

HE WAS CRUCIFIED

Reflections on the Passion of Christ

A Study Guide from Concordia Publishing House



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3558 S. Jefferson Ave., St. Louis, MO 63118-3968
1-800-325-3040 • www.cph.org

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PUBLISHER’S FOREWORD

Upon the cross extended
See, world, your Lord suspended.
Your Savior yields His breath.
The Prince of Life from heaven
Himself has freely given
To shame and blows and bitter death. (*LSB* 453:1)

For Christians, the cross is central to the life of faith. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is nailed to a tree and dies that we might live. For two millennia the cycle of the Church Year has returned worshipers to the events of Holy Week—Christ’s entry into Jerusalem, His Last Supper with His disciples, His arrest and trials, His scourging, and His crucifixion. For two millennia artists and writers have reflected on these events in enduring works that communicate our Savior’s anguish and suffering, as well as our abiding awe that Jesus drank from this cup of suffering in our place.

He Was Crucified offers the reflections of a medical doctor on the physical and mental anguish Jesus underwent in the hours leading up to His death. Paired with this commentary are masterpieces old and new—from Michelangelo and Rubens to Dali and Siqueiros—as well as prayers, hymns, Scripture, and poetry to enrich your meditation on Jesus’ Passion.

About the authors:

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Kent J. Burreson, PhD, served four years in parish ministry while completing his doctorate in liturgical studies at the University of Notre Dame. Since 2000, he has served on the faculty of the Department of Systematic Theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Missouri.

INTRODUCTION

If “art is the handmaiden to theology,” then the book *He Was Crucified* is an outstanding aid to our study of the Bible. *He Was Crucified* is a narrative of the Passion of Christ, combining a physiological description of Jesus’ crucifixion with Scripture, art, poetry, and theological commentary. This study guide will take you through *He Was Crucified* in six lessons, from Jesus’ arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane to His resurrection from the tomb. By studying the biblical accounts of Christ’s Passion and examining artwork that portray that story, we will grow both in our Christian faith and in our appreciation of Christian art. Along with your Bibles, it is suggested that you have your own copy of *He Was Crucified* to more closely follow the narrative and study the artwork. When you have completed this study guide, you will treasure *He Was Crucified* as a regular devotional book. It is my fervent prayer that this study guide may help you to see Jesus with greater faith, hope, and love.

Rev. William L. Gleason

Lesson 1: Leader

THROUGH THE EVANGELISTS' EYES

THEME VERSE

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, “Sir, we wish to see Jesus.” Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” (John 12:20–23)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Recognize that the Scriptures, particularly the Gospels, are God’s means to reveal the person and work of Jesus Christ; it is our way to “see Jesus.”
- Appreciate the use of art and poetry to enhance our meditation on God’s Word, especially the Passion of Christ.
- Gain insight to the individual writing styles of the evangelists, whom the Holy Spirit used to communicate the Gospel to different audiences.

FOCUS

“We wish to see Jesus,” the Greeks said to Philip. That is certainly every Christian’s desire. But how shall we see Him who is seated at the right hand of the Father? Through the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to reveal to us the person and work of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. The prophetic and apostolic books of the Bible are God’s inerrant means to show us the Savior. In particular, the four Gospels bring us into the life and ministry of Christ.

Although it is only the Word of God that reveals Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, there are many other witnesses of faith in Jesus. Christians throughout history have written, sung, painted, sculpted, and spoken about their faith in Christ. In addition to theological books, we also have works of art, hymnody, and poetry. These expressions of faith by Christians throughout the ages can serve to enhance our meditation on the Passion of Christ.

This first lesson begins our walk through the artistic expressions of the faith by looking at the Gospels. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John recorded for us the life and words of Jesus. Each author expresses his own personality and individuality in his writings. Although each writer had

different themes and audiences, the Holy Spirit moved them to weave the story of Christ into a unified and infallible literary tapestry.

Begin your study with this prayer from chapter 1:

Almighty God, grant that in the midst of our failures and weaknesses we may be restored through the passion and intercession of Your only-begotten Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

STUDY

**The Scriptures are God’s means to reveal His Son to us.
He moved holy men to write His Word.**

Read John 12:20–23.

1. The Passover was the chief annual festival of the Jews. Passover memorialized the Lord’s passing over the houses of the Israelites (Exodus 12:13) when the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed. The festival was also called the “Feast of Unleavened Bread” because the people ate only unleavened bread during that period (Mark 14:1). The word *Passover* came to refer to the lamb killed at the feast (Mark 14:12–14).
2. As fulfillment of all the Old Testament sacrifices, Jesus, the true Lamb of God, would be slain for the sins of the world.
3. He said, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified.” This “glorifying” referred to His crucifixion. By this atoning sacrifice on the cross, Jesus would draw all men to Himself as their Redeemer. Like the bronze serpent that Moses lifted up in the wilderness that saved all those who looked to it for healing (Numbers 21:9), all who look to Christ crucified will find healing from sin.

Read John 20:26–31.

1. Thomas said, “Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe” (John 20:25).
2. “Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” We do not need to see Jesus with our eyes, but by faith in Him we are blessed.
3. John wrote about his Gospel: “These are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.” By means of the Gospel, the Holy Spirit creates saving faith. By this faith we receive eternal life in Christ.

The four evangelists each wrote with different styles and to different audiences.

Read Matthew 4:12–17.

Jesus fulfilled Isaiah 9:1–2, in the land where the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali formerly lived, through His preaching, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Jesus, and His Gospel, is the light that dispels sin’s darkness. This would be of special interest to the Jews who waited for the Messiah.

Read Matthew 1:1, 20; 12:23.

Matthew calls Jesus the “son of David” because He is the direct descendant of Israel’s king; the promised heir of David’s throne. Writing especially to the Jews, Matthews shows in this theme Jesus fulfilling the ancient promises of the coming Messiah, the son of David.

Read Mark 1:1; 14:60–62; 15:39.

Mark calls Jesus the “Son of God” and the “Son of Man.” The first refers to Jesus’ divine nature as the eternally begotten Son of God the Father. The second refers to Jesus’ human nature as the Son of Mary. Throughout Mark’s Gospel, these truths repeat themselves, showing that Christ came from heaven and was made man to redeem the world.

Read Mark 7:3–4; 12:18; 15:42.

By explaining these details, which the Jews of his day would recognize, Mark showed that he was writing to a Gentile audience.

Read Luke 2:32; 10:29–37; 19:10.

In these passages, Luke is emphasizing the inclusion of the Gentiles in God’s plan of salvation. Luke’s writing demonstrates the all-embracing scope of Christ’s work for both Jew and Gentile alike. This theme of universal salvation shows Luke opening his Gospels to the Gentiles.

Read John 1:1–14.

The “Word became flesh” clearly refers to Jesus. The mystery of the incarnation is a major theme in John’s Gospel, along with the themes of light and. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life” (8:12).

CRITIQUE

1. Study the Byzantine icon of the crucifixion on page 34.

Because of their unusual artistic qualities, icons may appear rather strange, but they may let us see Jesus in a unique way. For example, the pose of Jesus or the saints minimize worldly characteristics, portraying a solemn and spiritual quality. The saint's eyes, ears, nose, and limbs may look out of proportion because they symbolize some spiritual quality or relation toward God and His Word. Particularly different is an abstract appearance due to an inverse visual perspective where the vanishing point is not in the picture, but in the eye of the viewer. The scene expands rather than diminishes, symbolizing that the viewers live in a finite world gazing through a window into heaven.

2. Study the painting *Jesus Christ Blessing* by Ferdinando Gallego on page 21 using the information in the caption.

The angel in human form symbolizes Matthew, whose Gospel emphasizes Jesus' humanity. The ox symbolizes Luke, who emphasizes Christ's sacrifice. Mark, the winged lion, emphasizes Jesus' death and resurrection. John is symbolized by the eagle because his Gospel soars to great spiritual heights.

3. Study *The Four Evangelists* by Jacob Jordaens on page 22.

The Holy Spirit is the author of the Gospels, He who gave the words to the writers. This painting illustrates the unity, single-minded purpose, and scope of the books. The evangelists look with wonder at the pages of the Gospel, marveling at the continuity that God accomplished through them. That each of them wrote with a different style and to different audiences adds further testimony to the Bible's inspiration.

APPRECIATE

1. As we grow in appreciation of God's love toward us, and especially in our knowledge of His inspiration of the Bible, we will be moved to study the Scriptures more often. Some ways to grow in our biblical knowledge include Bible commentaries and histories.
2. Christian art can enhance our studies by showing us how people of different times understood and expressed their beliefs. Viewing pictures, sculptures, and icons, as well as reading poetry and hymns, may complement faithful catechesis and preaching by stirring our imaginations.
3. As individual members of Christ's Body, we have unique gifts to offer in service to God. The Spirit gives us talents; He also will guide us in their use. Just as an artist gathers all the right materials to produce his work of art, so we combine knowledge of God's Word and the Christian faith to witness God's love. Our unique gifts will produce a testimony all our own, but shaped by God's Word.

CLOSE

Read or sing the hymn verses on page 37.

Lesson 1: Student

THROUGH THE EVANGELISTS' EYES

THEME VERSE

Now among those who went up to worship at the feast were some Greeks. So these came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, and asked him, "Sir, we wish to see Jesus." Philip went and told Andrew; Andrew and Philip went and told Jesus. And Jesus answered them, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified." (John 12:20–23)

FOCUS

"We wish to see Jesus," the Greeks said to Philip. That is certainly every Christian's desire. But how shall we see Him who is seated at the right hand of the Father? Through the Scriptures. The Holy Spirit uses the Scriptures to reveal to us the person and work of God's Son, Jesus Christ. The prophetic and apostolic books of the Bible are God's inerrant means to show us the Savior. In particular, the four Gospels bring us into the life and ministry of Christ.

Although it is only the Word of God that reveals Him who is the way, the truth, and the life, there are many other witnesses of faith in Jesus. Christians throughout history have written, sung, painted, sculpted, and spoken about their faith in Christ. In addition to theological books, we also have works of art, hymnody, and poetry. These expressions of faith by Christians throughout the ages can serve to enhance our meditation on the Passion of Christ.

This first lesson begins our walk through the artistic expressions of the faith by looking at the Gospels. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John recorded for us the life and words of Jesus. Each author expresses his own personality and individuality in his writings. Although each writer had different themes and audiences, the Holy Spirit moved them to weave the story of Christ into a unified and infallible literary tapestry.

STUDY

**The Scriptures are God's means to reveal His Son to us.
He moved holy men to write His Word.**

Read John 12:20–23.

1. What was the “feast” that the Greeks came for? (See 12:1.)
2. What was significant about this feast in Jesus’ life?
3. When Jesus heard that certain men wanted to see Him, what was His response? How might this “glorifying” help people to “see” Him? (See 12:32.)

Read John 20:26–31.

1. What did Thomas say he needed before he would believe in the resurrected Jesus?
2. What did Jesus say to Thomas after showing him the marks of the crucifixion on His body? What is the significance of His response for us?
3. St. John then writes how we may believe in Jesus (vv. 30–31). What does he say? What is the result of this belief?

The four evangelists each wrote with different styles and to different audiences.

Read Matthew 4:12–17.

What prophecy did Jesus fulfill according to Matthew? How did Jesus fulfill this? Who especially might be interested in Old Testament prophecies?

Read Matthew 1:1, 1:20; 12:23.

What is the common phrase that Matthew uses to describe Jesus? How would this work as a theme for Matthew’s Gospel?

Read Mark 1:1; 14:60–62; 15:39.

What two titles does Mark give to Jesus? How might titles fit for Mark’s theme?

Read Mark 7:3–4; 12:18; 15:42.

Mark explains certain customs to his readers. Who would need to understand these practices?

Read Luke 2:32; 10:29–37; 19:10.

What is the extent of Jesus’ saving work that Luke emphasizes in these verses? What theme for Luke’s Gospel might we derive from this? Who would his audience most likely be?

Read John 1:1–14.

Who is John referring to when he speaks of “the Word”? What other words or phrases stand out in these verses? How might these form themes in John’s Gospel?

CRITIQUE

1. Study the Byzantine icon of the crucifixion on page 34.

What unusual qualities stand out in this painting? The icon painter uses a different vanishing point to layout his image. Can you identify where it is?

2. Study the painting *Jesus Christ Blessing* by Ferdinando Gallego on page 21 using the information in the caption.

Identify the four symbols that represent the four evangelists. What reasons are given for these representations?

3. Study the *The Four Evangelists* by Jacob Jordaens on page 22.

Without doubt, the evangelists wrote their Gospels separately from one another. How does this painting of the four pondering the pages of the Gospels illustrate the unity of the Gospel accounts as inspired by the Holy Spirit? Consider the different “personalities” that Jordaens tried to impart in the expressions of the faces. How does this help us to reflect upon the way the Holy Spirit moved men (2 Peter 1:21) to speak and write God’s Word?

APPRECIATE

1. How might the inspiration of the Scriptures as God’s means to reveal His Son to you move you to study His Word more frequently? Discuss ways you might explore and advance your knowledge of the Bible.
2. Can Christian art complement the study of Scripture and the faith? What would be a beneficial way to incorporate it?
3. Discuss how your own individuality can be used by the Holy Spirit to share the faith to others in ways that are unique to you.

CLOSE

Read or sing the hymn verses on page 37.

Lesson 2: Leader

FROM THE LAST SUPPER TO THE ARREST

THEME VERSE

And [Jesus] withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:41–44)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Recall the events in Christ's life that took place in the Garden of Gethsemane
- Appreciate some of the physical anguish that Jesus suffered in the garden
- Compare various artistic expressions of Christ's agony in Gethsemane

FOCUS

Jesus entered Jerusalem on Palm Sunday amid shouts of "Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord" (Matthew 21:9). By Friday there were cries of "Crucify Him!" Between these two discordant choruses, Jesus and His disciples gathered to celebrate the Passover, the festival that commemorated how God delivered His people from bondage to the Egyptians through the blood of a sacrificial lamb. Jesus began the evening by washing His disciples' feet as an example of humility. He closed the meal by instituting His Holy Supper as a lasting memorial that effects the forgiveness of sins.

In Gethsemane, His human nature recoiled at the horror of the cross as He prayed that the cup of wrath might pass from Him. Yet, the obedient Son submitted to His Father's will praying, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). During this agony of soul, Jesus' sweat was bloody, an indication the intense physical affliction that accompanied His prayers. In mercy, God sent an angel to minister to His Son.

This passionate event in our Savior's life is the subject of many works of art. Artists have painted the Savior, the angel, and the disciples with a variety of expressions, from simple to sublime. As we study these different expressions of artistry, and as the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel Word, our own reflections may be lifted to a greater appreciation of Jesus' anguish.

Chapter 2 of *He Was Crucified* and your Bible will be the sources of our study. You can prepare ahead by examining the paintings and their captions selected for this lesson, along with the selected biblical texts.

Begin your study with this prayer from chapter 2:

Almighty and everlasting God, grant us by Your grace so to pass through this holy time of our Lord's passion that we may obtain the forgiveness of our sins; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

STUDY

Jesus enters Jerusalem and celebrates the Passover with His disciples

Read Mark 11:1–10; 14:22–31.

1. The Jerusalem crowds that welcomed Jesus were enthusiastic and hopeful. Enthusiastic because Jesus, “the prophet . . . from Nazareth of Galilee” (Matthew 21:11), was entering Jerusalem as King. Hopeful because they expected King Jesus to throw off the yoke of Roman oppression. The disciples shared this excitement. Later, on the way to the Mount of Olives, the disciples still held this confidence. Despite Jesus’ foretelling of their scattering, Peter and the rest declared they would not deny their Master. Jesus’ expectations were very different. Although He rode into Jerusalem as triumphant King, His victory was not by way of earthly conquest. He knew that defeating the powers of darkness would take more than swords and shields of human warfare. He also knew the weakness of sin in the people that hailed His coming, as well as in His disciples. Jesus knew and expected that they would all turn against Him. That is why He came: to bring victory through His suffering and cross.
2. In these verses, Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of Zechariah. The Zechariah 9:9 text tells how God would defend His people by bringing His King into Zion to establish a kingdom of peace over the whole earth. Zechariah 13:7 prophesies of God wielding His sword of justice against “the man” who is the shepherd of His people. This word Jesus applies to Himself as He is arrested and His disciples flee.

Jesus prays in Gethsemane

Read Matthew 26:36–46 and/or Mark 14:32–42.

1. These two Gospel accounts are nearly identical. Significant similarities are: Jesus’ confession of deep sorrow; His pleading with God to let the cup pass from Him; His admonition to the disciples to guard against temptation, which Luke also includes. Differences in Mark include Jesus’ loving address to God as “Abba,” and the disciples’ shame and dumbfounded response to Jesus’ admonition.

2. When Jesus says, “Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation,” He shows how they must struggle against the flesh that would give in to temptation’s allure.

Read Luke 22:39–46.

1. After Satan tempted Jesus in the wilderness, angels ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11). Now in the garden He is again the object of an angel’s ministry. In each case, our Lord struggled against both physical and spiritual temptations. Although the Bible does not reveal what these ministrations entailed, commentators suggest that the angel comforted Jesus with God’s Word, cheered Him in His struggle, or wiped away His sweat and tears. What is significant is how the Son of God willingly accepted the comfort and care of one of His creatures.
2. Sweat as a result of our toil is the inheritance of sin: “By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread” (Genesis 3:19). Jesus’ bloody sweat consoles us by showing how He shares our humanity and fully participates in our weakness. His blood-laced sweat is another proof of His atoning work.

Jesus’ arrest

Read John 18:1–13.

1. As Jesus rises from prayer to enter into His sacrificial death on the cross, we clearly see His work as our High Priest. The High Priest prays for God’s people and offers sacrifices that atone for their sins. Jesus is not only the High Priest who offers the sacrifice, but He is also the sacrificial “Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).
2. Jesus replied to the soldiers with the majestic name of God, “I AM.” At that word, “they drew back and fell to the ground.” This was similar to the power that struck down Saul of Tarsus and his companions (Acts 26:14). This word indicates not only the power of the One with whom they were dealing, but also Jesus’ complete willingness to undergo the humiliation and pain of His Passion.

CRITIQUE

1. Compare the painting of Christ’s triumphal entry by Lorenzetti on page 41 and the sarcophagus relief on page 42.
 - Besides both depicting Christ entering into Jerusalem, other artistic similarities might be the serene and resolute face of Christ, and the animated postures of the people laying palm branches. Differences would include, for example, Christ beardless on the sarcophagus, and the architectural styles reflecting the period (the Gothic architecture in the painting versus the Corinthian columns on the sarcophagus).

- Different artistic media may have properties that express emotions and meanings better than others. Colorful paintings may express emotions; sculpture might show greater depth and light. In these two works of arts the Lorenzetti painting portrays the energized atmosphere. The sarcophagus conveys depth and a sense of realism.
- The significance of these two different pieces of art is the harmony of beauty they share in portraying this wonderful event. Although they are different in visual impact, when appreciated together, they bring an artistic liveliness and imagination to our understanding of Palm Sunday.

2. Compare the following paintings of Christ praying in the Garden: Botticelli (p. 46), Ricci (p. 45), Guercino (p. 47), Canavesio (p. 48), Gossaert (p. 51), and di Giovanni (p. 52). Which painting(s) best convey(s): the reality? the suffering? the theology?

- Most of this discussion will stem from very subjective responses. Allow the participants freedom of thought and expression as they contemplate these paintings.
- Many people connect reality with realism in art. If it looks realistic, they think it portrays reality better. However, realistic-looking art can be very sentimental, and primitive art might better express reality. For example, the Ricci painting looks more realistic than the Canavesio, but the latter conveys the bloody sweat more clearly.
- One's idea of suffering depends on the viewer's perspective. Is suffering expressed best through physical or emotional portrayal? The Canavesio painting portrays physical suffering, but the de Giovanni painting shows more emotional or spiritual suffering.
- Theological content is seen in the historical reality found in the painting, as well as in symbolism depicted. The Botticelli painting symbolizes Christ's separation from His disciples with a fence (not only physically, but also spiritually as He bears alone the punishment of the world's sin). The cup in each painting symbolizes the cup of suffering that Jesus prayed could pass from Him.

APPRECIATE

1. Every Christian struggles against temptation. Satan never tires of enticing us to sin and doubt. We can sympathize with the disciples who could not keep awake as a spiritual battle was taking place before them. Our Lord's victory over temptation is our strength and salvation.
2. Witnessing to our faith may take many forms. Like Jesus, faithfulness and prayer during temptation can speak volumes about our trust in God. Likewise, creative expression of our beliefs may say much more than one could say in words.
3. By faith in God's mercy, we might show our appreciation by similarly giving of ourselves, suffering willingly for Christ, and expressing the grace that the Holy Spirit gives.

CLOSE

Close with reading the comments by Jerome found on page 44, singing a Lenten hymn, and offering a closing prayer.

Lesson 2: Student

FROM THE LAST SUPPER TO THE ARREST

THEME VERSE

And [Jesus] withdrew from them about a stone's throw, and knelt down and prayed, saying, "Father, if You are willing, remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, not My will, but Yours, be done." And there appeared to Him an angel from heaven, strengthening Him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground. (Luke 22:41–44)

OBJECTIVES

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- Appreciate some of the physical anguish that Jesus suffered in the garden
- Compare various artistic expressions of Christ's agony in Gethsemane

FOCUS

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In Gethsemane, His human nature recoiled at the horror of the cross as He prayed that the cup of wrath might pass from Him. Yet, the obedient Son submitted to His Father's will praying, "Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39). During this agony of soul, Jesus' sweat was bloody, an indication the intense physical affliction that accompanied His prayers. In mercy, God sent an angel to minister to His Son.

This passionate event in our Savior's life is the subject of many works of art. Artists have painted the Savior, the angel, and the disciples with a variety of expressions, from simple to sublime. As we study these different expressions of artistry, and as the Holy Spirit works through the Gospel Word, our own reflections may be lifted to a greater appreciation of Jesus' anguish.

Chapter 2 of *He Was Crucified* and your Bible will be the sources of our study. You can prepare ahead by examining the paintings and their captions selected for this lesson, along with the selected biblical texts.

STUDY

Jesus enters Jerusalem and celebrates the Passover with His disciples

Read Mark 11:1–10; 14:22–31.

1. Describe the emotions and attitudes of the crowd and the disciples in these passages. What do their words and actions say about their expectations of Jesus? What were Jesus' expectations?
2. In these two readings, Jesus fulfilled at least two Old Testament passages. What are they?

Jesus prays in Gethsemane

Read Matthew 26:36–46 and/or Mark 14:32–42.

1. These passages relate Jesus' sorrow and anguished prayers over His approaching Passion. Note any words or phrases that are common or different.
2. According to Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:38, what struggle did Jesus' disciples share with Him?

Read Luke 22:39–46.

1. As Jesus prayed, an angel was sent to minister to Him. At what other occasion did angels do this? What kind of ministrations might an angel provide the Son of God?
2. Luke tells us that Jesus "being in agony . . . prayed more earnestly; and His sweat became like great drops of blood." Sweat was the result of what event? (See Genesis 3:19.) How does Jesus' bloody sweat provide consolation to us?

Jesus' arrest

Read John 18:1–13.

1. Which part of Jesus' threefold office is seen most clearly here?

2. What happened to Judas and the officials when Jesus identified Himself to them with the words “I am”? What does this reaction indicate?

CRITIQUE

1. Compare the painting of Christ’s triumphal entry by Lorenzetti on page 41 and the sarcophagus relief on page 42.

Observe and discuss any similarities and differences in the scenes. What would you say are the strengths and weaknesses of the different media in portraying our faith?

2. Compare the following paintings of Christ praying in the Garden: Botticelli (p. 46), Ricci (p. 45), Guercino (p. 47), Canavesio (p. 48), Gossaert (p. 51), and di Giovanni (p. 52). Which painting(s) best convey(s) to you:

- The reality of the event, and why?
- The suffering of Christ, and why?
- The theological meaning as recorded in the Gospels, and why?

APPRECIATE

1. How does the struggle with temptation and prayer that Jesus and His disciples experienced compare with your own?
2. As you meditate upon Jesus’ agony in Gethsemane on our behalf, whether through the Scriptures or in the artwork, consider ways to express your appreciation of this event to others.
3. In what ways may we recognize and give thanks for God the Father’s love in sending Jesus? God the Son’s suffering for us? God the Holy Spirit’s grace to believe?

CLOSE

Close with reading the comments by Jerome found on page 44, singing a Lenten hymn, and offering a closing prayer.

Lesson 3: Leader

FROM THE ARREST TO THE CRUCIFIXION AT GOLGOTHA

THEME VERSE

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged Him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head and arrayed Him in a purple robe. They came up to Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck Him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing Him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” . . . So he delivered Him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:1–5, 16)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Recognize that the unjust trials and condemnation of Jesus were in place of the sinner’s just condemnation
- See the tools and implements of Christ’s scourging and Passion as symbols of our salvation
- As Christ bore His own cross, hear His call to pick up crosses in our own lives and follow Him

FOCUS

After His arrest, Jesus endured three trials that night before He was finally condemned to death. He was arraigned before the Jewish Sanhedrin, then Herod Antipas, and finally before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. It was not Jesus who deserved to be tried, innocent as He was in all things. Yet that night He bore the judgment against sin for the whole sinful human. We who inherited the guilt and condemnation of Adam were given a guiltless substitute to take the sentence of death that we deserved.

Sentenced to death by both the Sanhedrin and Pilate, Jesus went from condemnation to crucifixion. In preparation for His crucifixion, Pilate had the soldiers flog and beat Jesus. Jamming a crown of thorns upon His head, draping Him in a cloak, and putting a scepter of reed in His hand, the soldiers deepened Jesus’ punishment by offering their mock reverence. Their tools of torment became symbols of salvation because by them Jesus suffered pain and humiliation for us. Thorns, whip, cross and spear, and every other instrument of Christ’s Passion appear in Christian art as signs of Jesus’ love for us.

Finally, Roman soldiers yoked Jesus with the wooden beam of His cross. Weakened by the torture, Jesus falls on the way to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene is compelled by the Roman soldier to take up our Lord's cross. As Simon shoulders the burden, we reflect on the Savior's call to every Christian to pick up the cross found in each of our lives and follow Him. Artwork that portrays Christ bearing His cross, of Simon picking it up, as well as of Christian martyrs who have borne their crosses through suffering and death, kindle our minds to this holy calling.

Begin your study with this prayer from chapter 3:

Merciful and everlasting God, You did not spare Your only Son but delivered Him up for us all to bear our sins on the cross. Grant that our hearts may be so fixed with steadfast faith in Him that we fear not the power of sin, death, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

STUDY

Trials before the Sanhedrin, Herod, and Pilate

Read Matthew 26:57–68.

1. In addition to the high priest, the Council was comprised of the chief priests, the company of scribes, and Jewish elders. There would have been members from both the Pharisees and the Sadducees present (see Acts 23:6).
2. According to both Matthew and Mark (14:53–65), the Council was deliberately looking for false testimony against Jesus. It had been demonstrated that they could not find evidence against Jesus that would warrant the death penalty.
3. The testimony recorded by the evangelists Matthew and Mark shows the contradictory nature of the witnesses. What Jesus actually said was starting to take place: that the temple of His body would be destroyed by men, and that He would raise it up again in three days.
4. Although Jesus confessed the truth about who He was, the Son of God, Caiaphas saw this as the ultimate blasphemy. Notice that the high priest had not proven his case against Jesus.

Read Luke 23:6–12.

1. Herod was quite pleased to see Jesus because of the many wondrous things he had heard about Him. Hoping to see some miracle or other marvel, Herod saw Jesus as an opportunity for an evening's entertainment.
2. John the Baptist was another prophet whom Herod found interesting. His interest, however, was limited. Much more macabre entertainment thrilled him when he beheaded John (see Mark 6:16–28).

3. Jesus stood silent before the tyrant, knowing how worthless it would be to cast pearls before swine (Matthew 7:6).

Read John 18:28–19:16.

1. The Jews brought many charges against Jesus. Chief among them was sedition. “We found this man misleading our nation and forbidding us to give tribute to Caesar, and saying that He Himself is Christ, a king” (Luke 23:2).
2. Because Pilate saw no evidence of treason in Jesus, he tried to release Him. However, the Jews finally brought up the charge that so offended them: “He has made Himself the Son of God.”
3. Since Pilate had no intention of finding Jesus guilty on account of religious reasons, the Jewish officials returned to their original accusation of treason. Receiving the same threats, (19:12), Pilate finally acquiesced to their demands and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

Scourging and humiliation

Read Matthew 27:26–31.

1. Dr. Stanley gives a detailed examination of Roman scourging beginning on page 74, which may be highlighted for the lesson. The Gospel accounts say nothing other than that Jesus was flogged. This atrocious and unjust punishment was foretold by the prophets (Psalm 129:3; Isaiah 50:6; 53:5) and our Lord Himself (Matthew 20:19).
2. The scarlet cloak, probably a soldier’s cast-off, was used as a sham of majesty. In reality, Jesus is arrayed in holy majesty (Psalm 93:1; see also Isaiah 63:1)! The crown of thorns mocks the Lord who is the glorious crown of His people (Isaiah 28:5) and who is crowned with glory and honor (Hebrews 2:9). The reed makes fun of the scepter of His righteousness (Hebrews 1:8). Their sardonic worship scorns the true worship that God deserves (Psalm 29:2) and which Christ will ultimately receive from everyone (Philippians 2:10).

Bearing the cross

Read John 19:17; Luke 23:26–31.

1. The biblical account of Christ bearing His cross is brief. Each of the evangelists notes that Jesus carried His cross to Golgotha, The Place of the Skull. The name Calvary that Luke used is derived from the Aramaic word. It was so named either because of its skull-like shape, or to denote it as a place of execution, possibly due to the many skulls scattered around there of those who were crucified.

2. Jesus, who knew the redeeming purpose of His death and the joy that would follow the cross, told the lamenting women not to weep for Him. His words point to the destruction that would come upon Jerusalem in just a few decades, and called for greater sorrow over the sins of Jerusalem.

CRITIQUE

1. Study the paintings of Christ and Pilate by Caravaggio (p. 66) and Massys (p. 83).

1. These two paintings contrast Christ with Pilate. In the first, Pilate appears cold, almost detached as he presents Jesus to the viewer, as if we were part of the Jerusalem crowd. His dark presence recedes in the brightness of Christ. In the second, Pilate looks disgusted at the sight of the emaciated Christ. His eyes convey the loathing he feels toward Jesus, and perhaps toward the Jews who rejected their King.

Jesus' posture and countenance differ as well. In Caravaggio's painting, Jesus is meek and compliant. His face reveals a serenity that accepts His Father's will with humble obedience. In Massys's painting, Jesus is bent in anguished humiliation. His face shows His willing obedience, yet with greater sorrow.

The third man in Caravaggio's painting seems to stand in awe of Jesus' serene acceptance of His punishment. Contrast that with the malicious glee of the man binding Christ in Massys's work.

2. Pilate's hands provide an interesting comparison in these two artist's works. In the first, his hands say with gesture, "Behold the man!" In the second, they suggest revulsion and resignation: revulsion of the broken man before him, and resignation to His grim destiny.

2. Compare the symbols from Monaco's painting on page 74 with those from the German devotional book on pages 76–77.

1. The caption for each painting describes the pictures and provides some meanings. Discussion may expand on these.
2. From Cyrene, a city on the northern coast of Africa, Simon was probably a Jew who came to Jerusalem for the Passover feast. Many commentators speculate that he is either the disciple Rufus mentioned in Romans 16:13 or his father. He is given the supreme honor of bearing Christ's cross for Him, and in this way, sharing in His suffering.

APPRECIATE

1. St. Paul wrote: "For our sake He made Him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21) and And in Romans 5, "Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men" (Romans 5:18). The sinless Christ who bore our sins frees us from the condemnation of our trespasses.

2. Jesus said, “If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me” (Luke 9:23). In that spirit, St. Paul said, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Galatians 6:14). Picking up our cross is nothing less than believing in the crucified Savior and confessing His name. We can help others bear their crosses by witnessing to the faith we hold.
3. Give thanks to the Holy Spirit for His grace to carry our crosses.

CLOSE

Reflect upon J. S. Bach’s words on page 95, then close with a prayer or benediction.

Lesson 3: Student

FROM THE ARREST TO THE CRUCIFIXION AT GOLGOTHA

THEME VERSE

Then Pilate took Jesus and flogged Him. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on His head and arrayed Him in a purple robe. They came up to Him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!” and struck Him with their hands. Pilate went out again and said to them, “See, I am bringing Him out to you that you may know that I find no guilt in Him.” So Jesus came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. Pilate said to them, “Behold the man!” . . . So he delivered Him over to them to be crucified. (John 19:1–5, 16)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Recognize that the unjust trials and condemnation of Jesus were in place of the sinner’s just condemnation
- See the tools and implements of Christ’s scourging and Passion as symbols of our salvation
- As Christ bore His own cross, hear His call to pick up crosses in our own lives and follow Him

FOCUS

After His arrest, Jesus endured three trials that night before He was finally condemned to death. He was arraigned before the Jewish Sanhedrin, then Herod Antipas, and finally before the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. It was not Jesus who deserved to be tried, innocent as He was in all things. Yet that night He bore the judgment against sin for the whole sinful human. We who inherited the guilt and condemnation of Adam were given a guiltless substitute to take the sentence of death that we deserved.

Sentenced to death by both the Sanhedrin and Pilate, Jesus went from condemnation to crucifixion. In preparation for His crucifixion, Pilate had the soldiers flog and beat Jesus. Jamming a crown of thorns upon His head, draping Him in a cloak, and putting a scepter of reed in His hand, the soldiers deepened Jesus’ punishment by offering their mock reverence. Their tools of torment became symbols of salvation because by them Jesus suffered pain and humiliation for us. Thorns, whip, cross and spear, and every other instrument of Christ’s Passion appear in Christian art as signs of Jesus’ love for us.

Finally, Roman soldiers yoked Jesus with the wooden beam of His cross. Weakened by the torture, Jesus falls on the way to Golgotha. Simon of Cyrene is compelled by the Roman soldier to take up our Lord's cross. As Simon shoulders the burden, we reflect on the Savior's call to every Christian to pick up the cross found in each of our lives and follow Him. Artwork that portrays Christ bearing His cross, of Simon picking it up, as well as of Christian martyrs who have borne their crosses through suffering and death, kindle our minds to this holy calling.

STUDY

Trials before the Sanhedrin, Herod, and Pilate

Read Matthew 26:57–68.

1. Identify all those who assembled at this trial.
2. What kind of testimony did they look for?
3. Compare the witnesses' testimony in Matthew with that of Mark 14:57–59; compare those with the account in John 2:13–21.
4. What was the blasphemy Caiaphas accused Jesus of?

Read Luke 23:6–12.

1. Why was Herod glad to see Jesus?
2. Who else was once the source of Herod's amusement? What happened to him?
3. What was Jesus' response to Herod?

Read John 18:28–19:16.

1. What accusation did the Jewish leaders first bring to Pilate against Jesus?
2. What was the final charge the Jews leveled against Jesus to warrant the death penalty?
3. What finally convinced Pilate to let the Jews kill Jesus?

Scourging and humiliation

Read Matthew 27:26–31.

1. Details of Roman scourging may be found beginning on page 74. What prophecies were fulfilled with this horrible act? (See Psalm 129:3; Isaiah 50:6; 53:5; Matthew 20:19.)

2. The soldiers who scourged Jesus took sport in mocking His kingship. Identify the elements of their mockery and compare to the marks of Jesus' true and divine royalty.

Bearing the cross

Read John 19:17; Luke 23:26–31.

1. What was the name of Jesus' place of crucifixion? What does it mean?
2. Why does Jesus respond the way He does to the women who followed and wept for Him?

CRITIQUE

1. Study the paintings of Christ and Pilate by Caravaggio (p. 66) and Massys (p. 83).

1. What emotions may be seen in Pilate? Jesus? Others?
2. Compare Pilate's hands in each painting. What message does each pose give?

2. Compare the symbols from Monoco's painting on page 74 with those from the German devotional book on pages 76–77.

1. Identify the various tools from Christ's Passion in each. Suggest/discuss the symbolism of each.
2. Simon of Cyrene is compelled to take up Christ's cross. Reflect and discuss his participation.

APPRECIATE

1. Reflect upon Jesus, the Innocent One, accepting the sinner's just condemnation.
2. In what ways must the Christian carry his own, and help others to carry their own, crosses?
3. Give thanks to the Holy Spirit for His help to carry our crosses.

CLOSE

Reflect upon J. S. Bach's words on page 95, then close with a prayer or benediction.

Lesson 4: Leader

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION TO BURIAL (PART I)

THEME VERSE

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over Him there. (Matthew 27:33–36)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Become familiar with both the history and process of Roman crucifixion
- Contemplate the images of this most important and most illustrated event in history
- Appreciate the cross as the central image of the Christian faith

FOCUS

The closest we might come to seeing a crucifixion today is what we find depicted in a painting or a crucifix. Thankfully, this horrible, agonizing form of execution is no longer used. Emperor Constantine the Great abolished its practice in the Roman Empire by AD 337 in reverence of Jesus' crucifixion. Historical references to crucifixion, or impaling, go back to the time of the Persians. Alexander the Great introduced it to the Romans who, it is said, perfected it. The process of crucifixion resulted in the most agonizing pain, hence the word "excruciating," which means "out of the cross." Josephus, Jewish historian and advisor to Emperor Titus, described it as "the most wretched of deaths."

Most historical references to crucifixion are from the writings of the Church. In those, we learn that Christ's death on the cross to redeem the world of sin is surely the most important event in all history. Preaching the crucified Christ began with the apostles; depicting the crucified Christ did not become common until the fifth century. After that, the appearance of Jesus in iconography, painting, and sculpture, especially on crucifixes, became the preeminent image of Christian art.

The reason for the widespread acceptance and depiction of this ghastly death is best explained by its centrality to our faith. St. Paul said, "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). That Christ's death on the cross became the foremost image of our faith is not because of any morbid interest. On the contrary, the cross is the source of our greatest joy: the

salvation of our souls. Jesus is our best example of this, for Hebrews 12:2 says of Christ: “For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross.”

Chapter 4 of *He Was Crucified* is divided into two parts for our study. This lesson covers pages 99 to 127. We will include sections of Dr. Stanley’s text on the history and process of crucifixion along with selected works of art and Scripture passages.

Begin your study with the prayer from page 99.

STUDY

The crucifixion in the Scriptures

Read Matthew 27:35–38; John 19:18.

It is said a picture is worth a thousand words; perhaps there are words that carry so much weight that they can trigger a thousand pictures. Surely, among Christians, “crucifixion” is such a word. Crucifixion was, by its nature, a horribly painful and shameful death. The Romans had carried it to every corner of their empire. The first-century hearers of the account of Jesus’ Passion knew exactly what Jesus’ cross meant physically. They did not need the graphic details of crucifixion recorded. Instead, the Gospel writers’ chief concern was to deliver the more important spiritual and eternal message of the Gospel. The evangelists were not merely writing about Jesus’ suffering, but that He suffered *for us!*

Read John 19:31–37; 20:25.

In addition to giving insight to the manner of Jesus’ death, this account supplies grace to believe in Jesus’ death. Such observations recorded for us in the Gospels reveal the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about Christ. He is the Holy One who came to accomplish all that God had promised. The Gospels testify to the historical reality of Christ’s death and resurrection for the salvation of all. Unlike Thomas, who needed to touch the wounds of Christ in order to believe, we hear about those wounds inflicted for us and, by the power of that Word, we believe (John 19:35).

Read Hebrews 12:1–2.

Jesus endured the cross “for the joy that was set before Him.” His joy and delight was to do the will of the Father. He rejoiced to see that by His sufferings He would establish peace between God and man, that He would open a way of salvation to all sinners, and that He would sit at the right hand of God to live and rule forever. As we share in Christ’s suffering, the Holy Spirit brings us His joy as well.

The history of crucifixion

1. Read these selected sections: paragraphs 1–3 on pages 99–100, and the paragraphs found on pages 107 and 111.

1. Although the practice was repulsive, the Romans utilized crucifixion because these public executions instilled fear in their enemies and maintained peace in their realms.
2. Dr. Stanley states that the cultured Romans were actually disgusted with the cruelty of crucifixion, yet saw it as a necessary means of punishment. Thus, in literary circles, mention of crucifixion details was avoided.
3. Because crucifixion was such a highly offensive symbol, its artistic portrayal was slow to develop. The mission of the Church was to proclaim the crucified Christ as Savior; that message of the cross was difficult enough for people to *hear*. It took several centuries for the image of the cross to be accepted.

The process of crucifixion

1. Read these selected sections: paragraphs 1–2 on page 112, the paragraph on page 116 (this may be abbreviated), paragraph 1 on page 120, and paragraphs 1–2 on page 123. [A warning may be in order at this point. In this section, Dr. Stanley goes into vivid descriptions of the process of crucifixion. It might be difficult for some to hear. Pastoral discretion would be advised.]

1. Considering the fact that the Holy Spirit authored the Gospels and chose to leave out the painful details of Jesus' death, we must accept His holy wisdom. Participants still might have additional thoughts, pro or con.
2. Additional discussion might revolve around methods of punishment/execution in our world today.

CRITIQUE

1. View and compare the crucifixion paintings by Messina (p. 102), Mantegna (p. 105), Canavesio (p. 117), and Ribalta (p. 122).

1. Artists are perhaps most often inspired to create by the beauty and wonder of God's creation. They are filled with a sense of awe, splendor, and excitement in re-creating something that reflects God's handiwork. The same is true with many artistic creations inspired by the beauty and wonder of the Christian faith, perhaps more so. In creating art that expresses God's saving work in Christ, the Christian artist is also witnessing to his faith and hope. Devotion to God is the motivating force. Portraying the crucifixion of Christ, therefore, may be filled with penitent sorrow knowing that the artist's own sins are the brush strokes that put Christ on the cross. Yet, such a sacred act is also filled with joy and love over the Savior who redeemed sinners, of whom I am chief (1 Timothy 1:15).

2. It may be asserted that such details might emphasize Jesus' physical suffering at the expense of the purpose of His suffering. Reflection on Jesus' crucifixion is not meant to make us feel squeamish or horrified over His pain, but rather to recognize the horror of our sins and the depth of the Savior's love for us that sent Him to the cross. It is for this reason, for example, that Orthodox icons portray the crucifixion with very little blood. The image is meant to recall above all else what led Him to the cross and His willingness to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. The same is true of images of the saints—their faces do not express their feelings, but convey Christian virtues, such as faith, patience in suffering, forgiveness, and love.
2. Look at the painting by the Master of Westphalia on page 114. Take time to identify and discuss the symbols that surround Jesus hanging on the cross.

Here, again, the caption of the picture describes the symbols in the painting. Allow participants to try and identify them first. Discussion might revolve around the choice of these images and others that could have been used.

APPRECIATE

1. A crucifix is any image of Christ hanging on a cross in any media, whether a painting, sculpture, woodcarving, stained glass, or enamel. It is unique to Christian art. One may say that it is a visual representation of St. Paul's declaration that "we preach Christ crucified" (1 Corinthians 1:23). The crucifix not only reminds us of Jesus' sacrifice for our sins, giving us consolation, but it is displayed by countless Christians as a testimony to that faith.
2. While Good Friday observes the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ, Holy Cross Day celebrates the cross itself, the instrument of our salvation. In worship, the cross or crucifix may be carried in with a procession. Personal devotions might include meditating on a work of art depicting the crucifixion, as well as singing hymns and reading poetry that highlight the cross. Simple acts such as wearing a cross necklace or lapel pin may witness our faith. Finally, starting or renewing the practice of crossing oneself in prayer and during the Divine Service can serve to remind us of our Baptism, the time when the sign of the cross is given to the Christian as a mark of redemption ("Receive the sign of the holy cross . . . to mark you as one redeemed by Christ the crucified."—*Holy Baptism, LSB*, p. 268).
3. Perhaps one of the best ways to give thanks to God for the cross, besides our prayers of thanks for Jesus' death and resurrection, is to remain faithful, hopeful, and cheerful in the midst of our own cross-bearing. Acknowledge that what God ordains is always good with a life of thankfulness and praise. The joy of the cross is always cultivated when we realize that the cross of Christ is the source of our hope, peace, and life.

CLOSE

The words of Ephrem the Syrian on page 115 may serve as a fitting close, along with a hymn such as “In the Cross of Christ I Glory,” and a closing prayer or benediction.

Lesson 4: Student

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION TO BURIAL (PART I)

THEME VERSE

And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), they offered Him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when He tasted it, He would not drink it. And when they had crucified Him, they divided His garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over Him there. (Matthew 27:33–36)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Become familiar with both the history and process of Roman crucifixion
- Contemplate the images of this most important and most illustrated event in history
- Appreciate the cross as the central image of the Christian faith

FOCUS

The closest we might come to seeing a crucifixion today is what we find depicted in a painting or a crucifix. Thankfully, this horrible, agonizing form of execution is no longer used. Emperor Constantine the Great abolished its practice in the Roman Empire by AD 337 in reverence of Jesus' crucifixion. Historical references to crucifixion, or impaling, go back to the time of the Persians. Alexander the Great introduced it to the Romans who, it is said, perfected it. The process of crucifixion resulted in the most agonizing pain, hence the word "excruciating," which means "out of the cross." Josephus, Jewish historian and advisor to Emperor Titus, described it as "the most wretched of deaths."

Most historical references to crucifixion are from the writings of the Church. In those, we learn that Christ's death on the cross to redeem the world of sin is surely the most important event in all history. Preaching the crucified Christ began with the apostles; depicting the crucified Christ did not become common until the fifth century. After that, the appearance of Jesus in iconography, painting, and sculpture, especially on crucifixes, became the preeminent image of Christian art.

The reason for the widespread acceptance and depiction of this ghastly death is best explained by its centrality to our faith. St. Paul said, "We preach Christ crucified . . . the power of God and the wisdom of God" (1 Corinthians 1:23–24). That Christ's death on the cross became the foremost image of our faith is not because of any morbid interest. On the contrary, the cross is the source of our greatest joy: the

salvation of our souls. Jesus is our best example of this, for Hebrews 12:2 says of Christ: “For the joy that was set before Him [He] endured the cross.”

STUDY

The crucifixion in the Scriptures

Read Matthew 27:35–38; John 19:18.

The Gospel writers provide no details of the crucifixion, simply saying “they crucified Him.” What might account for this brevity?

Read John 19:31–37; 20:25.

These two passages reveal a little more physical details of Jesus’ death. What is the significance of these particulars? (See also Psalm 22:16–18; John 1:1.)

Read Hebrews 12:1–2.

What was the motivation for Jesus enduring the cross? (See also Psalm 40:6–8.) How does this become our motivation in suffering? (See 1 Thessalonians 1:6; 1 Peter 4:13.)

The history of crucifixion

1. Read these selected sections: paragraphs 1–3 on pages 99–100, and the paragraphs found on pages 107 and 111.

1. What does Dr. Stanley suggest was the reason that the Romans used such a horrifying means of execution?
2. How does he explain the absence of details in historical references to crucifixion?
3. What reason does he give for the length of time it took for the crucifix to become a common symbol of the Christian faith?

The process of crucifixion

1. Read these selected sections: paragraphs 1–2 on page 112, the paragraph on page 116 (this may be abbreviated), paragraph 1 on page 120, and paragraphs 1–2 on page 123. [A warning may be in order at

this point. In this section, Dr. Stanley goes into vivid descriptions of the process of crucifixion. It might be difficult for some to hear. Discretion would be advised.]

1. Considering the repugnant tone of these descriptions, discuss the wisdom of leaving such details out of the Gospel texts.
2. Would you agree that this is a sufficient “demonstration of force and intimidation”?

CRITIQUE

1. View and compare the crucifixion paintings by Messina (p. 102), Mantegna (p. 105), Canavesio (p. 117), and Ribalta (p. 122).

1. Contemplate especially the figures of Christ and the malefactors in these paintings. Try to imagine yourself in the place of the artist—what thoughts and feelings might he have had while portraying such a grisly execution?
2. Many paintings of the crucifixion, especially early ones, depict a serene Christ with very little of the wounds that would accompany beating, flogging, bearing the cross, and crucifixion. What reasons can you think of to explain this?

2. Look at the painting by the Master of Westphalia on page 114. Take time to identify and discuss the symbols that surround Jesus hanging on the cross.

APPRECIATE

1. How might a crucifix, as a Christian symbol, build us up rather than bring us down? How would you respond to someone who says we should only display empty crosses?
2. Discuss the centrality of the cross on Holy Cross Day and Good Friday. What are some ways we might bring the cross to the forefront of devotion and worship on those days?
3. What are some ways to give thanks to God for the Cross? How might we live in “the joy of the cross”?

CLOSE

The words of Ephrem the Syrian on page 115 may serve as a fitting close, along with a hymn such as “In the Cross of Christ I Glory,” and a closing prayer or benediction.

Lesson 5: Leader

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION TO BURIAL (PART II)

THEME VERSE

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. (John 19:28–30)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Understand that Jesus overcame death by His death
- Contemplate Christ’s death in art
- Appreciate that Christ truly died and was buried, but His physical body did not decay

FOCUS

St. Paul states that “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). We call this original or inherited sin. This death was not only physical, it also meant eternal death. Death came as a result of the fall of Adam and continues to this day. Into this world shrouded in death, Jesus, the Second Adam, came to defeat death by destroying the one who had the power of death, Satan. Christ, the ultimate sacrifice for sin, overcame the devil and the grave through His death on the cross—a death that redeems all who were in bondage to death.

Jesus, the very Son of God, is also true man. When He was crucified, He truly died and was laid in a tomb. Artists have portrayed the historical reality of this event in various ways and through different media, illustrating clearly that Jesus died our death. However, depicting the theological meaning of His death is a different matter. For this artists often relied on symbols. By including symbolic images in their artworks, the meaning of Christ’s death is communicated along with its history.

Although Jesus suffered death and was buried, the Bible makes it very clear that His body did not suffer decay. St. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, said the Scriptures testified “about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31). Because Jesus was conceived without sin, His body was not subject to the corruption that came from Adam’s fall. This gives hope and consolation to us as we trust His promise that we shall share in His resurrection.

In this lesson we continue with chapter 4 of *He Was Crucified*, pages 128 to 169. Again, we will include sections of Dr. Stanley's text on the death of Jesus, along with Scripture passages and selected works of art.

Begin your study with this prayer from page 137, which alludes to Mary and John standing at the foot of the cross:

Lord Jesus Christ, as we kneel at the foot of your cross, help us to see and know your love for us, so that we may place at your feet all that we have and are. Crucified Savior, naked God, you hang disgraced and powerless. Grieving, we dare to hope, as we wait at the cross with your mother and friend. Amen.

STUDY

Read Matthew 27:45–50; Mark 15:33–37; Luke 23:44–46; John 19:28–30.

1. The darkness was supernatural, not an eclipse of the sun, because this was the time of a full moon. The darkness lasted three hours. Creation is in horror as Christ, the very power by which all creation was brought into existence, suffers God's full wrath against sin: the Son of God was forsaken by His Father.
2. John says that Jesus cried, "It is finished!" He spoke with victorious passion, indicating His divine power beneath His frail flesh, His faith in God's Word, and His fearless acceptance of death.
3. After crying out, each Gospel records for us Jesus yielding up His spirit. Jesus willingly gave up that which no man could take from Him. That all four evangelists record this moment indicates the importance the Holy Spirit placed on preserving it for us.

Read Romans 5:9–21.

1. Comparing Adam and Jesus:
 - a. Many died through Adam's trespass; through the redemption won by Jesus, all who believe in Him shall live
 - b. Adam's trespass brought condemnation; Jesus' death brought justification
 - c. Death reigned through Adam; righteousness and eternal life reign through Christ
 - d. Adam's disobedience made sinners; Christ's obedience make the righteous children for God.
2. These comparisons make it unequivocally clear that whatever evils came into the world due to the sin of Adam are removed, or reversed, in Jesus Christ.

On pages 129–44, Dr. Stanley explains the physiological details of Jesus’ death. They are summed up in the first paragraph on page 133.

1. Dr. Stanley’s thorough explanation of the trauma and subsequent death of a crucified body gives insight to the suffering that Jesus went through. Understanding something of what Jesus’ body must have endured, we can appreciate how truly human He was. In turn, we may give thanks to our heavenly Father that this true man is also true God, our incarnate Savior.
2. Hearing about the injuries and breakdown that Jesus’ body underwent, we take comfort in His ability to sympathize with our sicknesses and our physical ailments. The Son of God suffered the same injuries that we do, yet without giving into temptation, despair, or doubt. Jesus’ perfect suffering gives us confidence in His redeeming power.

Dr. Stanley presents the medically knowable facts of one who dies by crucifixion on pages 149–64. Read the final four paragraphs on page 164. How does the medical commentary compare with the Gospel accounts?

In contrast to Dr. Stanley’s detailed descriptions of death by crucifixion, the Gospel writers simply state that Jesus “gave up His spirit.” Dr. Stanley admits that we can only speculate as to the exact cause of Jesus’ death. He does affirm, however, what the inspired Gospel writers make clear: Jesus Christ died on the cross. Furthermore, “Because He suffered and died in the cruelest fashion imaginable as a result of our sin, Jesus has delivered us from the power of sin, the devil, and death.”

CRITIQUE

1. View and compare the crucifixion paintings on pages 138–45 and contemplate.
 1. When artists painted or sculpted the death of Jesus, they imitated the natural signs of human death: bowed head and closed eyes, slumped body, pale or discolored flesh.
 2. In addition to natural signs of Jesus’ death, artists also used biblical references and symbols to indicate what Jesus’ death means. Pictures of the soldier piercing Jesus’ side proving His death; the disciples taking Jesus’ lifeless body from the cross; a skull or skeleton at the base of the cross indicating victory over death; John the Baptist pointing to Christ crucified; and the presence of a lamb signifying the sacrificial Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Sometimes Bible passages are painted into the scene, such as the centurion declaring that Jesus was the Son of God.
2. Look at the paintings of the crucifixion with Mary and John:

In crucifixion paintings, the Virgin Mary and the apostle John are usually present, often the only ones depicted. This commemorates when Jesus presents His mother to John for care, and the “disciple whom He loved” to His mother (John 19:26). Through faith in Jesus we too become “disciples whom He loved” and join the Church through out the centuries that regards Mary as our mother in the faith. The artist’s depiction of those at the foot of the cross, their devotion to Jesus, is often designed to draw our attention to their adoration, imagining ourselves in their place.

3. Discuss the *Pieta* by Michelangelo on page 136.

Michelangelo’s *Pieta* is one of the most famous sculptures of Christ and Mary; it is also considered by many to be one of the most beautiful. Mary is portrayed as very youthful, symbolic of her purity. Jesus’ face is serene. His dead body has weight and mass. His wounds are limited in their intensity, perhaps to accentuate Mary’s devotion to her Son. This combination of visual beauty and spiritual devotion make the piece quite awe-inspiring. Michelangelo’s masterwork serves as another useful focus for faithful reflection on the great sacrifice that is Jesus’ death.

4. In the anonymous painting on page 151, focus on the blood outpoured.

Angels collecting Christ’s blood into cups is a striking, visual reminder of the Sacrament of the Altar. It is truly symbolic as it presents in the imagery an even more striking reality: the real presence of Christ’s blood in the sacrament.

5. In the striking picture by Holbien, on pages 156–57, discuss that Jesus did not decay in the grave.

Art, like every other form of human communication, is fallible. The biblical events and teachings that art portrays may either be misrepresented by the artist or misunderstood by the viewer. For example, Holbien’s painting of Jesus’ body may give the impression that decomposition has begun. However, that would contradict the Bible’s clear statement to the contrary. In such cases, whether the artist deliberately or inadvertently misapplies Scripture, God’s Word must provide the necessary corrective.

APPRECIATE

1. The thought of death may cause dread in any Christian. Art showing Jesus suffering and dying might intensify this fear. Our comfort and hope through this is always the truth that Jesus, God’s Son, surely suffered and died for our sins. Yet, even greater, He rose from the grave to give us absolute certainty of our salvation.
2. Jesus’ rest in the tomb is commemorated in the Church on Holy Saturday, especially in the service know as the Great Vigil. The service traditionally begins in darkness, symbolizing the darkness of death and the grave. Attending the Divine Service, reading the appointed Bible lessons, and contemplating art depicting the event within family devotions, are all ways a Christian can reflect on and observe Holy Saturday. Above all else, trust that Jesus’ rest in the tomb also sanctifies ours.
3. Surely one of the best ways to thank God for Jesus’ blood is to heed the call of Jesus to His Holy Supper.

CLOSE

Close with the words of J. S. Bach on page 163 or the liturgical text on page 167, or both, and offer a prayer and/or benediction.

Lesson 5: Student

FROM THE CRUCIFIXION TO BURIAL (PART II)

THEME VERSE

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said (to fulfill the Scripture), “I thirst.” A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to His mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished,” and He bowed His head and gave up His spirit. (John 19:28–30)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Understand that Jesus overcame death by His death
- Contemplate Christ’s death in art
- Appreciate that Christ truly died and was buried, but His physical body did not decay

FOCUS

St. Paul states that “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned” (Romans 5:12). We call this original or inherited sin. This death was not only physical, it also meant eternal death. Death came as a result of the fall of Adam and continues to this day. Into this world shrouded in death, Jesus, the Second Adam, came to defeat death by destroying the one who had the power of death, Satan. Christ, the ultimate sacrifice for sin, overcame the devil and the grave through His death on the cross—a death that redeems all who were in bondage to death.

Jesus, the very Son of God, is also true man. When He was crucified, He truly died and was laid in a tomb. Artists have portrayed the historical reality of this event in various ways and through different media, illustrating clearly that Jesus died our death. However, depicting the theological meaning of His death is a different matter. For this artists often relied on symbols. By including symbolic images in their artworks, the meaning of Christ’s death is communicated along with its history.

Although Jesus suffered death and was buried, the Bible makes it very clear that His body did not suffer decay. St. Peter, in his Pentecost sermon, said the Scriptures testified “about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption” (Acts 2:31). Because Jesus was conceived without sin, His body was not subject to the corruption that came from Adam’s fall. This gives hope and consolation to us as we trust His promise that we shall share in His resurrection.

In this lesson we continue with chapter 4 of *He Was Crucified*, pages 128 to 169. Again, we will include sections of Dr. Stanley's text on the death of Jesus, along with Scripture passages and selected works of art.

STUDY

Read Matthew 27:45–50; Mark 15:33–37; Luke 23:44–46; John 19:28–30.

1. What was the cause and meaning of the darkness that covered the earth?
2. What is the implication of the “loud cry” that Jesus uttered before He died?
3. Each evangelist notes that Jesus gave up His spirit. Why is this significant?

Read Romans 5:9–21.

1. Identify the several comparisons Paul makes between Adam and Jesus.
2. What is the importance of these comparisons?

On pages 129 through 144, Dr. Stanley explains the physiological details of Jesus' death. They are summed up in the first paragraph on page 133.

1. How can such descriptions help us to acknowledge Jesus' incarnation?
2. How can they console us in our struggles with sickness and death? (See Hebrews 4:15.)

Dr. Stanley covers the proof and cause of Jesus' death on pages 149–64. Read the final four paragraphs on page 164. How does the proof of his medical commentary compare with the Gospel accounts?

CRITIQUE

1. View and compare the crucifixion paintings on pages 138–45 and contemplate.
 1. In each, how does the artist illustrate that Jesus truly died?
 2. What symbols illustrate the theological meaning of Christ's death?
2. Look at the paintings of the crucifixion with Mary and John.

What is the significance of their presence? How may our contemplation of their presence contribute to our devotion to Jesus?

3. Study the *Pieta* by Michelangelo on page 136.

Discuss how the exceptional beauty of this sculpture combined with its inspiring spiritual content provides us with an extraordinary devotional work of art.

4. In the anonymous painting on page 151, focus on the blood outpoured.

Angels collect in chalices the blood of Christ flowing from His wounds. How may the visual impact of this image strengthen our faith in the Sacrament?

5. In the striking picture by Holbein, on pages 156–57, discuss that Jesus did not decay in the grave.

Pictures of Christ's death might portray the death of Jesus so strongly as to suggest bodily decay, which did not occur with Him. How do the Scriptures ensure all doctrinal truth about the Christian faith that might be misrepresented or misinterpreted in art?

APPRECIATE

1. How may we find comfort and hope in Jesus' death on the cross?
2. Jesus' body was taken down from the cross and laid to rest in the tomb. In what ways could our observance of Holy Saturday recognize and celebrate this event?
3. Give thanks to God for Christ's blood poured out for us: cleansing us from sin and offered in the Lord's Supper.

CLOSE

Close with reading the words of J. S. Bach on page 163 or the liturgical text on page 167, or both, and offer a prayer and/or benediction.

Lesson 6: Leader

THE RESURRECTION

THEME VERSE

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” (Luke 24:1–7)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Rejoice that death and the grave could not hold Jesus
- Contrast and appreciate the expressions and symbols of the resurrection with the Passion (including a look at the Shroud of Turin)
- Understand that the resurrection is proof of Jesus’ atoning work

FOCUS

What inexpressible joy must have filled the anxious hearts of the disciples that day when Jesus rose from the grave. Three days earlier, their Lord was celebrating the Passover with them, and then was suddenly arrested, tried, and condemned. Some watched helplessly as the Romans mercilessly beat Him, flogged and mocked Him, and finally nailed Him to the accursed tree. There He died a horrible death. They laid Jesus in a new tomb, then they hid out of fear of the Jews. But on the first day of the week, on that first Easter Sunday, fear gave way to joy, for Jesus was risen from the grave. The tomb was empty. The women saw Him. Alleluia! He is risen! He is risen, indeed. The empty tomb and the appearance of the risen Christ is the confirmation of all that God had planned for the salvation of the world—it is the source of every Christian’s hope and joy.

Art of Christ’s resurrection differs dramatically from that of His Passion, and rightly so. Whereas creative works depicting Jesus’ suffering and death call for somber or, sometimes, shocking expressions, those portraying His resurrection surely demand a joyous quality. Not that the resurrection of Christ is without its own meditative value, but an image of the living and conquering Savior requires not only

solemn reflection, but certainly allows for a lively and triumphant artistic depiction. Along with such jubilant tenor to their pieces, artists will also use symbols of new life and victory over the grave.

The reason for this exultation in soul and art is because the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves His atonement for the sins of the world. The Scriptures attest to the historical authenticity of Jesus bursting open the gates of death and hell by His rising from the dead. He appeared many times to His disciples who testified to the truth and accuracy of His living presence among them. Jesus who died and is now alive, proves that God accepted His death as the redemption price for the sins of all people. St. Paul said it very clearly: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23–24).

Selected Scripture passages, chapter 5 of *He Was Crucified*, and the appendix on The Shroud of Turin will be the text for this study.

Begin the study praying the collect on page 172.

STUDY

Read Matthew 28:2–15 and 1 Corinthians 15:6 (an additional text could include Paul’s defense before Agrippa in Acts 26)

1. The rock solid assurance of our salvation, the forgiveness of our sins for the sake of Jesus, rests squarely on the truth of Jesus’ bodily resurrection. The Holy Spirit not only moved the evangelists to preserve in detail the account of Christ’s Passion, His suffering for our sins, but also His resurrection. Thus, the accounts of Jesus’ appearances relate how the disciples saw Him, touched Him, ate with Him, and worshiped Him. Also, it was not only a handful of people who claimed to have seen Him, but several hundred. Even Paul, who first persecuted the Church and who saw Jesus after His ascension, defended His ministry with a constant appeal to Christ crucified *and* risen.
2. While the disciples were rejoicing and proclaiming Jesus’ presence, their enemies were unable to account for the absence of Jesus’ body. The disciples were testifying to the truth of the empty tomb by declaring Jesus risen from the grave. The Jews bribed the guards to testify falsely that Jesus was stolen from the grave. This is significant because even the enemies of the Gospel do not deny the reality of the empty tomb. They only deny the eyewitness accounts of the fact of the resurrection.

Read John 20:1–18; Matthew 28:16–20

1. The evangelists present a most credible account of Jesus' resurrection, including the times when they report those who doubted. Many of the disciples did not believe Jesus was alive, even when He showed Himself to them. They confessed their confusion over Jesus' death and resurrection prophecies. These admissions of initial perplexity and disbelief make their later convictions, wrought by the Holy Spirit, more believable.

Read Romans 6:3–11; 1 Corinthians 15:12–17

1. St. Paul reaffirms the certainty of our salvation in the reality of the resurrection. When some people in Corinth taught that there was no resurrection of the dead, he refuted that false teaching with the truth of the risen Christ. Furthermore, Paul argues that our life and faith are living and active all because we are united to Christ in Baptism. In that sacrament of holy washing, we are both buried with Christ and raised with Christ. We die to sin, drowning the old Adam in the baptismal waters, and we live to Christ, being raised up out of death by the power of God, the same power and the same God who raised Jesus from the dead.

CRITIQUE

1. View the resurrection artwork on pages 169, 170, 172, and 181.
 1. Perhaps the most striking difference between pictures of Jesus' Passion and those of His resurrection is the strong and vibrant body of the Savior. In His suffering, His head is bowed down in sorrow, His frame is bent and burdened, and His body is shown weak, injured, and dying. After the resurrection, Jesus' body is straight and strong; the color of His flesh is vibrant, often glowing with His glory; and though His wounds are still present, they are no longer marks of torture but symbols of victory and honor.
 2. One of the common symbols present with the resurrected Christ is the Banner of the Resurrection, modeled after the Roman *vexillum*, which is a cross-shaped standard, or pole. It appears either with or without a flag. Another image of the resurrection, found especially in Orthodox iconography, shows Jesus raising Adam and Eve up from the grave.
2. Look at the picture of the Shroud of Turin on pages 182–83.

The Shroud of Turin is an intriguing and controversial relic. Discuss with participants what the implications of its authenticity might be. Does it “prove” anything about Jesus' resurrection? For the Christian, the only proof we need is that which is found in God's Word. The Scripture's infallible testimony of Jesus' resurrection, which the Church faithfully proclaims, is our confidence. Even if the Shroud could be proven beyond any doubt that it was the burial cloth of Christ, it would remain only an object of pious contemplation.

APPRECIATE

1. Our meditations on the Passion of Christ, His agony in the Garden, His suffering and crucifixion, must always look to and from the perspective of His resurrection (the picture on page 185 illustrates this perspective). Without the resurrection of Jesus, His suffering would be without value, and the hope of our salvation gone. As Paul says: “And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:14).
2. Allow the participants ample time to reflect upon and discuss their personal trust and hope in their resurrection. Reassurance of our hope in the resurrection is always and surely found in God’s Word and Sacraments.
3. Offer a prayer of thanksgiving for Jesus’ resurrection and the joy found in it.
4. Discuss ways to support and encourage the use of the arts in the Church. This study guide, with its use of *He Was Crucified*, is one simple way. Encourage local Christian artists, especially congregational members, as they create art that expresses our faith. This includes supporting them financially by purchasing their work. Adorning the sanctuaries of our churches with art that illustrates the life of Christ and His saints, that beautifies the space, and that uplifts our spirits to praise God for all things good and lovely (Philippians 4:8) is a work worthy of our time and money. Finally, give thanks to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for creating us, redeeming us, and sanctifying us all out of His love and mercy.

CLOSE

Close with the prayer on page 179 and an Easter hymn, such as “The Day of Resurrection” (LSB 478), written by John of Damascus, the great defender of Christian images.

Lesson 6: Student

THE RESURRECTION

THEME VERSE

But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they went to the tomb, taking the spices they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men stood by them in dazzling apparel. And as they were frightened and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, “Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. Remember how He told you, while He was still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men and be crucified and on the third day rise.” (Luke 24:1–7)

OBJECTIVES

With the illumination of the Holy Spirit, the participant will:

- Rejoice that death and the grave could not hold Jesus
- Contrast and appreciate the expressions and symbols of the resurrection with the Passion (including a look at the Shroud of Turin)
- Understand that the resurrection is proof of Jesus’ atoning work

FOCUS

What inexpressible joy must have filled the anxious hearts of the disciples that day when Jesus rose from the grave. Three days earlier, their Lord was celebrating the Passover with them, and then was suddenly arrested, tried, and condemned. Some watched helplessly as the Romans mercilessly beat Him, flogged and mocked Him, and finally nailed Him to the accursed tree. There He died a horrible death. They laid Jesus in a new tomb, then they hid out of fear of the Jews. But on the first day of the week, on that first Easter Sunday, fear gave way to joy, for Jesus was risen from the grave. The tomb was empty. The women saw Him. Alleluia! He is risen! He is risen, indeed. The empty tomb and the appearance of the risen Christ is the confirmation of all that God had planned for the salvation of the world—it is the source of every Christian’s hope and joy.

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solemn reflection, but certainly allows for a lively and triumphant artistic depiction. Along with such jubilant tenor to their pieces, artists will also use symbols of new life and victory over the grave.

The reason for this exultation in soul and art is because the resurrection of Jesus Christ proves His atonement for the sins of the world. The Scriptures attest to the historical authenticity of Jesus bursting open the gates of death and hell by His rising from the dead. He appeared many times to His disciples who testified to the truth and accuracy of His living presence among them. Jesus who died and is now alive, proves that God accepted His death as the redemption price for the sins of all people. St. Paul said it very clearly: “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:23–24).

STUDY

Read Matthew 28:2–15; 1 Corinthians 15:6.

1. What is the importance of Matthew recounting how the women “took hold of His feet,” and that in Galilee His disciples would *see* Him, and Paul relating the number of disciples who saw Jesus? (See also 1 John 1:1.)
2. What is the significance of the account the bribery of the guards?

Read John 20:1–18; Matthew 28:16–20.

How does the disciples’ lack of understanding at the tomb and their later disbelief add credibility to the resurrection account?

Read Romans 6:3–11; 1 Corinthians 15:12–17.

According to these words of Paul, what is the crucial connection between Christ’s authentic resurrection and our faith and life in Him?

CRITIQUE

View the resurrection artwork on pages 169, 170, 172, and 181.

1. Describe the artistic differences in these images of Christ with those of His suffering.
2. Identify symbols presented with the resurrection and their meaning.

Look at the picture of the Shroud of Turin on pages 182–83.

Highlight the history of the Shroud and discuss possible implications it may have with Christ’s resurrection.

APPRECIATE

1. How does Jesus' resurrection affect all our meditation on His Passion?
2. What does the future hope of your resurrection mean for you? How can you find reassurance for this hope?
3. Give thanks to God for Christ's resurrection and the hope it contains.
4. How may we support and encourage the use of the arts in the Church today?

CLOSE

Close with the prayer on page 179 and an Easter hymn, such as "The Day of Resurrection" (*LSB* 478), written by John of Damascus, the great defender of Christian images.