



## Mark 15:1-39

**Materials Needed:** White piece of paper, pencil with a good eraser, brown construction paper, scissors, glue

\* Prior to community group, draw the outline of a cross, at least 1 ½ inches wide, on the white piece of paper, so there's room to write within the lines of the cross. Then, cut out a cross from the brown construction paper that will fit on top of that cross exactly.

### Opening Activity

Tonight we're going to build a cross to represent the cross that Jesus died on. It will show us truth about how much Jesus loves us, and how He's rescued us!

- Tell the kids that even though we try to be good, we never really can be because of the sin and brokenness in our hearts (we've been this way since birth!) and how it causes us to choose ourselves over God. Examples: Not listening and obeying parents, not sharing, calling other kids names, lying, etc.
- Take the outline of the cross out and show it to the kids. Explain how Jesus went to cross to die for OUR brokenness, not just that of the people in Jesus' day (we'll see this in the passage).
- (Leader) Then, share an example or two of what that brokenness looks like from your own life, and write those things in pencil on the cross. Ask the kids do the same, and write those things on the cross as well.
- We're going to leave our brokenness exposed on the cross for now, but as we work through the passage tonight, we'll find the hope that Jesus Christ offers us.

### Discussion

Tonight's passage occurs just after Jesus has eaten the Last Supper with His disciples and has spent time in the garden of Gethsemane praying to His Father before He is arrested and taken to trial. After He is arrested, Jesus is first led to the leaders (high priest) of his town, where they cannot believe that Jesus calls Himself the Son of God. "You must die for calling yourself the Son of God!" they said. But since only the Romans were allowed to kill prisoners (John 18:31), they had to convince them (mainly Pilate) that Jesus needed to be killed because they did not like Jesus. So, the leaders made a plan. They told the Romans that this man wanted to be their king. To them, the only king was Caesar, the king who ruled during Jesus' day, and anyone who threatened his power must die.

This plan seems crazy! Jesus did nothing wrong. Yet this is what had to happen so that God's plan of redemption for all God's people would be fulfilled: Isaiah 53. This is where we pick up in Mark 15.

### Read Mark 15:1-5, 12-14, 16-20, 24-34, 37-39

And as soon as it was morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole Council. And they bound Jesus and led him away and delivered him over to Pilate. And Pilate asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" And he answered him, "You have said so." And the chief priests accused him of many things. And Pilate again asked him, "Have you no answer to make? See how many charges they bring against you." But Jesus made no further answer, so that Pilate was amazed.

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

And the soldiers led him away inside the palace (that is, the governor's headquarters), and they called together the whole battalion. And they clothed him in a purple cloak, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on him. And they began to salute him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" And they were striking his head with a reed and spitting on him and kneeling down in



homage to him. And 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.

And they crucified him and divided his garments among them, casting lots for them, to decide what each should take. And it was the third hour when they crucified him. And the inscription of the charge against him read, "The King of the Jews." And with him they crucified two robbers, one on his right and one on his left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself, and come down from the cross!" So also the chief priests with the scribes mocked him to one another, saying, "He saved others; he cannot save himself. Let 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.

And when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And 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?" And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And 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!"

**Question One:** We see that the leaders of the council and Pilate called Jesus 'King of the Jews.' Yet he was a different kind of king than they thought. What kind of king do you think Jesus was and is today? Allow the kids to answer on their own. When they're finished, read John 18:33-37. *Jesus is the king of heaven and earth, not a political king. He's the king of our hearts and who desires our full allegiance and worship.*

**Question Two:** What did the people mean when they said, "Crucify him"? *The word 'crucify' means to put to death by nailing or binding the hands and feet to a cross, or to treat a person with gross injustice; persecute; torment; torture. Both of these scenarios happened to Jesus.*

Because of the evilness in people's hearts – yours, mine, and everyone's throughout time – God had to come up with a rescue plan because there was no way we could ever fix ourselves. God's rescue plan was Jesus. Jesus, being God's own Son, was the only perfect solution to heal our hearts. For it to work though, Jesus had to die in our place, and as he did so, He had to suffer and take on all the evil and brokenness of the whole world. This is what happened on the cross as Jesus was crucified. Jesus didn't deserve any of it, but he did it because He loves us with the deepest love we can ever imagine!

The good news, and we'll talk more about this next week, is that Jesus came back to life! He conquered sin and death and was resurrected, so that now when we trust Him, we too can be freed from our sin and live by His strength and not our own!

### Wrapping Up

Look back at the outline of the cross that we wrote on during our activity tonight. Look at the broken, hurtful things we've done. We cannot do anything to fix our hearts or keep ourselves from doing these things – only God can. It's through God's great love for us that we can be changed, and through His love that our hearts can be renewed. Now, take the eraser on your pencil and erase the things that we wrote in the outline of the cross and glue the cross of brown construction paper over the outline of the cross. This shows us how Jesus' sacrifice for us on the cross wipes away and cancels *our* sin. It's as if our sin was never even there. This is what happened on the cross: God sent His perfect Son to pay the punishment – death – that we deserve for doing those things. And Jesus not only paid for our debt of sin, but that debt was wiped away and in return He gives us new and eternal life if we believe in Him – a life that's complete because He's the keeper of our hearts. What wonderful news to be thankful for!



Let's close our time by asking Jesus to forgive us for the hurtful things that we do and to show us how His great love and grace offers us a chance to be made new. Pray that this truth would be real in our hearts and that we'd be able to celebrate like never before on Easter morning!

