

CROSS

CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Flyer cut-outs, paper, pens, tape
- Copies of the downloadable “Litany” and “Prayers & Thanksgivings” booklets
- Copies of the lesson handout
- Copy of the leader’s notes
- OPTIONAL: Bibles (ESV or similar recommended)
- OPTIONAL: A white board, easel pad, or chalk board with markers/chalk
- OPTIONAL: Have notebooks on hand for teens to take home and use as prayer journals if they wish

ICE BREAKER: WHAT’S THE PRICE?

Ahead of time, cut some pictures of products for purchase out of magazines or flyers. Make a note of the advertised prices. Try to include a range of items (such as video games, cosmetics, sports equipment, cars, holiday cruises, groceries, etc.). Post them around the room. Each teen gets paper and a pen. They must look at each of the products, write their name and their price guess and post them next to each product. When everyone has posted guesses, go through and announce the actual amounts. You may wish to award a small prize to the person who guessed the closest for the most items.

FOR LARGER GROUPS, HAVE YOUR TEENS BREAK INTO GROUPS, GIVE THEIR GROUP A NAME, AND TOGETHER POST A COLLECTIVE GUESS AT EACH ITEM.

THE LITANY: BEGINNING WITH PRAYER

Begin the formal part of the lesson by saying together the Litany, leaving off the Grace (which can be said at the close of the lesson).

AT THIS POINT IN THE LESSON, ASK IF THE TEENS SUCCEEDED IN DOING LAST WEEK’S CHALLENGE, HOW IT WENT, AND WHETHER THEY HAVE ANYTHING TO SHARE.

DISCUSSION: STICKER SHOCK

As an introduction to the lesson ask the teens to discuss the following questions.

DEPENDING ON THE COMFORT LEVEL FOR SHARING IN YOUR GROUP, IT MAY BE EASIER TO HAVE THEM VOLUNTEER ANSWERS WITH ALL RESPONSES WRITTEN TOGETHER ON A BOARD.

- If you did the ice breaker: Were you surprised by any of the actual prices?
- Have you ever heard of “sticker shock”? What do you think the phrase means?
- Have you ever stood ready to pay for something only to discover you didn’t have the money? How did you feel? What happened?

A few things worth pointing out (if they don’t otherwise arise during the discussion):

- *“Sticker Shock” is a surprised and horrified reaction that we experience when we learn that the price of something is much higher than we expected it to be.*
- *For most of us there are things we’d like to buy which we know we simply cannot afford. But even if we can afford the things we want to buy, we may have had the experience of trying to buy something and not having a means of payment with us. The sudden realization that you are required to pay for something that you cannot afford – whatever the reason – is usually embarrassing and inconvenient. However, if we feel that our capacity to afford something financially bears a reflection on our worth as individuals (it certainly doesn’t in the eyes of God!), then the experience may be more deeply upsetting.*

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THE LESSON: MARK 15

The first part of the lesson (below) can be read aloud. Then the teens are asked to read the Bible text (either silently to themselves or aloud together), followed by some additional questions for discussion.

By thy Cross and Passion; by thy precious Death... Good Lord, deliver us.

All of scripture points to the cross of Christ. This is the centre of our faith: that “he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities... All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Isaiah 53:5-6).

Jesus Christ *came to die*. When John the Baptist saw Jesus approaching, he said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!” (John 1:29) Jesus came to be the perfect sacrifice, to pay the price for our sin and to make us right with God. This payment was made “not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ” (1 Peter 1:18-19). We were worth *this much*—something that has overwhelmed and transformed the hearts of believers for centuries.

In a moment we’ll read part of the passion narrative from St. Mark’s Gospel. Read it slowly, remembering that this is the story of our deliverance. *This is how much you are loved.*

Refer to Mark 15:12-14, 16-20, 24-34, 37-38.

(VERSES HAVE BEEN CLIPPED FROM THE READING FOR THE SAKE OF BREVITY AND FOCUS, BUT IF YOU HAVE TIME TO EXPLORE THE PASSAGE FULLY, FEEL FREE TO READ IT IN ITS ENTIRETY: MARK 15:12-38.)

(THE TEXT IS PROVIDED ON THE BACK OF THE HANDOUTS AND IN THESE LEADERS’ NOTES SO THAT EVERYONE CAN MARK IT UP AND MAKE NOTES ON IT IF DESIRED. ALTERNATIVELY, YOU CAN READ OUT OF A BIBLE).

Read through the text. Then ask the teens to respond to what they’ve just read. Here are some questions to help guide the discussion.

- Summarize the sufferings that Jesus underwent as described in this passage.
- What are some indications this passage gives us that this was no ordinary death?

A few notes and reflections for reference:

- *Although Jesus was innocent, the people present at his trial shouted for his crucifixion (v13). He was mocked, beaten and spit upon by soldiers (v17-19). He was crucified (v24). His clothing was taken from him and the soldiers gambled to see who would get to keep his things (v24). He was killed alongside two robbers – guilty men – who “reviled” him (v27, 32). Those who passed by continued to mock him, even using his own words of prophecy and acts of grace to laugh at him (v29-32). Jesus experienced a separation from God, which he voiced with the first lines of Psalm 22 (v34). Jesus died (v37). Remind your teens that Jesus underwent these things willingly because he loves us. (“By this we know love, that he laid down his life for us” - 1 John 3:16).*
- *The sign that accuses Jesus of being “King of the Jews” was Pilate’s (perhaps ironic) reference to the charges brought against Jesus by the chief priests. This reference is an interesting parallel with the prophecy of Christ’s birth that led to Herod’s rampage. Jesus made it clear that his kingdom was not a political or military movement confined to a specific time and place. Yet though the sign demonstrated accusation and misunderstanding, it did point to the truth, that – even on the cross – Christ was King! (v26) In the middle of the day there was a sudden darkness that lasted for three hours, culminating with the cry of Jesus at his separation from the Father (v33-34). Upon Christ’s death, the curtain in the temple was torn in two (v38). The passage itself doesn’t explain the immense significance of this. The holiest part of the temple was separated by a curtain, which signified the separateness of a holy God from a sinful people. Christ’s death removed that barrier! Then there was the testimony of the centurion who was watching these events unfold: “Truly this man was the Son of God!” (v39).*

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DURING EACH LESSON, IF THE TEENS RAISE THEOLOGICAL OR BIBLICAL QUESTIONS THAT YOU DON'T FEEL CONFIDENT ABOUT ANSWERING, SAY SO, BUT LET THEM KNOW THAT YOU'LL FIND THE ANSWER AND RESPOND AT THE NEXT MEETING.

PREVIEW: AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Take a brief moment to look at the at-home challenge together.

THE WEEKLY "AT-HOME CHALLENGE" IS TYPICALLY A SIMPLE ASSIGNMENT TO SPEND SOME QUIET TIME IN PRIVATE PRAYER. ENCOURAGE THE TEENS TO GET NOTEBOOKS THAT CAN BE USED AS PRAYER JOURNALS. ASSURE THEM THAT THEY WILL NOT BE REQUIRED TO SHOW THEIR JOURNAL OR THEIR PRIVATE PRAYERS TO ANYONE.

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer).)

Scripture is filled with prayers and praises in the form of poetry and songs. During this unit, try your hand at song-writing; drawing inspiration from the love God has for you, made evident in the work of Jesus Christ.

Spend some time this week writing your own song of praise inspired by the cross of Christ.

(Stuck? Spend some time instead reflecting on the words of this hymn penned by Isaac Watts in 1707: "Alas! and did my Saviour bleed, and did my Sovereign die! Would he devote that sacred head for sinners such as I? Was it for crimes that I have done, he groaned upon the tree? Amazing pity! Grace unknown! And love beyond degree!")

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through this collect.

Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy tender love towards mankind, hast sent thy Son our Saviour Jesus Christ, to take upon him our flesh, and to suffer death upon the cross, that all mankind should follow the example of his great humility: Mercifully grant, that we may both follow the example of his patience, and also be made partakers of his resurrection; through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

(THE COLLECT FOR PALM SUNDAY, BCP PAGE 150)

CLOSING PRAYERS

Close with any prayers that might be appropriate in the context of the discussion of the day.

AT THE END OF EACH LESSON, IF YOU FIND THAT YOU STILL HAVE LOTS OF TIME REMAINING, YOU MIGHT CHOOSE TO TAKE SOME TIME TO EXPLORE THE "PRAYERS AND THANKSGIVINGS" SECTION IN THE BCP (PAGES 39-62, OR YOU CAN USE THE DOWNLOADABLE BOOKLET). AS YOUR GROUP MEMBERS COME ACROSS PRAYERS THAT THEY FIND RELEVANT, PAUSE AND PRAY THEM TOGETHER. IF YOU'RE PRESSED FOR TIME, YOU MIGHT CLOSE WITH THE THEMED PRAYER FROM THE AT-HOME CHALLENGE.

Then finish with the "Grace", printed at the end of the Litany booklet.

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MARK 15: **THIS IS HOW MUCH YOU ARE LOVED**

¹²And Pilate again said to them, “Then what shall I do with the man you call the King of the Jews?” ¹³And they cried out again, “Crucify him.” ¹⁴And Pilate said to them, “Why, what evil has he done?” But they shouted all the more, “Crucify him”...

¹⁶And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor’s headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. ¹⁷And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. ¹⁸And they began to salute him, “Hail, King of the Jews!” ¹⁹And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in homage to him. ²⁰And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak and put his own clothes on him. And they led him out to crucify him...

²⁴And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. ²⁵And it was the third hour when they crucified him. ²⁶And the inscription of the charge against him read, “The King of the Jews.” ²⁷And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. ²⁹And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, ³⁰save yourself, and come down from the cross!” ³¹So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. ³²Let the Christ, the King of Israel, come down now from the cross that we may see and believe.” Those who were crucified with him also reviled him.

³³And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”...

³⁷And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. ³⁸And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. ³⁹And when the centurion, who stood facing him, saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, “Truly this man was the Son of God!”