



A Sunday  
School Series

# The Wonder of Easter

Lesson 3

**Saved!**  
**Just in time**

LUKE 23:32-34; 39-43






faith**m**kids



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"All for the glory of God alone" (1 Corinthians 10:31)

## Lesson 3

# Saved! Just in time

LUKE 23:32-34; 39-43



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### Big Idea:

On the cross, we clearly see who Jesus is – forgiving the soldiers and saving the criminal – this is why he came.



### Faith in Kids looks like:

...children who are amazed that Jesus' death can save them for heaven.

## Preparation



### WHERE ARE WE GOING?

Since the last lesson, where Jesus was arrested, he has had to face an unjust religious court, the disinterested governor Pilate and the screaming angry crowd. Finally, Pilate condemned Jesus to die on the cross simply because the crowd demanded it. It is a total shock to see Jesus, the Son of God, dying like a criminal on a cruel cross. But even as it is happening, we are shown the reason why — so that sinners who know they deserve punishment can be given forgiveness and promised a heavenly home.

Pray and read the Bible passage. Read **Where are we going** and **Look at the passage** to give you a better understanding of how to apply the truth.



### LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

This story is quite incredible. Nailed to a cross to die a gruesome death. And yet, in the darkest hours of Jesus' life on earth, he opened the door to paradise and welcomed the criminal in. We may never reach the criminal's depth of wickedness. We will never reach the heights of Jesus' perfection. And yet we deserve the same eternal punishment as the criminal. We need to be rescued as much as he did. It's only because of Jesus and the incredible act of rescue that took place on the cross that we can have the door to paradise opened for us too. As Christians, we can rejoice in the rescue we have had. And that's the truth that we get to share with our children this week.

**v32-34** The two criminals, led out with Jesus to die, must have been bad blokes. They must have been murderers or mob leaders. All three would have been stripped naked, nailed through the wrists and feet then left to die a slow, excruciating death in a very public place. But Luke tells us nothing of that, because he has a different focus.

continued →

Luke gives us two details to shout in our ear that Jesus is not like the criminals on either side of him:

- **A prayer of forgiveness.** Jesus prayed for the Roman soldiers to be forgiven for murdering their creator. They did not know that they were punishing the only perfect human, who left heaven to come to save them.
- **A prophecy fulfilled.** In Psalm 22:18, King David prophesied that the forsaken one would have his clothes divided by casting lots. This death is no accident. It's not simply a miscarriage of justice. It's no awkward ending for a deluded religious leader. It is part of God's eternal plan with every detail safe in his hands.

**v39** One criminal shouts what we would all be thinking. If Jesus is the Son of God, then the solution is simple — “get yourself off the cross”. The criminal thought he saw things clearly — if Jesus had the power to save himself, there is no possible reason why he would allow himself to die. That is the normal approach. Jesus' approach is radical!

**v40-42** The second criminal sees it very differently. He knows

1. **God punishes sin fairly.** They are getting what they deserve.
2. **Jesus deserves no punishment for his perfect life.** Jesus is innocent. He has done nothing wrong. EVER. He does not deserve any punishment at all.
3. **Jesus alone can save sinners for heaven forever.** Jesus' mercy is the only way for people to be saved.

**v43** This is the victory of the cross. If Jesus had saved himself, he would not have won the war over sin. Jesus' death makes it possible for this criminal to be saved. It is possible for anyone. The other criminal is lost because he does not entrust himself to Jesus.

## Question for your heart

When the criminal arrived in paradise, God already loved him, as he loves his own Son. You are ready for heaven, through Christ. What gets in the way of you feeling ready? Tell your heart the truth from this passage.



### 5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

Do your children know that Jesus was being punished for sin when he died on the cross? Are you ready to explain the 'swap' that happened on the cross to the children in a clear and simple way? How will you help them to be amazed that Jesus went through that so they can be welcomed into heaven?

What do the children in your group need?

Pray for them:  
• to grasp the truth  
• to live it out



## ALL TOGETHER TIME



This has been written as an all-age slot to introduce the whole church family to what the children are learning today, but it could be adapted for the children's classes.



### Props

'The Wonder of Easter' book, 3 actors, 3 plain light-coloured t shirts, markers or paint.



### Powerpoint Slides

Prepare PowerPoint pictures of: first day at school, new born baby.



### What to Say



### What to Do

In this series, we are looking at the most important moments in the Easter story. It's also one of the 5 stories that have been taken from the book, "The Wonder of Easter" to tie in with the family Bible times that you can do at home.

Hold up 'The Wonder of Easter' book

First days are big! Think about your first day in a new class or a new school – maybe you felt worried or nervous? Maybe you thought 'Will I fit in? Will I make friends?'

**[Pic]** Child in a brand new uniform on the first day of school.

First days are big for everyone – the day you are born is often a big day for your family, they have waited so long to meet you, they want everything to be OK.

**[Pic]** New born baby

First days are always big days because they mean big change.

I want to tell you about someone who faced the biggest change ever. He was a criminal.

I know this is going to sound strange... but his first day, was on his last day.

This person's story is found in the book of Luke, and it is an incredibly precious story. It could be the most incredible story in the Bible.

There were 3 men...

Let me tell you about this guy **[Right]** — He'd let the small sins in his heart grow and grow until they were out of control. His heart was full of selfishness, lies, anger and greed. If this shirt shows us what his heart was like then it was full of mess and muck. This man was a thief – more than just taking people's stuff, he'd hurt and killed people to get what he wanted – the worst of criminals.

Bring three people up. Left, Central, Right. Each of them need to be in a plain light coloured T-Shirt (cream, yellow, orange...)

Paint/ draw on t-shirt of **[Right]** as you talk - either words (lies, anger, thief, killer...) or just mess.

continued →



## What to Say

## What to Do

Then there was this guy **[Left]**, he had the same problem. The sin in his heart had spiralled out of control. He didn't care who he hurt. He did what he wanted and he took what he wanted. Like the other man, he was also a thief and a murderer. If his shirt showed us the sin in his heart and his life then it would also be a big mess.

Paint/ draw on t-shirt of **[Left]** as you talk, as previously done for **[Right]**. The two should look similarly 'bad' when you've finished.

These men lived years ago — when the punishment for the worst of criminals was to be nailed to a wooden cross and left to hang there until you died. These two men were up there because they'd been caught and were being punished.

But, there was a third man up there with them. The man in the middle was a man named Jesus — let me tell you about him — well he, erm, well he... you know, there is nothing to write, no mess to put on his shirt because there was no sin, no lie, no selfish act, no time when he went his own way. Jesus had lived a perfect life and yet here he was nailed to a cross with the worst of sinners.

**[Central]** Go to write / paint on the shirt. Pause, wait. Make no marks on the shirt.

All three men were put on crosses to die.

The two criminals were being punished for things they had done wrong.

Jesus was being punished when he had done nothing wrong. It wasn't fair.

As they were close to death, they had one last conversation.

Point to **[Left]** and **[Right]**  
Point to **[Central]**

**[Right]** "Hey, Jesus, If you're some big saviour – do something impressive – save yourself and us."

**[Left]** "You should fear God, we are getting the punishment we deserve, but this man has done nothing wrong.

Jesus, remember me when you get to your kingdom."

This man knows he is a sinner. He knows he has done many wrong things and he must be punished for them. But, he also knows that Jesus is a saviour. He's saying "I'm helpless, I can't do anything, I can't save myself – you are my only hope..."

**[Central to Left]** "Listen, what I say is true, today you will be with me in paradise".

continued →

## What to Say

## What to Do

What Jesus said to the man is amazing! He said he would be with him in paradise. That should be impossible. But it's not...that's why Jesus is here.

On the cross, perfect Jesus took the punishment that sin deserves. It's like he put on all the messy sin of others and was punished for it. Jesus did that so that sinners like us can be forgiven. The criminal knew Jesus was his only hope. He trusted Jesus to save him. And Jesus will do the same for any one of us who ask him!

Point to **[Left]**

**[Central]** and **[Left]** remove their shirts. Swap.

**[Central]** puts on the marked t-shirt.

But there is more. The criminal is not just forgiven. Did you notice that Jesus promised the criminal paradise today. He wasn't just forgiven, he was also given Jesus' perfect life! All of Jesus' perfection was now his too so he could walk into God's perfect paradise - heaven. That's true for you and me and anyone who asks him, too.

**[Left]** puts on the clean t-shirt.

This criminal's **[Left]** last day on earth, was also his first day of forever with Jesus in heaven. He gave his sin to Jesus and got Jesus' perfect life!

Sadly, the other criminal **[Right]** kept his sin. He didn't trust Jesus to save him.

Listening to that story reminds me that I am someone who makes a mess of my life too. I can't do anything to make my life pure and mess free. I can't do anything to make myself perfect for heaven. No matter what I do, I deserve the opposite. My only hope is Jesus. Only he can take away my sin, and gives me his perfection in its place. What good news it is that Jesus can do that for us! He is our only hope of heaven, Jesus is the only saviour.

This is the miracle and good news of Easter.




## Explorers (3-5s)



### GET GOING

#### All the rescues

Prepare one set of pictures that show people who rescue or ways to rescue: fireman, lifeboat, ladder, pool lifeguard, rope, plumber, car mechanic. Then prepare a second set of pictures to show the situations where those people rescue: fire, boat, on a roof, in a pool, in a lake, leaking tap, broken down car. Can the children match up the pictures? You could first hide the pictures around the room for the children to find.

 **Link:** There are lots of ways to rescue people. Today we're going to find out that Jesus rescued people for heaven using a cross.



### TEACHING TIME

Many children's Bibles have a retelling of the story of Jesus' crucifixion. If their version does not include the details from Luke's story, you can write your own text and use the children's Bible's pictures. Use short and clear sentences. Don't go into detail about the physical elements of death on a cross. Tell the children the story. Then go through it again and explain what was happening. Only explain details that will back up your one big point that you want them to grasp.

Instead of using a children's Bible, you could recreate the story using toy people and tell the story as you move them around. Create three crosses using lollipop sticks or other pieces of wood. These can be stuck in play dough to hold them up.

Once you have gone through the story, tell the children a point or two about what this story teaches us about Jesus. Try to keep this short and simple. A way to help the children remember the main teaching point is to teach it to them as a memory sentence. Come up with a short sentence that sums up the main teaching point and get the children to repeat it back to you a few times.

continued →



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at all the lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*





## BRAIN BREAK

### Rescue to heaven

Scatter coloured balls or other coloured objects around the room. Explain to the children that your bucket or box is heaven. When you call out a colour, the children have to rescue that colour and put them in heaven.

➔ **Link:** Well done for rescuing all those balls to heaven. In the story, as Jesus died he rescued the criminal to heaven. He can also rescue us for heaven if we ask him to. That is why he died.



*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*

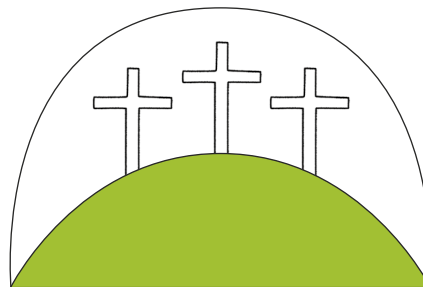


## HEART & HANDS

### Craft Time

**Make a Lolly Stick Cross Scene.** Using a paper plate, fold about a third of it up to create a hill. Let the children colour/paint/stick coloured tissue paper to the area behind the hill to make a sunset sky. Stick on 3 crosses (use PVA glue/double sided tape/pipe cleaners to join together two pieces of lolly stick to make each cross) or draw 3 crosses with a marker. Stick heart stickers to the middle cross or write "For me" on the cross.

This is your opportunity to make things personal. On their picture, and in your conversations use their names – "Jesus died to save (child's name)." Use this craft time to reinforce the **Big Idea** of the lesson to get them ready for **Think Time**.



*Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts.*

### Think time

Use the illustrations to help the children remember the story. Point to different parts of the picture and ask them to tell you what was happening.

**Big Question:** The soldiers really hurt Jesus. Where did they put him to die?  
A cross.

**A follow up question:** What did Jesus promise the man on the cross who was sorry?  
That he would be in heaven with Jesus.

### Pray

Dear Lord Jesus, thank you for dying to save me for heaven. Amen.





## Discoverers (5-7s)



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at all the lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*


*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*



### GET GOING

#### Rescue!

Have some multi-coloured balls or coloured pieces of paper, and some kind of container big enough to hold them. Say a colour and all/some of the children have to rush to rescue that colour and put them in the container.

 **Link:** You just rescued those things, in today's story we find out that Jesus can rescue us. This is the greatest moment in all history. Listen carefully.



### TEACHING TIME

Make three crosses from lolly sticks or pieces of wood. Alternatively, draw three crosses onto a large sheet of paper. You will need half a dozen toy characters (lego, duplo or other).

Go through the Bible story (use the International Children's Bible version) moving the characters, explaining what they do and what they say. Sellotape three characters to the crosses or lie them on the picture.

To explain what was happening as Jesus died on the cross:

Label the two criminals, on the left and right, as *sinner*s. As criminals facing this punishment, they must have been two of the worst people ever.

- Have a piece of paper/post-it note for each criminal. Ask the children what they think they would have done to be getting this punishment. Help them to think about the sins that could have been seen (stealing / hurting people) as well as the sins that happened in their heads and hearts (thinking of themselves more than other people / not caring about God's way of living). Write some of these things on the paper, scribble a mess on the paper.
- These men deserved to be punished for the bad things they had done.
- They didn't deserve heaven because of how they had treated God. Some of their sins are the same as ours- not obeying God as their wonderful creator, and thinking of themselves first and not others.

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Use a third paper/post-it note to label Jesus, in the centre, as perfect.

- Ask the children if Jesus ever did anything wrong? Did he ever sin? *No! There's no mess here!* Draw a big crown.
- Jesus didn't deserve any punishment, at all, ever.
- He loved God every moment of every day. He loved others more than himself, he always took the time to serve them. His life is not like ours!

When you arrive at the moment when Jesus promised heaven to the second criminal, you can swap his note with Jesus' note (1 Peter 2:24).

As you finish, think about how you can sum up the swap in a simple way. Have you made the following points clear?

- Jesus took the criminal's punishment for every one of his sins when he died. And he takes the punishment for anyone else's sins, if they trust in him and his death for them.
- Jesus gave his perfect life to the criminal so he could walk into glorious, perfect heaven. Anyone who trusts in Jesus will be welcomed into heaven too. Jesus' cross-shaped rescue is still saving people today!

## Try something different

Play the children a sketch that imagines what it was like when the criminal arrived in heaven, from the Faith in Kids Podcast. The sketch can be found in Faith in KIDS #7 Saved Just in Time (12 March 2019). Play from 11:40 (finishes at 15:00). The criminal thinks it's a mistake that he's in heaven. He doesn't deserve to be there. Who deserves heaven? Who is good? These two questions are answered in the sketch.




## BRAIN BREAK

### Swap!

On one side of the room have two containers - one full of coloured water (use food colouring or squash), leave the other one empty. On the other side of the room have two more containers — one full of clear water and the other one empty.

The game is to swap the two types of water. The coloured water needs to be taken to the empty container on the other side of the room. And the clear water has to go in the empty container on the other side of the room. You could do this as a relay race. Have cups for the children to transport the water across the room. Have two teams - one to swap the coloured water and one to swap the clear water.

If you don't want to use water, use different types of pasta shells or have something dirty and something clean that needs to be swapped - clear sheets of paper and scribbled on papers. You could also use the children as the objects that need to be swapped over. Have boys and girls on either side of the room and when you say 'Swap!' they all have to swap sides.

 **Link:** You have just done a big swap. When Jesus died, he did an even bigger swap. He took people's sin so they could have his clean life.

continued →



*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*



## HEART & HANDS

### Craft Time

**Craft Time - Make a Lolly Stick Cross.** Use PVA glue/double sided tape/pipe cleaners to attach the two pieces of lolly stick to make a cross. Decorate the cross - you could stick on heart stickers. Write "Jesus died to save (child's name)" on the cross. This is your opportunity to make things personal. On their cross, and in your conversations, use their names - "Jesus died to save (child's name)." Use this craft time to reinforce the **Big Idea** of the lesson to get them ready for **Think Time**.

### Think Time

Use the illustrations to remind the children of the story.

Use the worksheet to aid your discussion. Worksheet A (page 21) is the suggested sheet for this age group. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together.

#### Did you spot it?

- Who were the different people mentioned in this story? *Let the children write names or draw pictures (clean and messy hearts or a crown for Jesus and handcuffs for the criminals) to label the illustration on the worksheet.*
- How were the two criminals different from each other?

#### Work it out

- Remember the criminal who asked Jesus to remember him? Where is that criminal now?
- How did a criminal get to go to heaven? *Or, ask the children to explain the 'swap' to you using the picture on the worksheet and messed up paper / post-it notes.*

#### Live it out

- *Use the heart scales on the worksheet to answer:* How good is Jesus? How good must you be to get into heaven?
- You're not criminals! Do you think you're perfect like Jesus?
- Do you think it's possible for you to go to heaven?
- **Key Question:** How would you be allowed in?
- **Key Question:** Have you ever asked Jesus to swap your sin for his perfection?
- What do you think will be the best thing about being in heaven?

### Prayer Idea

Dear Jesus, I am surprised that.... Thank you that you died for me. Amen



*Make a craft and have a chat. Give the children time to reflect on today's big truth, so it can impact their hearts. We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section.*





# Adventurers (8–11s)



## Notes

*Flexible resource: look at all the lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*

## GET GOING

### The Swap

This illustration is messy but memorable! The mess is worth it because your children will remember this moment for many years.

Prepare a quiz of 10 questions. Include some questions that will be impossible to get right. Have a raw egg as punishment and a sweet as a prize. Have newspaper to cover the floor and an old towel to clean up the raw egg.

Ask for a volunteer to be in the hot seat — they can ask the rest of the children to help them with the answers. The challenge is to get all the answers right otherwise they will get an egg cracked on their head. If they succeed then they get the prize. Just before the egg cracking forfeit, tell the child that you (or another leader) are going to swap places with them. Crack the egg over your head. Give the child the prize.

This illustration works best with a raw egg but you could also use a less messy punishment — a cup of water over the head or having to eat an unpleasant food.

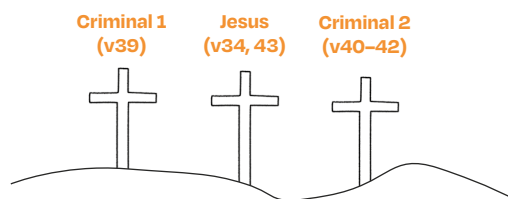
**Link:** We swapped places and I got what you deserved. In today's story, there is an even greater swap. Jesus took the punishment he didn't deserve so that we can have life in paradise with him.

## TEACHING TIME

On a big sheet of paper draw the picture of the three crosses on the hill, with the labels.

Have 4 large speech bubbles for the children to write on. Get them to find the following verses and write down what was being said — verses 34, 39, 40–42 and 43. Work as a group or split into smaller groups if you have a lot of children.

Read through the story and stop to stick on the speech bubbles as you get to it.



*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*

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Discuss what is being said and what that shows us about the person. Once you've gone through the story, ask the children if they can explain the swap to you. Why was the criminal able to go to paradise? What was really happening on the cross when Jesus died?

Once you have gone through the story, make sure you tell the children a point or two about what this story teaches us about Jesus and how his cross-shaped rescue is still saving people who trust him today.

## Try something different

Play the children a sketch that imagines what it was like when the criminal arrived in heaven, from the Faith in Kids Podcast. The sketch can be found in Faith in KIDS #7 Saved Just in Time (12 March 2019). Play from 11:40 (finishes at 15:00). The criminal thinks it's a mistake that he's in heaven. He doesn't deserve to be there. Who deserves heaven? Who is good? These two questions are answered in the sketch.




*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*



## BRAIN BREAK

### Swap!

Split your group into pairs. Each pair must face each other and be a distance apart. They can sit or stand for the game. Have 2 types of pasta shapes so that the children in the pair have different shapes to each other. Perhaps 10 pasta pieces for each child. Each pair must swap over their pasta shapes without moving from their place — they must throw them from one to the other. They can raise their hands when they have completely swapped over. You could play more than once — make the distance between the children greater each time you play.

 **Link:** You have just swapped the pasta shapes over. When Jesus died, he did the greatest swap — he took our sin and gave us his clean life.



## HEART & HANDS

Use the illustrations to remind the children of the story.

Use the worksheet to aid your discussion. Worksheet B (page 22) is the suggested sheet for this age group. If possible, enlarge the page to A3 so you can work on it together.

*We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section.*

continued →



## Did you spot it?

- Use the words in the 'Word Bank' to label the picture on the worksheet.
- If this was the only story we had ever heard about Jesus, what would we know about him? (What happened to him? What did he say? What do we learn about him?)

## Work it out

- What was the difference between the two criminals?
- How is it possible for a criminal to be allowed into heaven?
- What happened to the other criminal?

## Live it out

- Are you more tempted to think:
  - "I don't need Jesus to save me, I'm already good enough for heaven on my own." or
  - "I couldn't ever get into heaven. There are too many things I have done wrong."
- How is it possible for any of us to be allowed into heaven?
- **Key Question:** Have you ever asked Jesus to swap your sin for his perfection?
- **Key Question:** If you have, what can you say to yourself when you find it hard to be sure that Jesus gives you a way into heaven?

## Pray

- What would you say to Jesus if he was sitting next to you now?
- What would you want to thank him for?



## EXTRA STRETCH

- Why do you think only one asked Jesus to remember him in his kingdom?
- Can you think of reasons why people today would not ask Jesus to save them?
- Some people would say that it can't be fair for a murderer (like this criminal) to be allowed into heaven. What would you say?





## Mixed Ages (3–11s)

This component is suitable for a mixed group of children aged 3-11 years old. Use this if you are unable to break your group into smaller classes because of the number of children or leaders you have.



### Notes

*Flexible resource: look at all the lesson plans, pick what works for your group.*

*Use this activity to introduce today's theme.*


*Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at [www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)).*



### GET GOING

#### Rescue!

Have some balls or pieces of paper in different colours. Divide the children into groups and give each group a colour. Say a colour and the children of that group must rush to rescue as many of that colour by putting them in a 'safe' place (use a bucket or large box). Let the children rescue the items for a count of 5–10 before calling a new colour. The groups swap places so the new group can now rescue their colour items. Keep going until all items have been rescued.

 **Link:** You just rescued those things, in today's story we find out that Jesus rescued people. This is the greatest moment in all history. Listen carefully.



### TEACHING TIME

Draw 3 crosses on a large piece of paper that can be stuck up on a wall. Ask 3 children to stand up in front of the crosses. Have 3 large clear white paper hearts.

Talk about how the criminals had let sin take over their hearts. They had done many bad things, they stole and hurt people. They didn't live God's way. They lived their way. Draw a mess on the hearts, scrunch them up make them look messy. Explain that Jesus never sinned. He always lived God's way perfectly. He loved God perfectly and he loved people perfectly. There was no mess in his heart, it's pure and sin free. Have the children hold up the hearts.

Go through Luke 23:32–34, 39–43. You could have the children say the lines of the criminals and Jesus.

After v39, explain that the criminal only wanted to get off the cross. He didn't want to be punished for the bad things he had done.

After v 42, explain that the other criminal knew that he deserved to be punished for all the things he had done. But he also knew that Jesus was the only one who could save him.

After v 43, explain that Jesus gave this man the best thing ever — he said he would be in paradise, in heaven, with Jesus!

continued →



Explain the 'swap' that took place on the cross. Have the children act it out by swapping the hearts to show that the criminal got Jesus' perfection. That's how he could be welcomed into heaven.

Once you have gone through the story, make sure you tell the children a point or two about what this story teaches us about Jesus and how his cross shaped rescue is still saving people who trust him today.




*A chance to rest the children's minds before Heart and Hands. Get moving and have fun with this game.*



## BRAIN BREAK

### Swap!

Sit the children in a circle with one child standing in the middle. If possible, play some music. While the music is playing, the child in the middle must ask someone in the circle if they will swap places with them. If they are willing then they swap. If not then the child must ask someone else. At random, stop the music. When it stops, the person in the middle has to complete a task that the leader decides (star jumps / sit ups / singing a nursery rhyme etc.). Once the task is completed, carry on playing.

 **Link:** You had to swap places in that game. When Jesus died, he did a swap. He took people's sin and gave them his perfect life.



## HEART & HANDS

Small group discussion: The vital chance for the children to reflect on the story, so that its truths impact their hearts. They do the talking, not the leader. All the children need to be given the opportunity to respond. Ask each question to multiple children. If you have more than one leader then you could split up into smaller groups of similar aged children (if possible). If not then get the younger ones busy with a craft so you can have some discussion time with the older children.

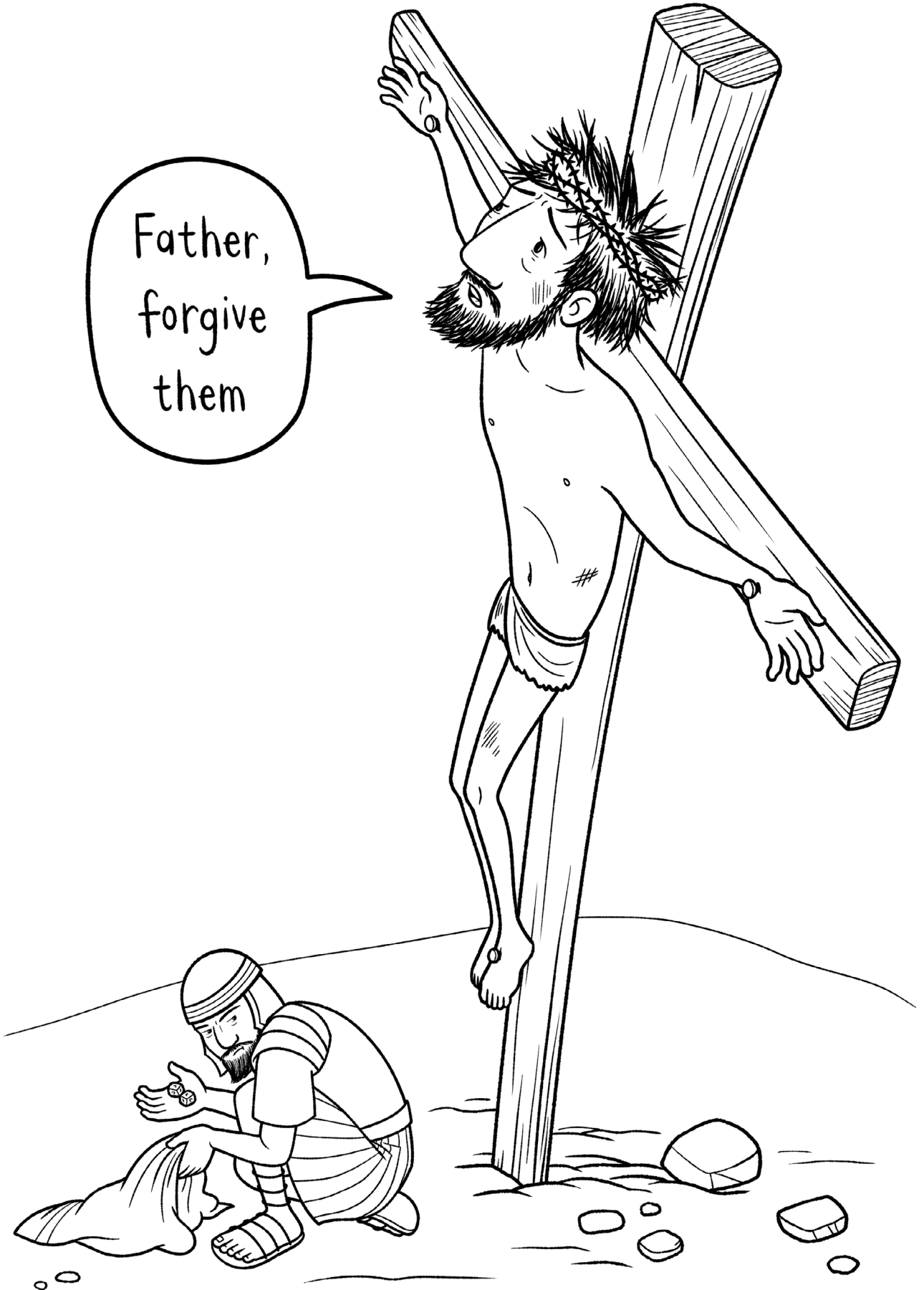
Use the illustrations to help the children remember the story.

Depending on your children, use the age group craft/worksheet and questions that best suit them.

*We have found that this is where children make the most progress relating the Bible to their everyday lives. Please leave enough time for this section.*

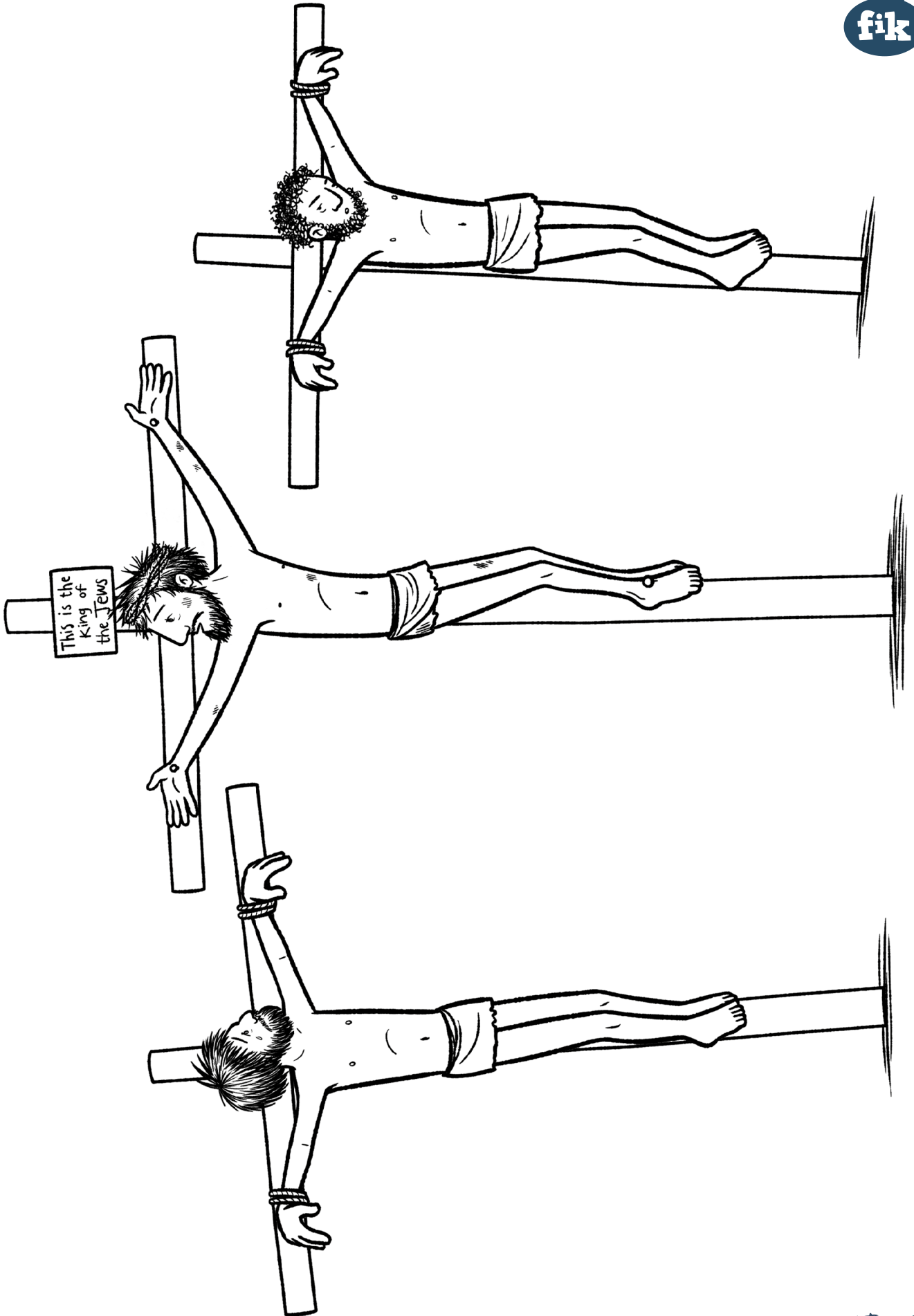






Father,  
forgive  
them

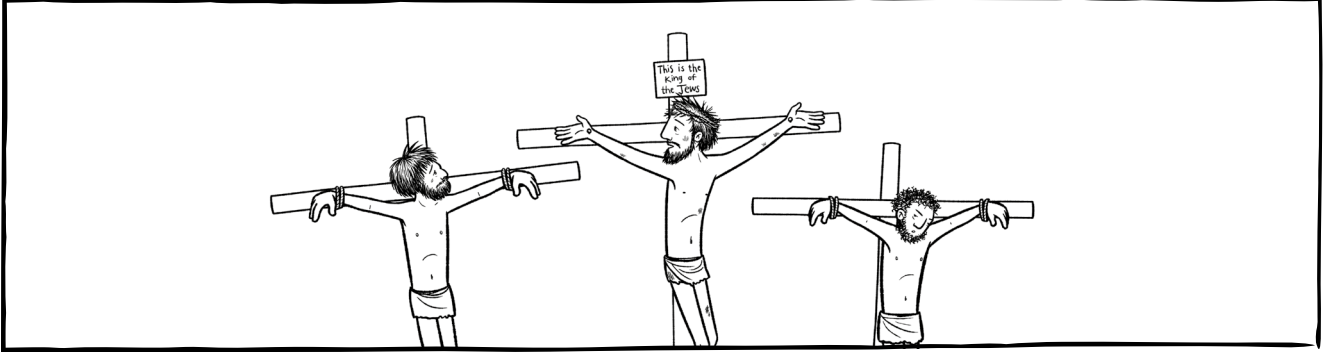






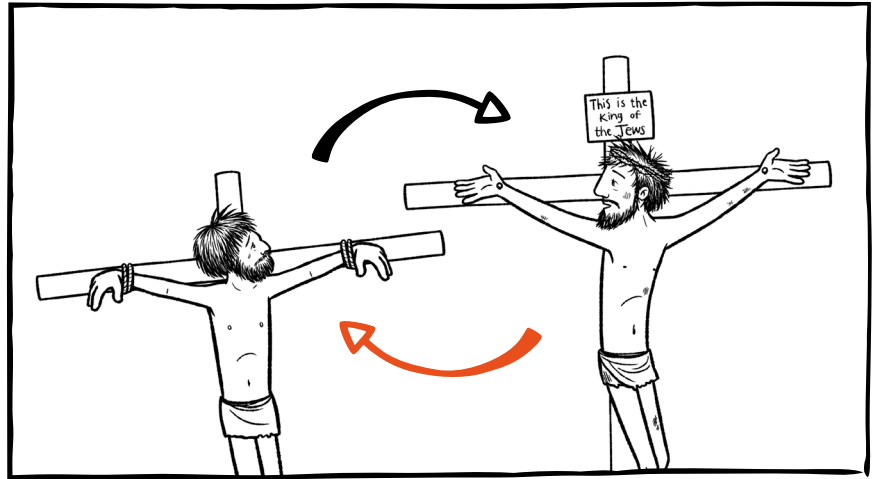
## DID YOU SPOT IT?

Who were the different people in the story?  
How were the two criminals different from each other?



## WORK IT OUT

What was happening on the cross?

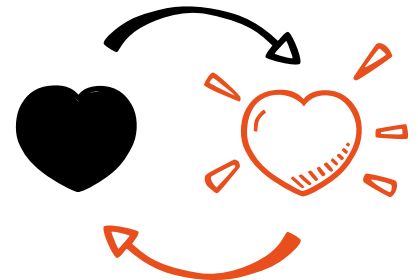


## LIVE IT OUT

How good is Jesus?



How can you be allowed in?



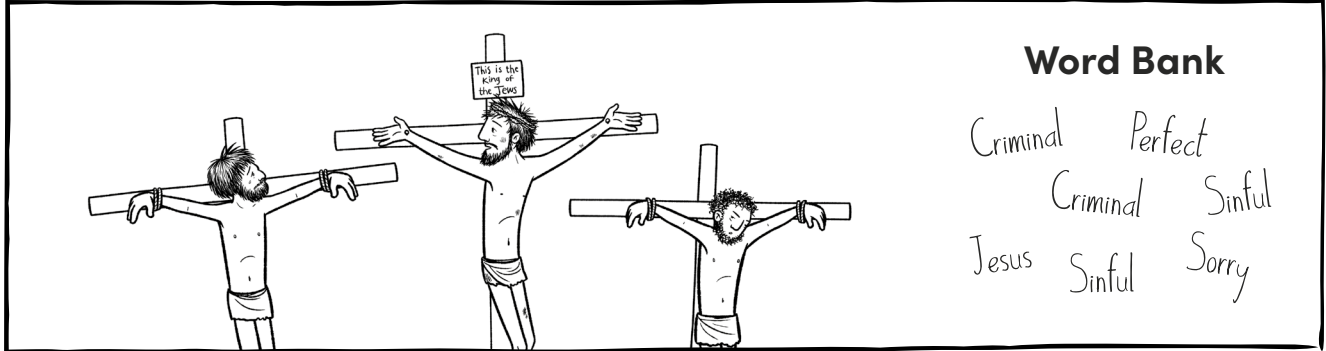
How good must you be to get into heaven?  
Is that possible?





## DID YOU SPOT IT?

Use the words in the 'Word Bank' to label the picture

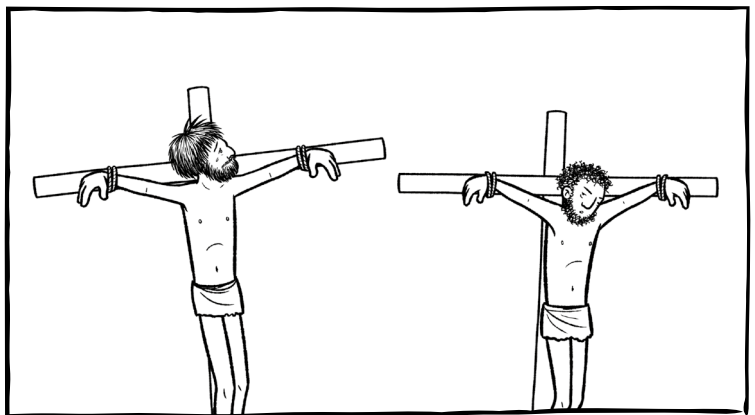


What can you know about Jesus from this story?



## WORK IT OUT

What is the difference between these two men?



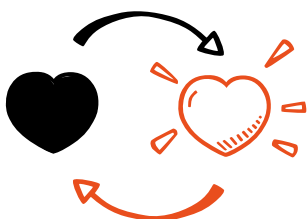
## LIVE IT OUT

How do you sometimes feel?



“I don't need Jesus to save me. I'm good enough.”

“I wouldn't get into heaven. I've done too many things wrong.”



How is it possible for any of us to be allowed into heaven?





# Take Home Truth

Use these questions to get a conversation started about today's lesson with your child. Pick a time that sets you up for success – maybe in the car on the way home or before bedtime. Make yourself part of the conversation, give your own ideas – this is not a test!



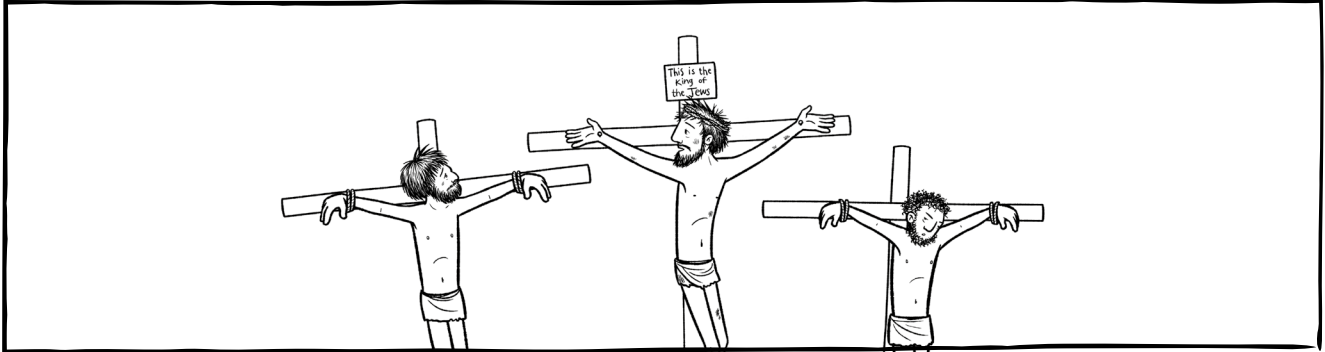
## Big Idea:

On the cross, we clearly see who Jesus is – forgiving the soldiers and saving the criminal – this is why he came.



## Faith in Kids looks like:

...children who are amazed that Jesus' death can save them for heaven.



## 3–5s

- The soldiers really hurt Jesus. Where did they put him to die? *A cross*
- What did Jesus promise the man on the cross who was sorry? *That he would be in heaven with Jesus.*



## 5–7s


- How were the two criminals different from each other?
- How did a criminal get to go to heaven?
- Who can get into heaven? How?



## 8–11s

- What did Jesus do for the criminal on the cross?
- Why do some people not ask Jesus to save them?
- If you find yourself struggling to imagine that you will be allowed into heaven, what do you want to tell yourself?





# The Wonder of Easter

**Faith in Kids exists to encourage, inspire and equip influencers of faith in children with support, training and resources.**

## **Partner with us**

We can offer this resource free of charge to churches everywhere because of the generosity of our supporters – people like you! Please consider partnering with us by giving monthly so that we can continue writing new resources.

To support us, please **click the link** or email us at **[info@faithinkids.org](mailto:info@faithinkids.org)**



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