

The Latin Cross

Memory Verse: When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus. Luke 23:33 (NRSV)

Study Plan: We learn about the cross and how it shows God's love for us.

To earn this badge, you will need to do the following:

Step 1: Jesus is crucified Leader's initials_____



Jesus had a special dinner with his disciples. Then he went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." He took Peter, James, and John with him, and he began to be sorrowful and troubled. Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."



While Jesus was speaking to the disciples, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived with a large crowd armed with swords and clubs. The men seized Jesus and arrested him. They took him to the house of the high priest, and then to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor. Every year Pilate would set one prisoner free. The people asked Pilate to release Barabbas, a man who was in prison. Pilate set him free. The soldiers stripped Jesus and put an elegant robe on him, and twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They knelt in front of him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" They beat him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

As they were going out, they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and forced him to carry Jesus' cross. They came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of the Skull). There they hung Jesus on the cross. Above his head they put a sign which said, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews". Two robbers were crucified with Jesus, one on his right and one on his left. The people who walked by shouted insults at



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Jesus. For three hours, darkness came over the land. Then Jesus said, "It is finished", and he died. The centurion, a soldier, said, "Surely he was the Son of God!"

Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. They took it down from the cross and put it in a new tomb.



On the first day of the week, some women went to the tomb with spices to put on Jesus' body. When they got to the tomb, the stone had been removed from the entrance. Two angels appeared and told them "Do not be afraid, for I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he has risen, just as he said." The women ran to tell the other disciples the good news.



1. Pilate was the governor at the time of Jesus. He was allowed to let one prisoner go free. Who did Pilate release?

2. What did the soldiers place on Jesus' head? _____

3. How did the soldiers dress Jesus? _____

4. Who helped carry Jesus' cross? _____

5. What was the name of the place where Jesus was crucified? _____

6. Who was crucified next to Jesus? _____

7. Pilate had a sign made to be put on Jesus' cross. What did that sign say? _____

8. What did the centurion say when Jesus died? _____



Draw a picture showing the three crosses where Jesus and the two robbers died.

Step 2: The Cross

Leader's initials _____



The cross is the most important symbol of our faith. Jesus died on a cross to save us, to free us from our sins, to bring us back to God. Each time we see a cross it reminds us of God's love for us.

Sometimes it is hard to understand why the cross is the main symbol of our faith. The cross reminds us of a very sad time, when Jesus died on the cross, and we usually want to forget sad times. But Christians remember the crucifixion with joy and thanksgiving, which overcomes sadness. Soon after Jesus' death, his disciples learned that Jesus was alive again. They realized that he had died because he wanted to show them how much God loved them. The cross helps us remember God's love for us shown in Jesus Christ.

Sometimes we see a cross that has the figure of Jesus with his arms and feet nailed to the cross. This is called a crucifix; it reminds us of Jesus' death on the cross. Another form we might see is Christ triumphant, the risen Christ, with a splendid crown on his head. This is called a Christus Rex, or Christ the King, and reminds us of the resurrection of Jesus.

There are more than fifty forms of the cross used in our churches and in our art. Here are some of them:



The Latin cross is the best known; it was the kind of cross on which Jesus was crucified. In the early days of church, people began to make the sign of the cross when they worshiped, tracing a small cross on their forehead with the thumb of their right hand. Later, people began to make a much larger sign of the cross by tracing a cross from forehead to breast, then left to right. Churches were built in the form of a cross as well.

A variation of the Latin cross is known as the Celtic cross. The circle found in this cross stands for eternal life. It helps remind us that people who die are still God's children, and that they are with God.



The Canterbury Cross is used as a symbol of the Anglican Communion. The Episcopal Church is part of the Anglican Communion.



The Anchor Cross is an old design. First-century Christians carved it on the walls of the catacombs. The Anchor Cross reminded Christians that Jesus' death gave them life. It probably refers to the passage in Hebrews which says, "We have this hope, a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul..." (Hebrews 6:19)



The Jerusalem Cross has four small crosses in the arms of the larger cross. These may stand for the five wounds of Christ, or for the four Gospels, or for the four directions in which the Good News of Christ spread out from Jerusalem.



We know that the story of Jesus does not end at the crucifixion. God raised Jesus from death! We call this the resurrection. Each year, we celebrate the resurrection on a special day, Easter.

What day do we celebrate Jesus' resurrection? _____

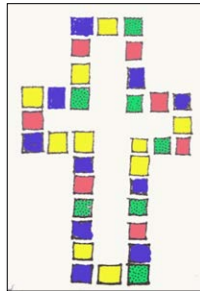
Jesus told his disciples he would be raised from the dead. On what day would Jesus rise again? _____



Go into your church and look for crosses. Where are they, and what form are they?

Draw two or three of the crosses you see in your church.

- ❖ Make a Latin cross to put wear or put in your room. It could be made of wood, clay, cardboard, or other material. When you see it, remember that Jesus loves you.



- ❖ Next time you are at a baptism, watch the priest or bishop. After a person is baptized, the priest or bishop will make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the newly baptized, and says, "You are sealed by the Holy Spirit in Baptism and marked as Christ's own forever." Why do you suppose we do this?

Challenge Yourself!

Resurrection Eggs

"Resurrection Eggs" are plastic eggs which contain symbols of Holy Week and Easter. The questions will help you learn about each of the symbols.

1. Three pieces of silver: for the thirty pieces of silver Judas got for turning Jesus over to the people who wanted to get rid of him. "Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What will you give me if I betray him to you?' They paid him thirty pieces of silver. And that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him."



(Matthew 26:14-16). *What are some ways we betray Jesus? When we betray each other, we betray Jesus.*

2. Rooster: for the cock that crowed after Peter denied Jesus three times. "Then Peter began to curse, and he swore an oath, 'I do not know the man!' At that moment, the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: 'Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.' And he went out and wept bitterly." (Matthew 26:74-76). *What does deny mean? To pretend you don't know someone or something when you really do. It's like lying. Can you think of ways you have lied? It isn't always easy to be honest. We're tempted to lie when we know that telling the truth is going to get us in trouble. God loves honesty. Jesus said, "I am the truth."*



3. Thorn: for the crown of thorns they put on Jesus' head. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole cohort around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt down before him and mocked him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!'" (Matthew 27:27-29). *The soldiers made fun of Jesus. Why do people make fun of others? We are all God's children, we are all different. Making fun of others is like making fun of Jesus.*



4. Rope: for the rope used to tie Jesus' hands and feet. "They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor." (Matthew 27:2). *How did Jesus act when they tied him up and took him away? Most people would yell and scream and be angry. When you are treated unfairly, do you lose your temper? Stay calm like Jesus did. Jesus gives us wisdom and patience.*

5. Nails: for the nails used to hang Jesus on the cross. "The soldiers 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 clothes among themselves by casting lots."



(Matthew 27:33-35) *Do you know why Jesus was nailed to the cross? Having nails driven through your hands and feet and hanging on a cross was a terrible way to die. But Jesus did this for love of us, so that our sins could be forgiven.*

6. INRI "King of the Jews": for the sign that was put at the top of the cross. "Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, 'This is the King of the Jews.'" (Matthew 27:37). *Even though Jesus never let himself be put to death like a sinner to pay for our sins. What does that tell you about Jesus? Jesus loves us very much, no matter what. He will always be with us.*



cross.
Jesus,
sinned,
tell you

7. Sponge: for the sponge dipped in vinegar that they gave Jesus when he was thirsty. "After this, when Jesus knew that all was now finished, he said (in order to fulfill the scripture), 'I am thirsty.' A jar full of sour wine was standing there. So they put a sponge full of the wine on a branch of hyssop and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the wine, he said, 'It is finished.' Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit." (John 19:28-30). *Have you ever had to do something that took a long time and was hard work? How did you feel about yourself when you were done? There is a special happiness in finishing your work and knowing it is well done. Jesus was given a very hard assignment by his Father, to go into a world that did not understand him and hated him, and then to die to save that world.*

8. Dice: for the dice the soldiers threw to decide who would get Jesus' clothes. "When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one for each soldier. They also took his tunic; now the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from the top. So they said to one another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see who will get it.' This was to fulfill what the scripture says, 'They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.'" (John 19:23-24). *Jesus forgave all the soldiers who mistreated him. What have you done that you've had to ask for forgiveness afterwards? Sometimes it's very hard to forgive others and ourselves for something that happened. But Jesus will always forgive us.*



9. Linen cloth and spices: for the way Jesus was wrapped for burial. "They took the body of Jesus and wrapped it with the spices in linen cloths, according to the burial customs of the Jews." (John 19:40). *Have you ever lost someone you loved who died and was buried? Isn't it good to know that they are with Jesus? Jesus said, "I will never leave you." We know that when we die, we will be with Jesus.*

10. Stone: for the stone placed in front of the tomb to seal it. "They said to them, 'You have a guard of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can.' So they went with the guard and made the stone secure by sealing the stone." (Matthew 27:65-66). *Why do you think the stone was placed over the entrance to the tomb? And why did they have guards outside the tomb? Something far more wonderful took place than the disciples stealing the body of Jesus!*



"Plate
tomb
thing



11. Angel: for the angel who rolled away the stone and said to the women, "Don't be afraid." "And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. But the angel said to the women, 'Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said.'" (Matthew 28:2-6) *What are some things that you are afraid of? Who is it that makes you feel safe when you become afraid? God never planned that we should live in fear, so he gave us our parents and friends here on earth, and God gave us Jesus to be with us now, and after we die, so we never have to be afraid.*

12: The empty egg: for the empty tomb. "The angel said, 'He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay.'" (Matthew 28:6). *What happened when the women went to the tomb on that Sunday morning after Jesus had died? How do you think the women felt when they found out what had happened to Jesus? The women were filled with joy because they knew that Jesus had risen. He was alive! Jesus is alive today as we celebrate his death and resurrection*

Color this badge for your notebook.

