
BACK-TO-SUNDAY-SCHOOL



Hear the Gospel Again for the First Time

Big Truth Bible Lessons for Kids

Do you remember the first time you heard the truth of the gospel? For many of us who grew up in Christian homes, the answer is no. Most of us can't remember the first time we heard someone say that Jesus died for our sins. We might remember when we really understood the significance or really believed it, but not when we heard it. Sadly for many of us the best news we've ever heard has become commonplace and ordinary instead of amazing us each and every time we hear it.

One of the great benefits of serving in Children's ministry is that you often get to hear the good news of Jesus again for the first time. You get to marvel at God taking on flesh and coming to earth. You get to hear the truth of Christ "laying down His life," through the ears of children hearing it for the first time. You get to stand in awe as you hear of the resurrection and be amazed again and again at these truths.

A few weeks back, as I stood in front of a room of 100+ kids I was prepared to teach the cross. I was excited to teach the cross, but I was thinking of the cross with the mind of someone who has heard the story hundreds if not thousands of times. Honestly, I wasn't thinking of the child in the room who had never heard it before. And, as we walked through John 18 & 19 together, God opened my ears to hear it again for the first time.

Directly in front of me each week is a group of 4-6 year olds who generally struggle to listen and I often wonder how much they hear and if they understand any of it, but this week that wasn't the case. Among that group was a wide eyed boy who was hearing the best news he'll ever hear – and he was hearing it for the FIRST TIME.

We started the lesson with Jesus and the disciples in the garden and read about the soldiers coming to arrest Him. We read John 18:4-6:

Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “I am he,” Jesus said. -And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.- When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

... and one of the older kids in the room explained that the soldiers fell to the ground because when Jesus said “I am He” was essentially saying that He is God. He was comparing Himself to the “I AM.” When this young boy heard that, he looked up at me with wonder and said , **“really? He is?”**

Then, in John 18:22 when we read

When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

...The same little boy looked angry, and said loud enough for the whole room to hear, **“no....that’s bad. Why are they doing that?”**

We continued on and read of Peter’s denials, to which the same boy responded **“stop lying”**. We walked through the rest of Jesus’ trials before Pilate, and the beatings, and the crowds yelling to crucify him, and as we got closer and closer to the cross this little boy was obviously moved by what he was hearing.

Finally, I explained that the soldiers put Jesus on a cross and left him there to die and the boy said, **“No, they can’t kill God.”**

I continued on and read John 19:30 (Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.), and I reminded the kids of what Jesus had said to Pilate ~ that Jesus willingly died for His people, that He laid down His life and died because of His great love for His people. I explained that because He died we can live forever with Him. As I said those words and finished the story, I looked at the little boy and with a huge smile on his face he said, **“Wow! That’s so cool!”**

No matter how many times you've heard the story, or even how many times you've taught the story, take a minute and read the account of Jesus' death in our place one more time and read it with fresh ears. Stop and remind yourself that this REALLY HAPPENED! The creator of the universe stepped out of His rightful place and stepped into the world. He came as a helpless baby. He lived a perfect and sinless life and He willingly went to the cross and suffered and died for our sin. And then, three days later He came back to life, conquering the power of sin and death so that all who believe in Him will be raised to live with Him forever.

The story of the cross is a story we hear every year, or every week, or maybe even every day....but let's all take a cue from this little boy and hear it again for the first time. And next week, when you teach the cross, don't let it become ordinary, but remember the child who hasn't heard this good news yet and remember that you are proclaiming the greatest news ever. Let's not get bored of teaching the cross and Christ crucified!