

Jesus Predicts His Death

Grades
1-2

SACRIFICE • LENT 5 • YEAR B

JOHN 12:20-33



5

What is happening in this story?

Everyone expected the Messiah to exhibit an overwhelming power and victorious defeat of the world's evil forces. Instead, the Messiah was arrested and crucified. God's power is found in suffering, death, and the new life that comes from suffering and death. Jesus compares this "hour" ahead of him to a grain of wheat in the earth. Like a grain of wheat buried in order to bear new fruit, Jesus must die to bring new life into the world. This is true not only for Jesus but also for his followers. They are not to "love their life"; in fact, they are to "hate" their life—that is, to reject the unbelief in the world and to trust and follow Jesus.

Why does this story matter for kids?

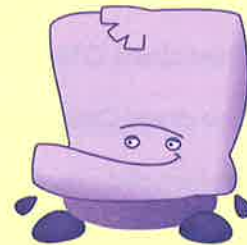
Jesus is talking about the real possibility that we lose our very lives in self-centered living. The antidote to that is serving. Tangible ways include helping at home/school/church, learning and celebrating how others live and practice their faith, and working at various social safety-net organizations like food shelves—but it can also happen in worship and in regular observances of our faith such as praying for others.

What is the lectionary connection?

Jesus is trying to prepare his disciples—he's trying to tell them that he is going to die but that God is going to raise him, and therefore them, to new life, just as wheat grows from a wheat seed. We twenty-first-century readers of John 12 are also being prepared for chapter 13 and onward. Jesus speaks to us in this text too. It is a foreshadowing of all that is to come.

AGE LEVEL TIP

Sometimes kids need to hear a story more than once. And some kids this age will still ask you to "read it again." If kids ask, or if you have extra time, don't be afraid to read the story again, allowing kids to make new discoveries about God's Word.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Tape
- Scissors
- White paper (cut into small pieces)
- Whiteboard with markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Seeded watermelon
- Paper plates
- Plastic spoons
- Wet wipes
- Watermelon seed packet
- Chenille stems (green and red)

WHIRL SUPPLIES

• WHIRL STORY BIBLES

• DVD

• WALL CHART

• LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Wash and precut watermelon slices. Set on paper plates, then have kids use plastic spoons or their fingers to find and collect the seeds. Invite kids to look at how small the seeds are and wonder how they grow into big watermelons. Use wet wipes to clean up.

Invite kids to gather near the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, season (Lent), color (purple), and icon (bread and wine). **Lent is a time to learn about our relationship with God. Today we will learn that, even though we are small, we can serve!** Show kids the seed packet, then open the packet to show kids the seeds. **These are watermelon seeds. These seeds are small but will grow into big fruit. Let's tape these small seeds on our chart today.** Tape seeds to the chart by first attaching seeds to the sticky side of your tape, then adhering the tape and seeds to the chart.

Have kids make the sign of the cross while saying, **"God in my head, God in my heart, God from one side to the other, send love around the world."**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Write the phrase "SACRIFICE or SELFISH" on a whiteboard. Ask kids to take their markers and play connect-the-letters on their leaflet to form the phrase

"Sacrifice or Selfish." Next, talk together about the photos on the leaflet. Ask kids to name how these things—technology, shoes, and food—might be used to be selfish or to sacrifice for others. Collect their leaflets until Respond.

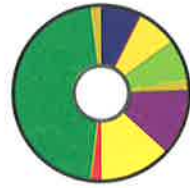
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Someone is big into rewards today. Let's find out who and why.

View Episode Lent 5, "Lent Lament," on the Whirl Year B Spring PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Who wants to earn lots of rewards?**
- **What does Otto do to earn rewards?**
- **How does Otto learn about sacrifice?**
- **How would you feel if you no longer had your favorite toy?**
- **If you didn't have your favorite toy, what would you do instead?**



Pass out Whirl Story Bibles to kids.

Let's find our story today! Help kids find "From Death to Life" on page 374. Start by pointing out the graphic that shows the bread and wine in the purple circle for the season of Lent. Before you read, invite kids to look for a root, a bright light, and a bag of seeds.

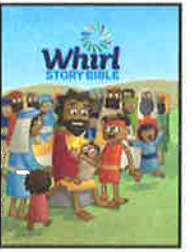
Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **A crowd came to hear Jesus speak. What country was the crowd from?**
- **What was Jesus going to do after he died?**
- **Who talked to the crowd "like crashing thunder"?**
- **How do you think God talks to you? How do you talk to God?**
- **How can we be "fruitful" and help the world?**

Play together!

Have kids divide into four groups by counting off 1-2-3-4. Each group will be a part of a plant known only to its group and not the other groups. Group 1 is roots. Group 2 is stems and leaves. Group 3 is flowers, and Group 4 is fruit. Ask kids to form a human sculpture of their group's plant part. **Figure out how to show the other kids what plant part your group is. The big rule for this game is that your group must somehow be connected to each other.** Give kids work time, and then come together to share.



BIBLE BIT

Jesus was into seeds. Check out Matthew 13 for three stories about seeds: the Parable of the Sower, the Parable of the Weeds, and the Parable of the Mustard Seed.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Pay attention to Monty's kind actions toward the kittens and toward Otto. **Why does Monty offer Otto his bike back? Would you do the same if you were Monty?**

OUR CHURCH

Take a family poll at pickup time. Ask families about the parts of your faith community that feel alive. Then ask what parts of your community might still have room to grow.

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets, chenille stems (2 green and 1 red per kid), markers, scissors, tape, and small pieces of paper.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. In the red circle, our leaflet says, “Like the seed, I will die. But then I will come alive again.” Point to this word circle. **There is a cross next to this circle. Let’s make a red cross.**
2. Help kids cut the red chenille stem in half, poke through red dot in the center of the circle, and secure by bending a bit of the stem back on the back side of the leaflet, then taping down to hold in place.
3. Help kids make the arms of a cross by twisting the second half of the red chenille stem around the piece they’ve secured to the leaflet.
4. Point to the green circle. **This part of our leaflet says, “They will bear fruit that feeds the world.” See the tree? Let’s make a green tree.**
5. Have kids poke one green chenille stem through the green dot in the center of the circle, then use a piece of tape to secure it.
6. Help kids cut the other green chenille stem in half, then twist the pieces around to make branches.
7. **Now it’s time to put some fruit on our trees and crosses. Write words of sacrifice or service on your small pieces of paper.** Give examples like “Love others” for service and “Grow food” for sacrifice.
8. **Now hang your sacrifice fruit on your cross and your service fruit on your tree!** Show kids how to punch through the small pieces of paper with the pointy ends of stems. Invite kids to share the words they’ve hung on their trees and crosses.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Our story today was called “From Death to Life.” Tell me how something that is dead can come back to life. Allow kids to respond. **Seeds seem dead, but if we plant them in soil, and give them water and sunlight, seeds grow and bear fruit. Jesus wants us to grow like fruit and serve the world with love.**

Pass out leaflet panels, scissors, and chenille stems (at least 2 more per kid).

Kids cut out circles, poke chenille stems through the blue dots, and make a set of headphones. Some kids may need to twist multiple stems together to make their headphones fit.

Send kids out.

Have kids make the sign of the cross while saying, **“God in my head, God in my heart, God from one side to the other, send love around the world.”**

Pray together: **God, open my ears, my heart, and my mind to listen to Jesus. Amen.**

Thank kids for being “good fruit” in the world like Jesus would want them to be. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.