

# Salvation— the Great Escape



## **Why Did Jesus Have to Die?**

*Key Faith Foundation:* The Sacrificial System for Forgiveness

*Key Scriptures:* Leviticus 1:1-4; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-5;  
Hebrews 9:22; 10:1-10; 1 Peter 2:22-24

## Bible basis for teachers

*Leviticus 1:1-4; Romans 3:23; 6:23; Ephesians 2:1-5; Hebrews 9:22; 10:1-10; 1 Peter 2:22-24*

► **GRAPPLE QUESTION:** Why Did Jesus Have to Die?

► **KEY FAITH FOUNDATION:** The Sacrificial System for Forgiveness

**T**he Bible tells us Jesus never broke any rules. He never sinned! So why did Jesus have to die? Use this lesson to explain that the punishment for sin is death; because we've all sinned, we all deserve to die. But God, in his great love for us, sent Jesus as the perfect sacrifice for every person's sin.

**Romans 3:23** and **6:23** plainly state that everyone has sinned, and the payment for sin is death. The only way to escape this punishment is to accept God's free gift through Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Encourage kids to talk about what it means to accept this free gift and the consequences of not accepting it.

Through **Leviticus 1:1-4** and **Hebrews 9:22**, we see that not only does God have a payment rule for sin, but God also has a forgiveness rule. In the Old Testament, God allowed the Israelites to sacrifice an unblemished animal to purify the people and make them right before him. The Hebrews verse explains, "Without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness." Jesus became that perfect sacrifice by living a sinless life and then dying on the cross. Explain that when Jesus' perfect blood was shed, he made it possible for everyone to receive forgiveness for every sin.

**Hebrews 10:1-10** says Jesus was the ultimate sacrifice. We don't need to sacrifice every time we sin anymore. Through Jesus' death, we can be made holy—forgiven—once for all time. Help kids see that Jesus' death was a permanent solution to the problem of sin.

In **Ephesians 2:1-5**, we read that Jesus offers not only forgiveness, but also new life. We used to be dead because of our sins, and our lives were filled with sin and disobedience. But God loved us so much that he sent Jesus to be the payment for our sin and to give us new life full of the richness of God. Use this passage to sum up the good news of Jesus so kids can share it with others.

## understanding preteens

By this age, kids grasp the brutality Jesus endured while being crucified—and may wonder why such an extreme action was necessary. As you explore the Bible's messages about sacrifice, emphasize the good news of forgiveness and new life Jesus offers.

## the lesson at a glance

LESSON SEQUENCE		WHAT KIDS WILL DO	SUPPLIES
<b>1</b>	<b>grapple community</b> <i>(5 minutes)</i>	Build relationships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Christian music</li> <li>• music player</li> <li>• snacks</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>grapple games</b> <i>(10-15 minutes)</i>	Choose two games to play.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• soccer ball</li> <li>• bedsheet</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>grapple time</b> <i>(10 minutes)</i>	Play a tough game and experience someone else taking the penalty they deserve.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bible</li> <li>• 10 paper cups per team</li> <li>• paper</li> <li>• pencils</li> </ul>
<b>4</b>	<b>grapple team time</b> <i>(15 minutes)</i>	Explore what the Bible says about Jesus' death being a permanent solution for sin.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles</li> <li>• cups from Grapple Time</li> <li>• water</li> <li>• permanent markers</li> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• paper</li> <li>• copy of the Grapple Team Guide for each person</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>grapple team reports</b> <i>(10 minutes)</i>	Report what they learned from the Bible passage they studied.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bibles</li> <li>• paper</li> <li>• pencils</li> <li>• tape</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>grapple prayer</b> <i>(5 minutes)</i>	Choose a prayer option.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• paper slips</li> <li>• pencils</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>grapple dare</b>	Hear the Grapple Dare.	

## 1 grapple community

Play Christian music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship. Give kids this discussion starter as they eat. Say: **Find out if anyone in our group has ever asked for forgiveness for the same thing more than once.**

## 2 grapple games

Say: **We're going to play a game, but you'll get to choose. Would you rather play Circle Soccer (p. 103), where you try to reach a goal as a group? Or would you like to play Get Lost (p. 104), which involves putting yourselves in a particular order?** Have kids vote on the game they'd like to play. Then lead kids in playing the game.

Say: **Now we'll play another game. Would you rather play Copycat (p. 104), which involves mirroring a leader's movements? Or would you like to play Name Game (p. 105), where you race to identify each other?** Have kids vote on the game they'd like to play. Then lead kids in playing the game.

## 3 grapple time

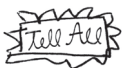
Lead the entire group in the following:

**We're going to play a game called Two Rules and a Penalty. The object of the game is to work together as a team to stack 10 cups. Sounds simple, right? That all depends on the rules—each team will decide on two stacking rules for the opposing team.**

Suggest some fun rules such as using feet instead of hands to stack the cups, balancing the cups on the head or back of another team member, or doing the job with eyes closed. The rules should be difficult enough that kids aren't likely to succeed in stacking the cups. Form an even number of teams, pair up teams, and ask them to exchange rules.

**Now that you know the rules, let me explain the penalty for failing to stack the cups—you have to skip backward across the room and cry like a baby.**

Give each team 10 paper cups; then have kids begin stacking. Stop the game before anyone has had a chance to succeed. Remind kids about the punishment for anyone who failed to stack 10 cups. Give kids a moment to react, and then step forward and offer to take the punishment they deserve. Skip backward across the room as you cry like a baby.



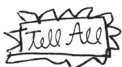
What were you thinking as you considered having to do the punishment? What was it like to have someone else take the penalty even though your team deserved to be penalized? If anyone has ever taken a punishment for you, tell about it.



What are some rules you have to follow in daily life? What punishment have you received for not keeping a rule?

**Write down an important real-life rule you believe everyone has broken.**

Read 1 Peter 2:22-24 aloud.



Based on this verse, do you think Jesus broke the rule you wrote down? Why or why not? What's it like to hear that Jesus was punished even though he didn't break any rules?

**The Bible tells us that Jesus never broke any rule. He never sinned! If that's the case, why did he have to take such a huge punishment? Why did Jesus have to die? Let's grapple with that.**

#### 4 grapple team time

Break into Grapple Teams. Encourage Grapple Team leaders to check in with kids about their week. Grapple Team leaders will facilitate discussion, using the Grapple Team Guide on pages 61-62.

#### 5 grapple team reports

At the end of Grapple Team Time, have kids work with their team to choose one of the options below to report what they discovered.

**Option 1: Cross Reasoning**

Tape several sheets of paper into the shape of a cross. On the cross, write reasons why Jesus had to die. Be sure to include your name on the list.

**Option 2: Press Conference**

Choose a team member to be a news reporter asking the question "Why did Jesus have to die?" Answer the question using what you discovered today.

Match Grapple Teams that chose Option 1 with Grapple Teams that chose Option 2. Have teams present their reports. *(Do this one team at a time if you have only two Grapple Teams.)*

## 6 grapple prayer

Read the Grapple Prayer options. Have the group choose one prayer option that everyone will do. Allow kids time to pray about what they discovered. Then close in prayer.

### Option 1: *Exchange Prayers*

Write prayer requests on slips of paper, and exchange them with a friend. Talk to God about the “great exchange” that took place when Jesus traded his life for your sin.

### Option 2: *Kneeling Prayers*

Pray on your knees in a circle with your Grapple Team.

## 7 grapple dare

**Say: Jesus became the perfect sacrifice for our sin not only because of God’s payment rule, but also because of God’s love. I dare you to stop what you’re doing once every day this week and picture God’s perfect sacrifice, Jesus, hanging on the cross. It’s not pretty. It’s cruel and bloody and painful to watch. So is sin. When you wonder why Jesus had to die, remember the simple answer: so that you wouldn’t have to. I dare you to tell God that you believe Jesus died for you, and receive his permanent forgiveness.**

*(Find the Parent Page for this lesson on the enhanced DVD. Have each child give a copy to his or her parent. Alternatively, send the file to parents via email.)*

# grapple team guide

In your Grapple Team, use this guide to grapple with today's question. Before you begin, fill one cup (from Grapple Time) with water for each team.

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Why did Jesus have to die? Let's see what the Bible says.

## **Read Romans 3:23 and 6:23.**

In your own words, write out God's payment rule for sin.

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*In Pairs*

*What are some examples of sins you've committed? What does God's payment rule say you deserve for that sin? What's your reaction to that?*

God doesn't just have a payment rule for sin; God also has a forgiveness rule. Let's check out how people in Old Testament times received God's forgiveness.

## **Read Leviticus 1:1-4 and Hebrews 9:22.**

*In Pairs*

*Why did the Israelites have to bring God an animal offering? What do we do today, if anything, that's like bringing an animal offering to God? Explain.*

Use a pencil to draw an altar in the center of a piece of paper. Dip your finger into the cup of water, and write "forgiven" on your altar using your finger.

### Read Hebrews 10:1-10.



How is Jesus' death the same as or different from the animal sacrifices offered to God on the altar?

Look at the word you wrote earlier on your altar. If the letters aren't visible, write them again using water on your finger. Why is Jesus' sacrifice better than the Old Testament sin offerings?

Now draw a cross over the altar on your paper. Write "forgiven" across it in permanent marker, and talk about why Jesus' death is the permanent solution for forgiveness.

### Read Ephesians 2:1-5.

What could you tell your friends if they asked, "Why did Jesus have to die?" Write your answer below.

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A graphic consisting of several overlapping, scribbled lines in grey, resembling a tangled ball of string or a 'grapple'.

### grapple team reports

With your team, choose one of the options below to report what you discovered.

#### **Option 1:** *Cross Reasoning*

Tape several sheets of paper into the shape of a cross. On the cross, write reasons why Jesus had to die. Be sure to include your name on the list.

#### **Option 2:** *Press Conference*

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