinkle some glitter over the cross. Put some tiny flowers at the base of the cross.

5. Carefully transfer the cross to a clean plate.
Children decorate a foam cross with colorful shapes.

Materials:
- foam sheets
- small foam pieces, various colors (or package of pre-cut foam shapes)
- scissors
- glue
- hole punch
- thin ribbon

Preparation:
Cut the foam sheets into a cross shape. It may be as short as 6” and as long as 12”. Have small foam pieces ready, or cut your own from the leftover sheets.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a cross as follows:

1. Cut small foam pieces into various shapes to make parts of hearts, flowers and other designs, or abstract shapes.

2. Glue these pieces onto the cross. Designs can be made from several shapes glued on top of each other.

3. Let the cross dry before taking home.

4. Punch a hole at the top and thread some ribbon through for hanging.
Children use pipe cleaners and beads to make a simple cross.

**Materials:**
- white or silver pipe cleaners
- scissors
- clear beads, either pony beads or star beads
- other color beads, such as pale blue or purple
- liquid glue
- white thread

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a cross as follows:

1. Make a cross shape from the pipe cleaners by twisting one pipe cleaner around another, around ⅓ down from the top. Cut the ends of the “crossbeam” part of the pipe cleaner to the desired length. (The crossbeam should be shorter than the vertical pipe cleaner.)

2. Thread beads through the pipe cleaners. Use all clear beads, or mostly clear beads with a few pale colored beads placed symmetrically on the cross.

3. Before putting the last bead in, add a little dab of glue to the end of the pipe cleaner, then put the bead on. This will keep the beads in place.

4. Tie a length of thread to the cross for hanging, if desired.
Children make crosses and soak them in a solution that covers them with crystals.

**Materials:**
- white pipe cleaners
- large Styrofoam cups
- spoon
- string, around 12” per child
- scissors
- Borax
- hot water
- tablespoon (measuring spoon)
- pencils
- paper towels

**Preparation:**
Make sure that you have hot water handy. Bring a thermos of hot water if it is unavailable in your room.

**Directions:**
1. Bend the pipe cleaner into an outline of a cross shape (see illustration). Twist and press the ends together.
2. Tie a length of string to the top of the cross.
3. Write your name on a Styrofoam cup.
4. Add 3 tablespoons of Borax into your cup. Fill with hot water to around 1” from the top of the cup. Stir the mixture with a spoon, very carefully.
5. Hold the string and lower the cross into the water-borax solution. Make sure the cross is completely covered in water.
6. Wrap the string around a pencil and set the pencil on top of the cup, to dangle the cross. Leave the cup for a week to allow the solution to get thicker and more crystallization to occur.
7. Remove the cross. It will be covered in crystals. Unwind the string, allow the cross to dry on paper towels, then hang in a window.

**Variation:**
In addition, children might make a star to symbolize Jesus’ birth and a heart to symbolize his teaching.
NATURAL WOOD CROSS
for Intermediate

Children make a simple but dramatic cross of naturally formed twigs. They may use it as a centerpiece or window hanging during Holy Week.

Materials:
- long, straight twigs, 2 per child
- small dried or silk flowers
- string, thread or twine

Directions:
Invite each child to make a cross as follows:

1. Use two twigs to make a cross shape.
2. Tie the twigs together at the center with the string or thread.
3. Add the small flowers in the center of the cross.
Children glue tiles to poster board and decorate its frame with Jesus’ message of peace.

**Materials:**
- 1” x 1” square white or ivory tiles
- acrylic paints
- narrow paintbrushes
- tacky glue or hot glue gun
- dark blue poster board
- black poster board
- scissors
- optional: decorative items for frame

**Directions:**
Invoke each child to make a framed cross as follows:

1. Cut the blue poster board to around 18” x 18” square.
2. Glue the tiles in a cross shape onto the poster board.
3. Paint a design on the cross. Children can paint one picture on each tile, or a single picture on the whole cross.
4. Make a frame by cutting an 18” square of black poster board. Cut an inside square around 16”, making a 2” wide frame.
5. Glue this frame on top of the blue poster board. Decorate if desired, or leave plain. On the frame, write *My Peace I Give to You* (John 14: 27).
PROPS FOR STORYTELLING
for Preschool, Primary, Elementary, Intermediate

Children may use these concrete reminders of Jesus’ passion during storytelling time, which take the story of Jesus’ suffering out of the realm of story and into the realm of reality and remembrance.

Directions:
As you tell the story, take each prop out, or have all of the reminders out and pass them around when the time comes.

These are the suggested reminders (the first three may be used with Lesson 31):

- **Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem**: palm branches or palm leaves, shepherds’ costumes (garments spread on the road)
- **foot washing**: tub of water, towel
- **Last Supper**: plate of bread (pita bread, round loaf of french bread or homemade communion bread) and chalice of wine
- **arrest**: money bag of coins (symbolizing Judas’ payment), soldier’s sword, lantern (because he was arrested before dawn), model or picture of a rooster (symbolizing Peter’s denial)
- **trial**: whip or scourge (make it yourself, or buy at a costume store), purple cloth (that the soldiers wrapped around Jesus), crown of thorns, bowl of water and a pitcher (for Pilate to wash his hands)
- **crucifixion**: cross, 4 large nails, hammer, a bowl of vinegar and a sponge (when Jesus thirsted), plain tunic (like a shepherd’s costume, what the soldiers gambled for), dice, spear (to pierce his side after he died)
- **death**: plain white cloths (for burial cloths)
Children make a folding picture of the hill where Jesus’ cross stood on Good Friday.

**Materials:**
- picture (p. 18)
- crayons
- scissors
- construction paper
- glue or tape
- craft utility knife (leader only!)

**Preparation:**
Make a copy of the picture for each child. Use a craft utility knife to cut around the cross.

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a stand-up picture as follows:

1. Color the picture.
2. Cut out the whole picture and glue it to a sheet of construction paper.
3. Fold the paper in the middle. Then fold under the top and bottom flaps.
4. Tape or glue the flaps together so that the picture stands up.
HOLY WEEK LIGHT CATCHER
for Primary, Elementary

Children use poster board and colored cellophane to make a silhouette of three crosses on a hill. Next week, they can make a matching Resurrection Light Catcher.

Materials:
- colored cellophane paper
- light catcher pattern (p. 20)
- dark blue or black poster board
- scissors or craft utility knife
- glue
- thread
- hole punch

Preparation:
Make a copy of the light catcher pattern for each child. For younger children, do steps 1 and 2 below, transferring the pattern to poster board and cutting it out.

Directions:
1. Cut out the light catcher pattern, including the inside. Transfer this design to the poster board and cut out.

2. Cut out a second light catcher pattern to serve as the back of the light catcher.

3. Cut out a piece of cellophane. Glue it onto the back of the poster board. Older children may be able to use several colors of cellophane in smaller pieces, for a stained glass effect. Younger children will probably be able to use only one or two colors.

4. Trim any excess cellophane.

5. Glue the second light catcher pattern to the back of the first, hiding the glued cellophane.

6. Punch a hole at the top of the light catcher and thread for hanging.
SIMPLE HOLY WEEK LIGHT CATCHER
for Preschool

Younger children make a variation on the Holy Week Light Catcher from paper plates and colored cellophane. Next week, they can make an Easter Light Catcher to match.

Materials:
- colored cellophane or tissue paper
- glue
- scissors
- markers
- plain paper plates
- thin ribbon
- hole punch
- Holy Week pictures (p. 22)

Preparation:
Make a copy of the Holy Week pictures for each child.

Directions:
1. Cut out the center of the paper plate.

2. Cut a piece of colored cellophane or tissue paper and glue it to the plate. Trim any excess paper.

3. Color and cut out the Holy Week pictures. Carefully glue them onto the cellophane or tissue.

4. Punch a hole in the top of the light catcher. Thread ribbon through and tie, for hanging.

Variation:
For a striking light catcher, cut a circle from black poster board and use this as the frame, instead of using a paper plate. Follow step 2 above. Then outline the pictures on black construction paper. Cut out these pictures and glue them to the cellophane.
HOLY WEEK VIGIL KEEPER
for Primary

Children make a clock marking the events of Holy Week to help them keep vigil.

Materials:
- paper plates
- light-colored poster board
- scissors
- hole punch
- paper fasteners
- crayons
- dark-colored poster board
- pencils
- glue
- arrow pattern (p. 25)
- Holy Week pictures (p. 24)
- optional: adhesive sheet or strip magnets

Preparation:
Make a copy of the Holy Week pictures and the arrow for each child.

Directions:
Invite each child to make a Holy Week Vigil Keeper as follows:

1. Put a paper plate on a sheet of poster board and outline it in pencil. Cut out the circle.

2. Color and then cut out the Holy Week pictures. Arrange them on the outside edge of the circle, like the numbers on a clock face. When they are arranged as you want them, glue them on.

3. Cut out the arrow pattern and use it to outline an arrow shape on poster board, a different color than the circle. Cut out this arrow. Punch a hole at the base.

4. Poke a hole in the center of the circle. Put the arrow over this hole and push a paper fastener through.

5. To hang the vigil keeper on a refrigerator, cut a large piece of sheet or strip magnet and stick it to the back.

6. At the appropriate times during Holy Week, point the arrow to the corresponding event leading up to Jesus’ death and resurrection.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Holy Week Symbols</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Palm Sunday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday evening</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Drink this all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant... Do this for the remembrance of me.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thursday night</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass me by. Yet not as I will, but as thou wilt.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday before dawn</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“But this is your hour — the hour when darkness reigns.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday morning</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>“Crucify him!”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Father forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Friday afternoon</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“It is finished.”</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Easter Sunday</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Alleluia! Christ is risen!”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burial of the dead</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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PASSION CUBE
for Elementary

Children draw scenes from Holy Week on a cube to remind them of Jesus’ Passion.

Materials:
- box pattern (p. 27)
- card stock paper
- crayons, markers or colored pencils
- pencils
- scissors
- glue

Preparation:
Make a copy of the box pattern for each child, using the card stock paper for stiffness. Make a few extras in case of mistakes.

Directions:
Invite each child to decorate a box as follows:

1. In pencil, draw 6 scenes from Holy Week, or draw 5 scenes and use the sixth side for a title.

2. Color the pictures carefully.

3. Cut out the pattern and assemble it. Glue it together.
Holy Week Vigil Candle

Primary

We sometimes light candles in prayer vigils, to remind us of those for whom we pray. Children make this candle out of felt as a reminder of Jesus.

**Materials:**
- dark felt squares (for the background)
- yellow felt (for the flame)
- red felt (for part of the flame)
- any other color of felt (for the candle)
- gray felt (for the candle plate)
- scissors
- glue
- pencils or pens

**Preparation:**
Draw the outlines of the candle, plate and flames on the felt squares.

**Directions:**
Invite each child to make a candle as follows:

1. Use one felt square as your picture backing.
2. Cut out the candle shapes where the adult has drawn them.
3. Arrange them on the felt square. When the pieces are as you like them, glue them onto the felt.