



## LESSON 69

3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Principle:** Faith in Christ covers the worst of sinners.

**Bible Character(s):** Jesus and the Criminals on the Cross

**Scripture Reference:** Luke 23:32-43



**PERSONAL PREPARATION:** Before this weekend, read through Luke 23:32-43. As

you read, focus on the principle that faith in Christ covers the worst of sinners. Jesus is crucified on the cross with two other criminals. Pay close attention to the criminals' responses to Jesus; we see the different responses the cross of Christ would have on our world. One of the criminals joined in the crowd in mocking Jesus, his heart hard with unbelief. The other criminal recognized that he deserved to be hanging on that cross. He realized his sin, believed that Jesus was God and was innocent, and he asked Jesus to remember Him. This criminal's humility and Jesus' loving response are a powerful testimony of God's grace. Are you aware of the full weight of your sin? Do you realize you deserve death for your sin (Romans 6:23)? Do you truly believe in the grace of God? Although we deserve death for our sin, God has provided us with a way to be made right with Him through Jesus' death. Jesus took on the sin of the world in His death, and no sinner is irredeemable. If you have faith that Jesus is your Savior, you are washed clean and redeemed by God. Spend some time this week praying for your campers' hearts to be opened to the truth.

### PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

### Timeline Review

Review the past couple of weeks by having the campers place the timeline of Jesus' life on your wall (Use your clothesline display when possible). Please remove the timeline at the end of your service so the next class can place the pictures in their correct spot. Clip the set of cards back together.



### BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts – fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

## **The Bridge to Small Group**

Today we will look at Jesus' response to those around Him and the criminals' response to Jesus. We will focus on the one criminal's belief as well as the forgiveness and grace given to him.

## **Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes**

### **Getting Started**

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group? Did Jesus deserve to be crucified? (No.) Was Jesus angry at the soldiers for what they did? (No, He asked God the Father to forgive them instead.) How did the other two criminals respond to Jesus being crucified with them? (One mocked Jesus, the other knew Jesus did not deserve it.)

Last week, do you remember what Pilate did? (He turned Jesus over to the crowd.) Did Pilate believe Jesus was guilty? (No, he knew Jesus was innocent but he agreed that Jesus could be crucified.) Why didn't Pilate do what was right? (Pilate gave into the pressure of those around him. He cared more about what the people thought of him than honoring God.) This was sin. We learned that giving into peer pressure can be sin.

Today we will begin by reading the Bible in Luke as the soldiers bring Jesus to the place where He will be crucified. Let's begin reading now.

### **Luke 23:32-33**

*<sup>32</sup> Two others, both criminals, were led out to be executed with him. <sup>33</sup> When they came to a place called The Skull, they nailed him to the cross. And the criminals were also crucified—one on his right and one on his left.*

Both of these criminals deserved their punishment. They had done bad things. Jesus was innocent, yet He was nailed to the cross just like these criminals.

Here is an example of a nail that might be similar to the ones the soldiers used (show the campers the nail in your bin).

Can you imagine having this nail hammered through your wrist and into a wooden cross? The physical pain would be unbearable. This happened to Jesus, yet He had done nothing wrong to deserve this!

## **Two Are Guilty. Three Are Punished**



The purpose of this activity is to see how the campers react to an innocent camper being punished along with two who are “guilty.”

### Supplies:

Set of guilty and innocent cards (1 set per bin)


Bowl (1 per bin)

Bag of candy (1 bag per session – enough for 1 piece of candy per camper)

You will put the “Guilty” and “Innocent” cards in the bowl – but only put enough “Innocent” cards as the number in your class, minus two. (So you will have enough cards for one per camper, but two of them will be “Guilty” cards.)

Have the campers randomly draw cards but tell them to wait to reveal what’s on their cards until everyone has one. Once all cards are picked, have them reveal what’s on the card. The two campers that pull the “Guilty” cards lose the game and should sit together. Tell the “innocent” campers that they get to pick one piece of candy as a prize for being innocent. BUT, before you allow the “innocent” campers to choose candy, pull out one innocent camper and have him or her sit with the guilty ones. Do not let that “innocent” camper have candy. (After explaining the tie-it-together, you can give candy to the three campers who did not receive any.) Clip the set of cards back together.

### Tie It Together

 This “innocent” camper deserved to have a piece of candy, yet he or she was placed with the two “guilty” campers and not allowed to have candy. Do you think that was fair? (Allow responses.) Was it hard for the “innocent” camper to sit with the “guilty” campers and feel like he or she deserved the candy? (Allow responses.) This is a very simple example of how innocent Christ is. Jesus did not deserve death, yet He was nailed to a cross with two other criminals that did deserve death. How do you think Jesus felt? (Allow responses.)

Let’s continue reading our passage from the Bible.

### Luke 23:34

*<sup>34</sup> Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they don’t know what they are doing.” And the soldiers gambled for his clothes by throwing dice.*

How did Jesus respond to being crucified? (Allow responses.) Jesus forgave those who mocked Him and nailed Him to the cross. Even here, when Jesus was in horrible pain, He chose to show compassion and love to others. Do you respond this way when people hurt you? (Allow responses.) Let’s continue reading the Bible.

### Luke 23:35–38

*<sup>35</sup> The crowd watched and the leaders scoffed. “He saved others,” they said, “let him save himself if he is really God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”<sup>36</sup> The soldiers mocked him, too, by offering him a drink of sour wine. <sup>37</sup> They called out to him, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!”<sup>38</sup> A sign was fastened to the cross above him with these words: “This is the King of the Jews.”*

All of these people were making fun of Jesus. He was dying on a cross, in excruciating pain, and these people were still making fun of Him. But Jesus continued to endure this pain to pay for our sin. He loves us so much that He went through that intense amount of pain for us. Let's read more in Luke.

### Luke 23:39-43

<sup>39</sup> One of the criminals hanging beside him scoffed, "So you're the Messiah, are you? Prove it by saving yourself—and us, too, while you're at it!"

<sup>40</sup> But the other criminal protested, "Don't you fear God even when you have been sentenced to die?" <sup>41</sup> We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong." <sup>42</sup> Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your Kingdom."

<sup>43</sup> And Jesus replied, "I assure you, today you will be with me in paradise."

Let's take a look at the differences between these two criminals.

## Weight of Sin Compared to Depth of Forgiveness



The purpose of this activity is to see the response of the criminals.

### Supplies:

Worksheet (1 per camper)

Red and black crayons/markers

White board

Give each camper a worksheet. Copy the worksheet onto the whiteboard as you guide the campers through the following steps:

1. Ask the campers to give a description of each criminal's response to Jesus and write it under the two criminals' crosses. (Criminal 1: made fun of Jesus, did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God; Criminal 2: realized that he deserved his punishment, knew Jesus was innocent, believed Jesus was the Son of God.)
2. Have the campers draw a heart above each criminal's cross. (Criminal 1's heart should be colored black to represent his heart that did not believe. Criminal 2's heart should be colored red to represent his heart that believed and whose sin was covered by Jesus' blood.)

### Tie It Together



One criminal recognized the innocence of Jesus, as well as the weight of his sin. He realized that Jesus did not deserve to die and believed that Jesus was God. This criminal was definitely a sinner, yet because of his belief, God forgave him. The other criminal did not see Jesus as the Son of God. He mocked Jesus, just like the soldiers and many of the people watching did too.

## Changed Today By God's Forgiveness



The purpose of this activity is to recognize that all sins are forgiven through God's forgiveness, regardless of our works.

#### Supplies:

Coffee filter (1 per session)

Lemon juice (1 per bin)

Highlighter \*\*must be Accent brand to work\*\* (1 per bin)

Pie pan (1 per bin)

Ask the campers to list some sins. Write down the sins on the coffee filter with the highlighter. Place the coffee filter inside the pie pan and use the lemon juice to watch the sin disappear!

### Tie It Together



What happened to the "sins" written on the coffee filter? (Allow responses.) The lemon juice made them disappear. When we believe and trust in Jesus, our sins also "disappear" because of Jesus' death on the cross. Instead of judgment and payment for our sin in God's eyes, He sees Jesus in the place of our sin. It does not matter how bad we think our sin is; Jesus' death paid for our sins because Jesus innocently took on the sin of the world to pay the punishment for our sin. Jesus died for the criminals hanging beside Him. One criminal believed that Jesus is the Son of God and was promised paradise; the other criminal did not believe and was not offered paradise. We are also offered paradise if we choose to believe and trust that Jesus died for our sins.

### We All Sin



The purpose of this activity is to help the campers recognize ways in which they sin.

#### Supplies:

White board

Ask the campers to think about some ways that they sin, and ways they see other children their age sin. List these ideas out on the white board.

### Tie It Together



We are all sinners. God is holy and He cannot be around sin so our sin separates us from God. Jesus paid the price for our sin, so now we do not have to be separated from God. We can live eternally with Him if we put our faith and trust in Jesus as our Savior. God wants us to live a life that brings glory to His name. Because we are sinners, we still struggle with sin in our hearts. God wants us to recognize how our actions and behaviors, and the motivations behind them, cause us to sin, so that we can repent. We have listed out different ways that we see ourselves and others sin. We have recognized the sin in our hearts. Now we have the opportunity to repent of our sin and allow God to change our heart so that we can become more like Jesus.

### Wrapping It Up

We have the same choice as the criminals. We have also sinned and are in need of Jesus. Do you believe that you are a sinner? Do you believe that your sin, no matter how small or big you think it is, is paid for by the death of Jesus Christ? Can you remove the sin from your life? (Allow responses.) Jesus is the only one who can remove that sin. Next week, we will continue to learn about Jesus' death. Think about Jesus on the cross, bearing unbelievable pain and suffering even though He did not deserve it. Do you believe that He did this for you because you are a sinner?

## Prayer Time

Spend a few minutes in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to help each of us recognize our sins and turn to Jesus for forgiveness and eternal life.



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