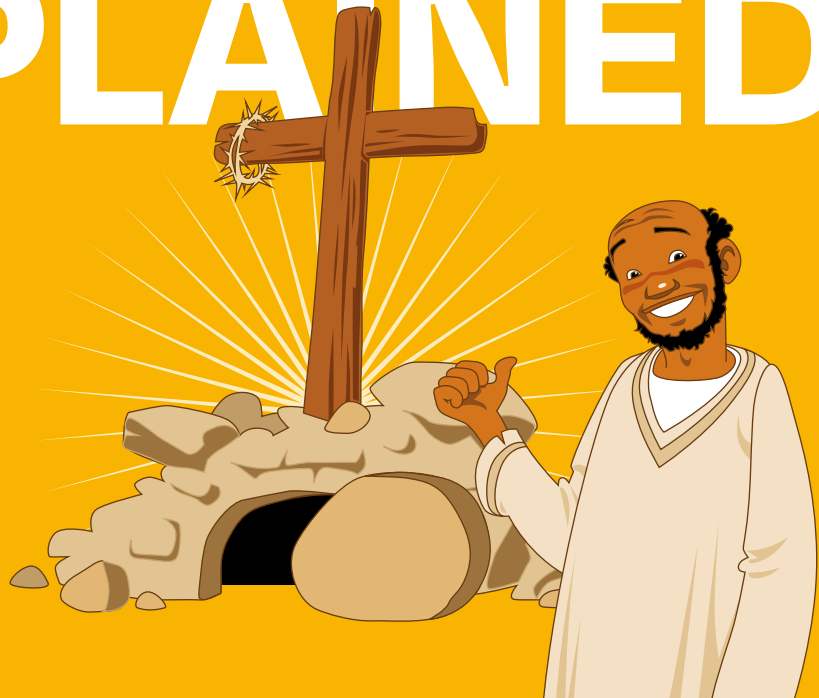


ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

EASTER EXPLAINED





LESSON 2

THE CROSS: "IT IS FINISHED!"

JOHN 19:17-18, 28-30

faith  **kids**

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Easter Explained

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We recommend the International Children's Bible for use with children during the lesson. Our leader's notes use the New International Version.

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

THE CROSS: "IT IS FINISHED"

JOHN 19:17-18, 28-30



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Big Idea:

Jesus died taking the full punishment for the sin of all who believe in him.



Faith in Kids looks like:

Children who are thankful to Jesus for taking the punishment for their sin.

Preparation



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We want the children to understand that the death of Jesus was the only way for sin's judgement to be taken away. Jesus chose to drink the cup of God's anger about our sin. He finished it so there is nothing left for us to have to face – amazing! That is the gift for all who trust Jesus.



LOOK AT THE PASSAGE

What John saw (v17-18)

John stood at the foot of the cross with Mary and saw Jesus crucified - the humiliating and excruciatingly painful public execution that the Romans used for the worst of criminals, to make an example of those threatening their authority. Jesus the perfect and sinless one, against whom no charges could be found, was nailed to a cross between two criminals. He chose to be where he did not belong so that he might do for us what we could never do for ourselves.

What John heard (v28-30)

John heard Jesus announce his victory cry from the cross - he had finished the work that the father gave him to do. Just as God promised and in fulfilment of scripture (e.g. Psalm 22:1, 15-18, 31), Jesus finished the work of salvation for all who believe as he took God's anger against sin on himself. He took the punishment we deserve so that we might know forgiveness, he died so that we might live.



Notes

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.

What Jesus finished (v30)

On the night he was arrested (John 18:11), Jesus said he was determined to drink the cup that the father had given him. The cup is a picture, like a poisoned chalice, containing the anger a perfectly Holy God rightly feels about our sin. This is the cup we deserve to drink, but Jesus drank it in the place of his friends, draining it to the bottom. If we trust in Jesus there is no anger left to drink, not one drop - it is finished! Nothing can now prevent us from being back where we were made to be - knowing God as our father. God now looks on us with a smile. Forgiven. Brought home. Just as Jesus is.



This truth is for your heart too.



WIN MY HEART

What do you think makes God delighted to have you on his team? How helpful you are in church? The things you achieve? How you are a significantly better Christian than some others you could mention? Or perhaps you wonder if there has been a mistake, if you are on the "not quite forgiven" list due to the extent of your failures and you need to earn some extra credit to make it into the "righteous zone"? The wonder and beauty of the cross is contained within those three simple words, "It is finished." Jesus said it, Jesus meant it. Trusting in what Jesus has done means there is no punishment, no condemnation, no judgement and no anger against sin left for you to take - not the teeniest drop - because Jesus has finished the lot. You are free to live celebrating his love for you and your secure place in his father's house!

Questions for your heart

- Where do you see yourself trying to pay your own debt to God or earning your own salvation?
- How does Jesus proclaiming, "It is finished," make a difference to you? Jesus drank the cup that should have been yours. How does that make you feel?



5 MINUTES TO FOCUS ON YOUR GROUP

How can you help children who are less familiar with the cross understand how sin's penalty is being taken by Jesus? How can you help those who can endlessly repeat "Jesus died to take away my sin"? How can their great head knowledge become a beautiful heart connection - Jesus has finished a wretched work that they were going to have to do for themselves?

What do the children in your group need?

Pray for them:

- to grasp the truth
- to live it out
- to rely on the Spirit



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

Pictures of something out of place, image of the cross, large jug of juice - ideally red coloured, a cup.



What to Say



What to Do

When did you last see something that was where it was not supposed to be?

- A big dirty footprint in the middle of a clean cream carpet
- A stash of sweet wrappers in someone's bed

It's even worse if *someone* is where they are not supposed to be

- Going to school on an inset day - no one else is there!
- A big year 6 kid sent down to the infants for being naughty - sitting at small reception tables looking embarrassed

You could show some images to illustrate

Today in John's gospel we hear about when Jesus was somewhere he surely wasn't supposed to be.

Read John 19:17-18

- Jesus on a cross
- Jesus treated like the worst criminal
- Jesus in the middle of two bad guys

It would have looked as out of place to John as a polar bear in a desert!

- A king belongs on a throne - not a cross
- A good person deserves awards, praise and ceremonies - not pain, suffering and public execution

Had something gone wrong? Was Jesus really supposed to be there?

Show an image of Jesus on the middle cross (see page 16)

Jesus didn't deserve to be there.

Jesus had done nothing wrong, he had lived always pleasing and obeying God the Father, showing us all what pleasing God and loving others perfectly looks like.

Jesus was in the middle of two criminals on a cross because that is where he chose to be. He had the power to get down, but he chose to stay where he didn't belong to finish the task he came to do.

continued →

What to Say

What to Do

When did you last shout "I've finished"?

You'd finally eaten your vegetables, or just your dinner.

Finished a piece of work in class or your homework.

Completed a game, or finished a race.

There's usually something to celebrate when we say "I've finished!"

When John (the best friend of Jesus) wrote his gospel, he tells us all about what he saw and heard.

Read John 19:28 & 30

- He saw Jesus on the cross in the middle of two criminals
- He heard Jesus say "It is finished."

What had Jesus finished? What was he doing? Is there anything to celebrate?

Jesus came to do the work the father had given him to do. Last week, in the garden we heard Jesus say he was determined to "drink the cup" that the father had given him.

Imagine...

- This juice is like God's anger. Our anger can be out of control and unloving. God is perfectly good and loving - his anger is always good.
- Whenever we do wrong - when we don't love God as we should, when we lie, are mean, unkind or selfish - God is angry because these things are against him and they make a mess of our lives, our relationships and our world. The cup becomes filled with anger.
- We have all done wrong things - we have all put anger in the cup and deserve to drink it. But drinking the cup would be horrible.

When Jesus says - "IT IS FINISHED!" - he is saying - "I have drunk the cup!"

Perfect Jesus had done nothing wrong, every moment of his life he lived delighting God.

Jesus was in a place he didn't deserve to be, sorting out a problem that he didn't make. He was fixing the mess, drinking the cup we deserve to drink, so that we don't have to.

It's finished! All gone! None left! The cup is EMPTY!

Jesus has finished the work he came to do - to save you and to save me.

Because Jesus took God's anger and sin's punishment - there is none left for me - there is none left for you!

That sounds like a good day to me, that sounds like something worth celebrating!

Prayer

Show picture of Jesus on the cross saying "It is finished." (see page 17)

Hold up the jug of juice/red liquid

Pour from the jug into a cup

Drink the cup



7s and under



GET GOING

Race to finish

Select two distinctly different groups of items and mix them up together - e.g. a large tub of lego with wooden blocks mixed in, or a selection of soft toys and socks spread across the floor. Tell the children that they need to race to sort out the problem - remove the blocks from the bricks / sort the socks from the soft toys and shout "It is finished" when they have sorted out the mess.

👉 **Link:** Once you'd sorted the mess out, you shouted "It is finished!" Today we hear about when Jesus called out "It is finished" because he'd finished the work of saving us.



TEACHING TIME

What John saw (v18)

Draw a number line on a piece of paper but write the numbers with a number out of place - 1, 2, 4, 3, 5.

- Can you spot what is in the wrong place?
- What needs to change to make it right?

Show the children a picture of Jesus on the cross.

John saw Jesus on the cross - being punished like a terrible criminal - in the middle of two guys who really had been bad. John saw that this didn't look right - he was Jesus' best friend, he'd seen how Jesus lived, the things he did, how he loved God and obeyed him - he knew that Jesus hadn't done a single thing wrong.

John had seen Jesus knock soldiers over with his words, calm storms and raise his friend from the dead. Jesus could step down off the cross if he wanted to. Jesus was not on the cross because soldiers put him there, but because we needed him to save us from the wrong things we have done.

What John heard (v30)

Sit in a circle and play pass the whisper. Whisper "It is finished" around the circle and see if you can get the message around.

Write the words "It is finished" on a speech bubble.

John heard the words Jesus said - they weren't passed on to him from someone



Notes

Flexible resource: look at both 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).

You will need: Large sheets of paper to draw on as you talk, a picture of the cross ready to show the children, a jug of juice and a cup.

else, they didn't get muddled up. John heard Jesus call out "It is finished," because he was right there standing at the foot of the cross.



What Jesus finished (v30)

Last week when Jesus was arrested, we heard him talk about drinking a cup. Jesus chose to go with the soldiers because he was choosing to drink the cup. The cup is a picture to help us understand what is happening.

God is perfectly good and loving. He made a perfect world and gave it to us. But people are not perfect. We do wrong things - the Bible calls this sin - and we make a mess of our lives, other people and the world.

- Hold up the jug of juice - this juice is like God's anger at the mess we make.
- Whenever we do wrong - when we lie, are mean, unkind or selfish - the cup becomes filled with God's anger. *Ask the children if they can think of little wrong things we do. As they answer, pour a little juice into the cup.*
- The cup is filled with anger - someone needs to take it away. We can't pour it out, that would just make a puddle on the floor. Someone needs to drink it - but drinking it would be horrible, we don't want to drink it! We need someone to help us - the only one who can is someone who has never made a mess - Jesus!
- When Jesus died on the cross and said "It is finished", he was saying "I have drunk the cup, every last drop!" Jesus has taken God's anger and sin's punishment, so now there is none left for us - not a single drop.

Jesus has finished the work that he came to do - to save you and to save me. If we believe in Jesus we can know God's forgiveness and love forever - there is nothing in the way!




BRAIN BREAK

Sin bin

Have a pile of screwed up pieces of paper at one side of the room - imagine that these are filled with descriptions of things we have done wrong. Place a bin on the other side of the room.

Split the children into teams or set a time limit for them to race against to get the sin in the bin! Encourage them to keep racing until it is all gone!

 **Link:** Today we have learned that Jesus really did get our sin in the bin by taking the punishment for it on the cross for us.

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




HEART & HANDS

"It is finished" card

Prepare in advance: cut out the cross and fold the card along the dotted line to create a card.

Stick coloured paper across the back of the cut out cross to create a beautiful cross card.

 **Link:** As the children cover the cross with coloured paper remind them that Jesus' death on the cross is good news for them as Jesus took the punishment they rightly deserve for their sin.

Think time

Big question: What problem was Jesus finishing when he died on the cross?

A follow up question: Why is that good news for you?

Pray

Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to save us, thank you Jesus for dying on the cross and staying there until sin was paid for and your work to save us was finished. 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.

You will need: strips of coloured paper, glue, page 14 printed out (on to card if possible) and scissors.






8s and over



GET GOING

Cup stacking

Divide the group into pairs. Each pair needs 10 cups. They need to race against each other to stack their cups into a pyramid (4 on the bottom, 3 on the next row, 2 on the next, with 1 on top). When they have created their pyramid they need to shout "It is finished!". This won't take that long, so you could give different instructions at the beginning of each build: make a pyramid with cups upside down; cups right way up; each row with the cups a different way up!

 **Link:** Once you had completed the task you shouted "It is finished". Today we hear about when Jesus called out "It is finished" because he'd finished the work of saving us.



TEACHING TIME

In the wrong place (v17-20)

Write out a list of numbers with a letter in the middle, e.g. 1, 2, 3, b, 4 or the alphabet with a number in it.

Can the children spot what is in the wrong place?

Look at verses 17-20 and ask the children what John saw. Write these down on the paper with eyes.

- Jesus carrying his cross
- Jesus nailed to the cross
- in the middle of two criminals
- Sign saying "King of the Jews"

Jesus, the one who has done nothing wrong, is on the cross in the middle of criminals. Ask the children if they can remember any of the amazing and good things that Jesus did in his life?

Jesus is in a place that he does not deserve to be in, being punished when he has done nothing wrong.

continued →



Notes

Flexible resource: look at both lesson plans, pick what works for your group.

Use this activity to introduce today's theme.

You will need:
paper/plastic cups

Use a suitable Bible translation - we use the International Children's Bible (found online at www.biblegateway.com).

You will need:
Bibles / the passage printed out, 3 large sheets of paper - draw eyes on one, a speech bubble on the other and a question mark on the final sheet, a jug of juice and a cup.

- Why do you think Jesus stayed there - we saw last week that he had the power to come down?
- Whose place could Jesus be taking? *Open discussion - the answer will become clear later in the lesson.*



It is finished (v30)

Look at verse 30 - what does John hear Jesus say? Write in the speech bubble on the paper.

Jesus had the power to come down from the cross but chose to stay there because he was finishing the work that the father had given him to do, the work of saving us.

Drinking the cup

When Jesus was arrested, he said that he was determined to drink the cup that the father had given him and save his friends (John 18:11 - you could look at the verse together).

Jesus talked about a cup to help us understand what he was doing when he died on the cross.

God is perfectly good and loving and he created a perfect world for us. But people are not perfect. We all do wrong things - the Bible calls this sin. Sin makes God angry because it is against him and because it messes up our lives, our relationships and our world. God would not be perfect, holy and good if he ignored it.

- *Hold up a jug of juice.* This juice is like God's anger at the mess we make.
- Whenever we do wrong - when we ignore God, lie, are mean or selfish - the cup becomes filled with anger. *Pour juice into the cup.*
- We need to get rid of this - someone needs to drink it. Nobody wants to drink a cup of anger and take the punishment that follows, but we all deserve to! We need someone to help us. The only one who can is someone who has never done anything wrong, who has never made God angry - Jesus!
- When Jesus died on the cross and said "It is finished", he was saying "I have drunk the cup, every last drop!" Jesus has taken God's anger and sin's punishment, so now there is none left for us. Jesus has finished the work that he came to do - to save you and to save me.

The cross offers us a choice - Jesus drinks the cup for us or we have to drink it ourselves. If we believe and trust in Jesus we can know God's forgiveness and love forever - there is nothing in the way!

Ask the children to write their names around the speech bubble that says "It is finished" if they understand what Jesus did when he died on the cross, or to write their name on the question mark if they still have questions.


continued →



BRAIN BREAK

Sin in the bin!

Mark a line on the floor where you need to throw from. You could split the group into two or more teams. Each team takes it in turns to throw the screwed up paper into the bin (split the paper balls evenly between the team so everyone joins in). Imagine the balls are covered with descriptions of things we have done wrong which need to go into the bin. Take a moment to imagine one description you would write. Then let's go. Sin in the bin! How many made it into the bin? Which team won?

 **Link:** In the game we tried to get all the sin in the bin, but we failed, we couldn't do it, no one really won. Jesus won for us on the cross. It is finished!



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

You will need:

pieces of paper
screwed up into balls -
imagine these are filled
with descriptions of
things we have done
wrong and an empty
bin.



HEART & HANDS

Did you spot it?

- What did John see that day? If he was here now, how do you think he would describe it?
- What did John hear Jesus say?
- What do you think surprised John most that day? *No particular answer in mind, just giving the children a chance to think about it in a fresh way.*

Work it out

- What made it seem like Jesus was in 'the wrong place'?
- What did Jesus finish on the cross?
- What does that change for you and I?

Live it out

- Imagine a moment when you are feeling properly awful for something you did wrong earlier that day. What one thing from this story would you like to remember that might help?
- What would you like to say to Jesus?

A chance to reflect and chat about how the truth, through the Spirit's work, changes our thoughts (head), feelings (heart) and actions (hands).

*Use the **Chat Time** sheet (see page 15) - you could enlarge it and work on it together. Hand out sticky notes so children can still respond personally.*

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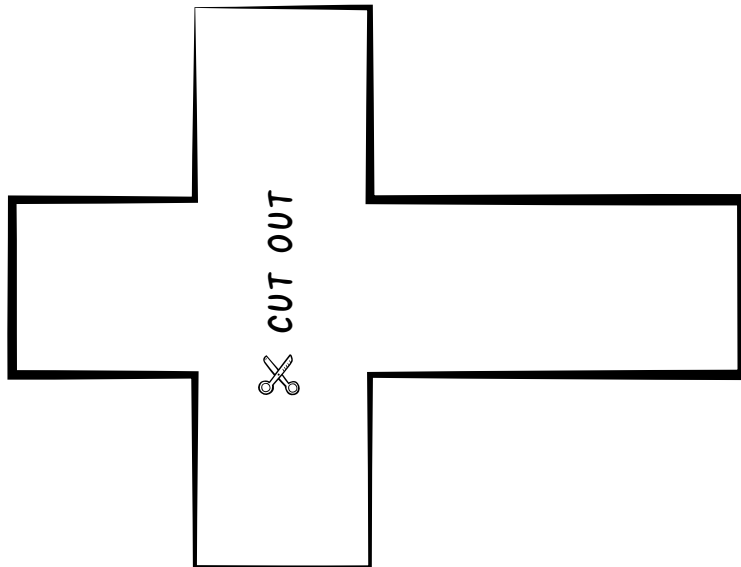
Extra stretch

- “Thank you Jesus for dying for my sins” is a prayer that feels very easy to remember and pray! Can you think of a new prayer that could only be prayed from today’s story?
- If Jesus hadn’t finished it, if he had jumped down from the cross and walked away, what difference would it make to us?
- We’re going to close our eyes so we can concentrate and meditate on one verse. That means that we try to fill our mind with that verse, to think about it and to see where our thoughts go. It’s difficult because we’re not used to thinking about just one idea for longer than 3 seconds! I’m going to read v30 twice. Then we will sit silently for a minute to think about it. Then we’ll pray about where we got to. Let’s try it!

PRAY

- What would you want to say to Jesus for making sure there is no punishment left for you to take? How could remembering his love and forgiveness help you next time you feel like a failure - ask him to help you remember the difference that the cross makes.



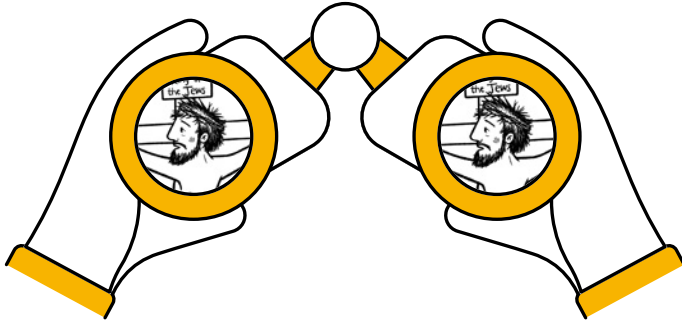


“It is finished”

JOHN 19:30



DID YOU SPOT IT?

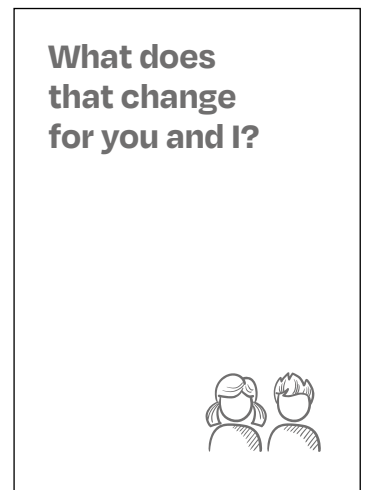
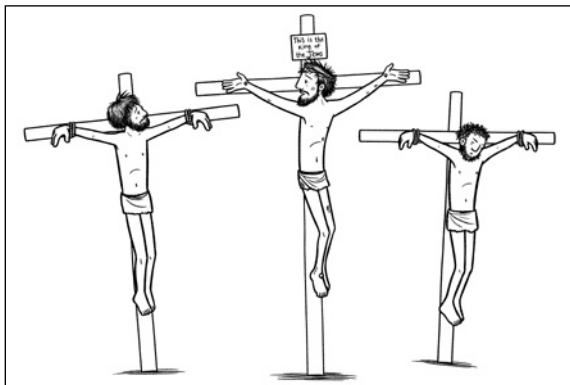


What did John see that day? If he was here now, how do you think he would describe it?

What did John hear Jesus say? What do you think surprised John most that day?



WORK IT OUT



What made it seem that Jesus was in the wrong place?

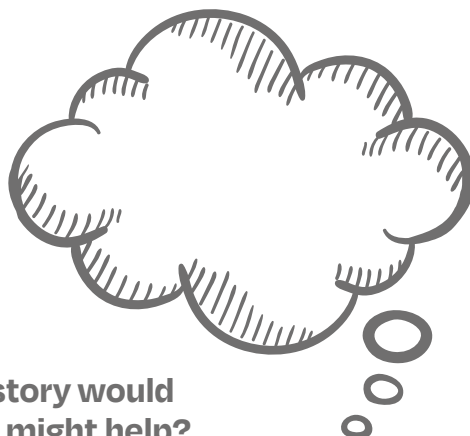
What did Jesus finish on the cross?

What does that change for you and I?

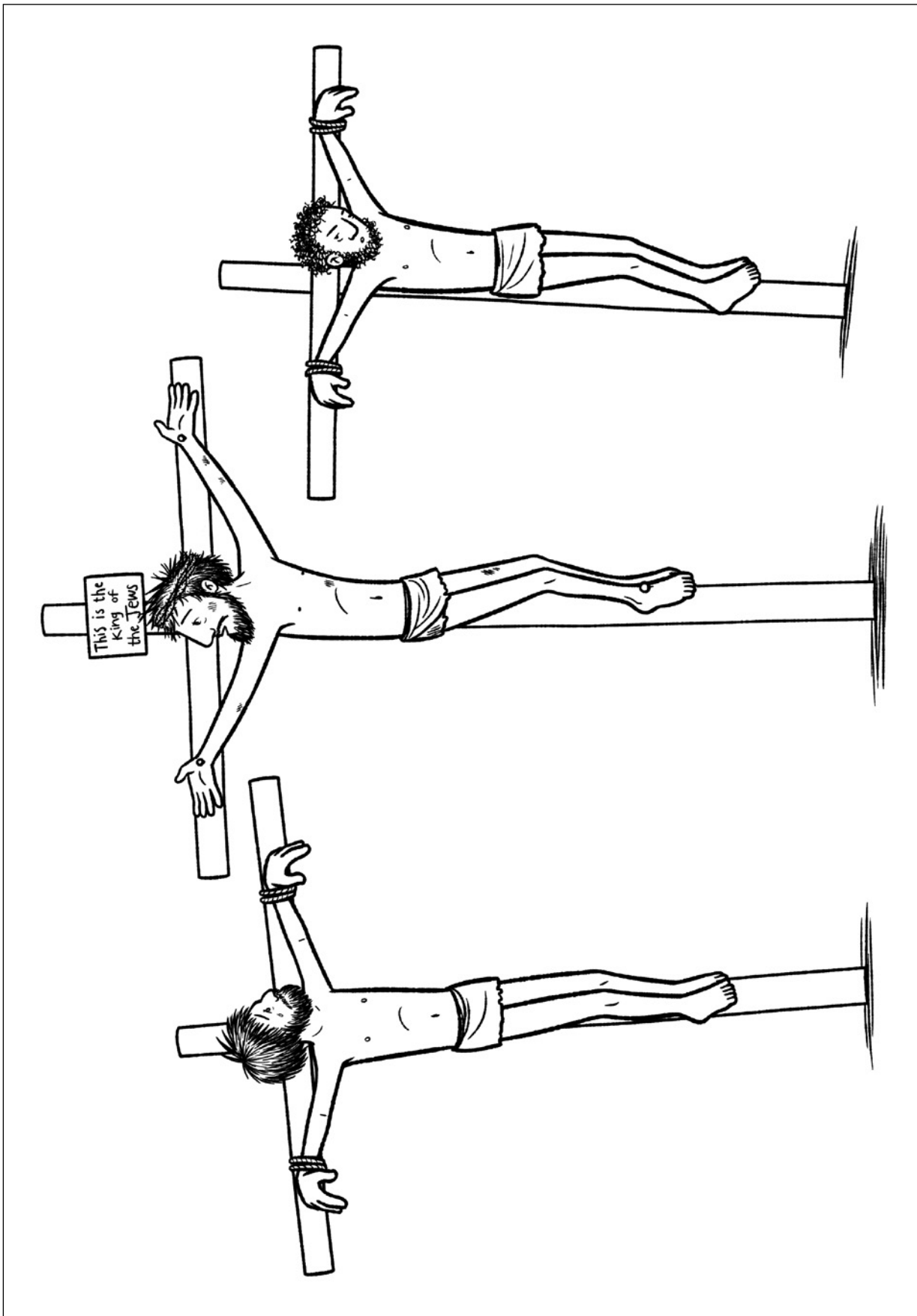


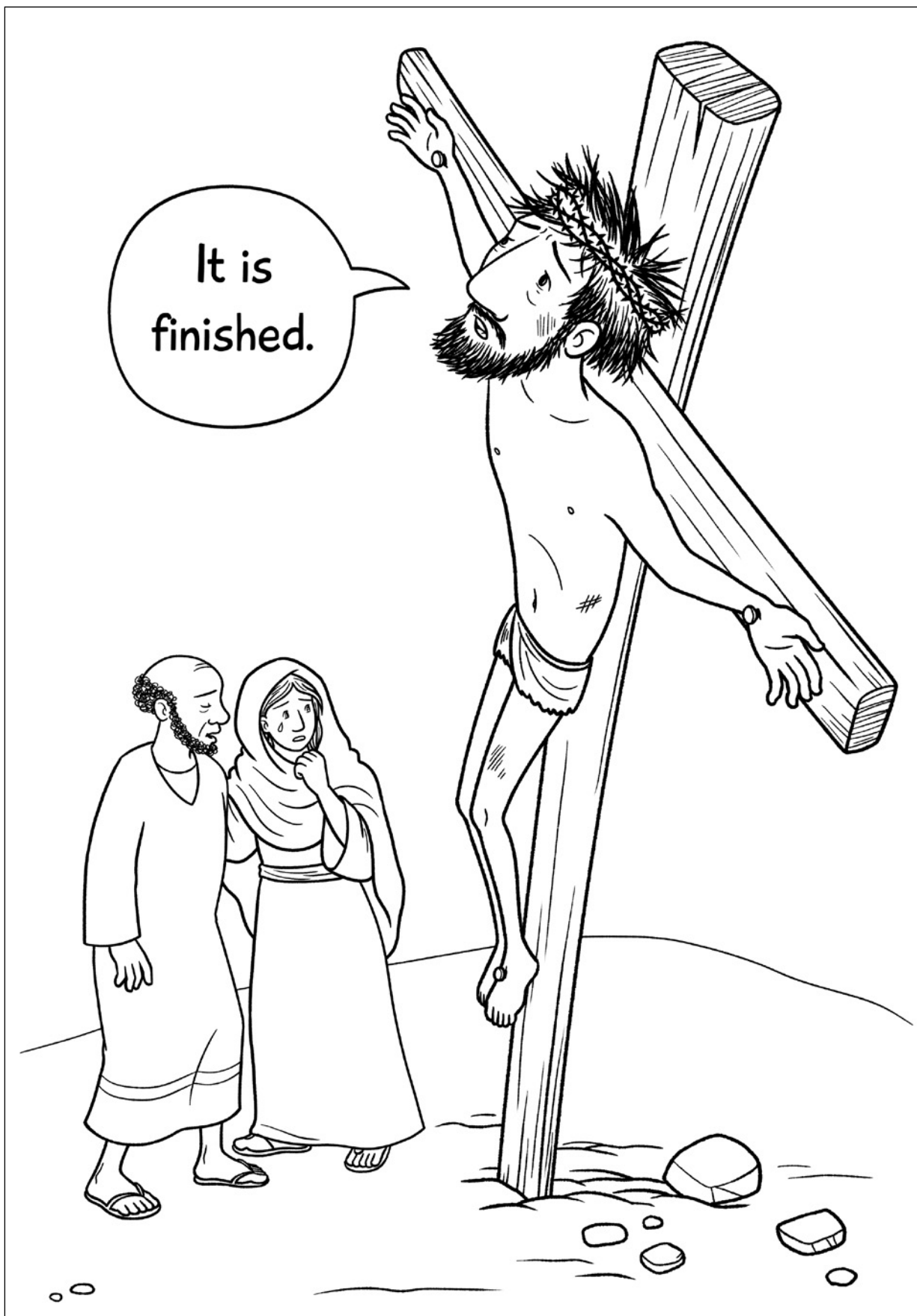
LIVE IT OUT

Imagine a moment when you are feeling properly awful for something you did wrong earlier that day. What one thing from this story would you like to remember that might help?



What would you like to say to Jesus?







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