

# Jesus Predicts His Death

PreK-  
**K**

**SACRIFICE • LENT 5 • YEAR B**

**JOHN 12:20–33**



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## 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

Sacrifice—giving up something for no gain—is a really hard concept for kids and adults! Sharing, taking turns, and trading things are unselfish ways for kids to begin to understand sacrifice.



### GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Clear tape
- Crayons

### LESSON SUPPLIES

- Plastic cups (3)
- Small rubber ball
- Pumpkin seeds
- Gift bag (purple)
- Cup of soil
- Circle stickers (white or light colored, 5 per kid)

**WHIRL SUPPLIES**

• **WHIRL STORY BIBLES**

• **DVD**

• **FLOOR MAT**

• **LEAFLETS**

## Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have one kid hide the rubber ball under one of the cups on a flat surface and quickly shift the cups. **In today's story, Jesus predicts he will die. Predict means to tell what will happen before it does. Which cup do you predict has the ball under it?** Take turns predicting where the ball is.

## Invite kids to sit around the Floor Mat.

Point out the season (Lent), color (purple), and icon (bread and wine). **In worship, we might see people making the sign of the cross. This is how you do it.** Demonstrate the sign of the cross (touching head, chest, left shoulder, right shoulder) and give kids time to practice. **Now let's take turns making the sign of the cross on the Lent section of the Floor Mat.** Invite kids to use their fingers to draw the sign of the cross on the Floor Mat.

Put pumpkin seeds (or other large, non-allergenic seeds) in the gift bag and have kids form a circle. **Part of our story today is about a seed that grows. Take a seed from the bag to remember this story.** Pass the bag around the circle.

## Pass out leaflets, circle stickers, and pens.

One way to follow Jesus is to pray for friends and family members. The leaflet says, "We remember to

pray." Put one circle sticker on each finger and then draw the face of someone you can pray about. The prayer hand can remind you to pray for family and friends, just like Jesus did. Collect their leaflets until Respond.

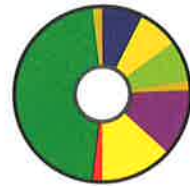
## Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

The kids in today's video are learning about sacrifice. *Sacrifice* is when you give something to someone and you don't expect to get anything back. I wonder if the kids think it is easy or hard to give things away.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

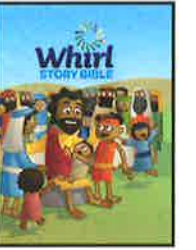
- What does Otto "sacrifice" first?
- What does Otto think he will get in return for his sacrifice?
- What will Otto miss without his bike?
- What does Monty do now that he has a bike?
- Why do you think sacrifice is hard for Otto and for us too?



## 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 all the people who want to hear Jesus.

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



## Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Did the people understand how Jesus would live, die, and then live again?
- How did the Greek people feel after hearing Jesus talk?
- Why do you think they wanted to hear Jesus talk more?
- How do you think Jesus is like a seed?
- What are some things Jesus tells us to do if we want to follow him?

## Play together!

Use the rubber ball to play a game where kids will share in the "work" of the game. **Sharing work is a kind of sacrifice, and we're going to do that in this game. I'll throw the ball up in the air and everyone will try to catch it. We'll count together how many times it bounces before someone catches it. The person who catches the ball has to jump that many times. BUT, we can work together to jump for that person. Each person can jump once. Or one person can volunteer to do all the jumping.** Throw the ball up in the air several times and let the kids decide how to share the jumping. **Jumping would be hard if one person had to do all of it. But sharing the work makes it easier. Sharing helps everyone.**

## BIBLE BIT

The setting of this story is a Passover observance—but Gentiles are gathering around Jesus too! This signals that Jesus' glorification is for all.

## WATCH IT AGAIN

**Let's watch the video again. This time, let's count the number of things Otto "sacrifices." How many are really sacrifices?**

## OUR CHURCH

Take a walk around your church. Point out places in your church where Jesus' name is glorified and lifted up.



# RESPOND 10

## Pass out leaflets, tape, seeds, and crayons.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **Sharing is a kind of sacrifice. We all have things we can share with our friends. Let's look at the square. The square says, "We serve when we share!" What do you see that you might be able to share? How could you share it?**
2. **Let's think of other things we share that aren't on the leaflet. We can share lots of stuff!**
3. **Use the crayons to draw a few things you'd like to share with your friends and family.** Allow time for kids to draw in the frames. Help kids who need ideas with prompts.
4. **Tape a seed next to the flowers as a reminder that Jesus talked about seeds, growing, and sacrifice.** Help kids tape a seed near the flowers.
5. **Ideas are great things to share!** Invite kids to share their sharing ideas with the group.

# LAUNCH 10

## Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Jesus tells us he is like a seed that will grow into something huge and wonderful for everyone. When he dies and is raised, it is definitely something huge and wonderful for everyone. He talks about following him. What are some ways you can follow Jesus this week? Take time to hear kids' responses.

## Pass out leaflet panels.

Jesus says he is like a seed that grows into a big tree. Put your finger on the seed. What picture comes next? Put your finger there. Follow the cycle, ending with the fruit tree with seeds that will start the cycle again.

## Send kids out.

Take a pumpkin seed and plant it in the cup with soil. **Jesus is like the seed that dies and comes back to life as a big tree. That big tree bears fruit for lots of people.** Let kids take turns patting down the dirt on top of the seed.

Pray together: **Dear God, thank you for sending Jesus to sacrifice his life for us. Help us to love him and follow him. Amen.**

Thank kids for following Jesus by being good listeners and helpers. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.