

# Jesus Is Always Faithful

**Objective:** Students will be able to identify the cross as a sign of Jesus' love and faithfulness to His Father and His love for all of us.

## **For the Catechist**

At the time of Christ, crucifixion was a dishonorable death and the cross was a sign of disgrace. But through Jesus' death and resurrection, the cross has become for Christians of all ages a sign that calls to mind our salvation. The cross is no longer a sign of disgrace, but it is the way to glory—to Pascha and the New Life—first for Christ and then for all Christians.

The cross is such a familiar sign that reverence for it might be lacking. The reverence that the cross should engender is not one that appeals only to the intellect but one that brings our whole person to a deep experience of what love really is. Our Church sees the cross as the sign of the total event of Christ's saving death. For this reason we are able to sing: "We bow to Your cross, O Lord, and we praise Your holy resurrection."

The Grade 3 book includes an entire unit on the Great Fast and Great and Holy Week. That unit includes lessons on each of the Sundays of the Great Fast and on the events of Great and Holy Week. In contrast, this Grade 4 book includes only one lesson called "The Great Fast" as part of "Unit 6: Observances." In that lesson the students review that we prepare for Pascha through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. The emphasis for this present lesson 22 is the love and faithfulness of Jesus who accepted the cross. One suggestion is to teach lesson 25 on the Great Fast before this lesson 22. Then teach lesson 26, "Pascha," followed by lessons 20, "Living in God's Love," and lesson 27, the "Transfiguration." The date of Pascha and the last day of your class will determine the need for the order

## **Lesson Plan Overview**

**Opening:** "We Bow to Your Cross"

**Introduction:** Discussion of the ways we are to behave as Christians

**Read Text Aloud:** Have the students volunteer to read the text aloud or have the students read sections silently.

### **Activity Tracks:**

Choose a basic, group, or craft activity (detailed on the pages that follow) to reinforce the lesson.

- *Basic:* The Burial
- *Group:* Verse Scramble
- *Craft:* String Art Cross (Part 2)

**Closing:** Troparion of Great and Holy Friday

## **Icon Packets:**

*Come Bless the Lord:*  
Crucifixion

## **Teaching Pics**

Veneration of the Cross (GL7)

## ***Background Reading***

*(Direct quotations from the sources noted)*

### **Why Jesus Suffered**

"Modern thinkers have tried to outline the psychology of One like us in all things except for sin. The picture they paint is generally close to that offered by St. Peter in his first epistle: *'He did no wrong; no deceit was found in his mouth. When he was insulted, he returned no insult. When he was made to suffer, he did not counter with threats. Instead he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly'* (1 Peter 2:22-23).

"According to Peter, Christ did not react negatively as we do to the unrighteous acts of others .... This kind of behavior strikes us as odd, but it is we who are unnatural, who react in accordance with our fallen nature. Christ never did, thereby restoring our nature in fulfillment of God's original creative plan. In Christ, human nature was transformed—not into something supernatural, but into that which had been intended from the beginning, perfect union with the Father at all times. His humanity was divinized, completely filled with and penetrated by the energy of God" (*WEF* 32-34).

### **Christian Love**

"It is this Christian love in each Christian which exorcises demons, eradicates evil and heals sicknesses. It is Christian love which liberates and frees. The world does not believe such a love is possible. It is only by living such a love, witnessing to its reality and power, that the Christian will arouse and inspire the world to the conviction that its problems can be solved. Only living love will ever convince the world that it can become a family, a family of man one day worthy of being the family of God.

"It is only in the power streaming from the risen Christ that man can acquire this fullness of life—only in Christ can he discover that what was once the road to death has now become the road of return to the Father. The road that previously led to nothingness and failure has now become the road of return to the One who is Life. What we long for most deeply is already a reality in the risen Christ, who is coming, always coming, until the Kingdom of God is supremely fulfilled.

"We believe that God raised Jesus from the dead. We are therefore, as Christians, Convinced that there is nothing in death or life, in the realm of spirits or superhuman powers, in the world as it is or in the world as it shall be, in the forces of the universe, in the heights or depths, nothing in all creation that can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Rom 8:38). It is by Christians living out this affirmation in their lives that the world will come to believe in the possibility of its own resurrection" (*FG* 90-91).

### **The Message of the Cross**

"The experience and writing of St. Paul gives the passion a new dimension. At first frustrated and discouraged by many failures, St. Paul began to look back over his whole missionary experience from a new light. He saw that suffering and persecution had often accompanied his attempts to plant the seeds of the Gospel. However, the seed had actually grown. Paul clearly recognized in his own experience the central teaching of Isaiah the Prophet, that only in the intense awareness of one's weakness could one be filled with the power of God. St. Paul wrote, 'God forbid that I ever boast of anything but the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ...' (Gal 6:14); I will do no boasting about myself unless it be about my weaknesses...' (2 Cor 12:5); 'The message of the Cross is complete absurdity to those who are headed for ruin, but to us who are experiencing salvation it is the power of God' (I Cor 1: 18). To live in this mystery means to discover the paradox of the way of Christ - wisdom and life come through weakness and death to self" (*LLI* 53).

# The Lesson Plan

## Opening

Today we are going to pray a prayer we hear during the Great Fast. We also pray these words on the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross. Let's see if you remember hearing this prayer. [Give out the worksheets from the end of this lesson. Add them to the song and psalm booklets if you are making them.] Let's pray: "We Bow to Your Cross"

## Introduction

Today I want to start with a story that I read.

Each morning a gentleman stopped by a newsstand to buy a newspaper. Each day he greeted the person selling the paper with a smile and a "Good morning." Each time the other person answered in a mean way and shoved the newspaper at the gentleman.

One of the gentleman's friends asked, "Does he always treat you so rudely?"

"Yes, unfortunately he does."

"And are you always so polite and friendly to him?"

"Yes, I am."

"Why are you so nice to him when he is so unfriendly to you?"

"Because I don't want him to decide how I'm going to act."

[This story is in *WEF* (33), and it is taken from *Why Am I Afraid to Tell You Who I Am?* by John Powell, S.J.]

What did this man mean by his answer? (We can choose to be nice always—we can't say someone made us be mean.) Did any of you ever meet a mean and rude person? [They might want to share their stories.] How did you react to them? Why? What do you do when your friends do something that is mean to you?

A few weeks ago we learned that we "put on Christ" when we received what Mystery? (Baptism) What does "put on Christ" mean? (We are followers of Jesus; we act the way Jesus would; people recognize us by the way we react.) Is the gentleman in the story I read reacting the way Jesus would? (Yes) Why? (Because he is being nice to someone who isn't nice in return.) His answer, "I don't want him to decide how I'm going to act" means that we must be in charge of our acting like Jesus even if someone else isn't. Today we are going to hear how Jesus shows His love for His Father and for us even when few other people are showing love.

Let's turn to our lesson to learn how much Jesus loves us.

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## Jesus Is Always Faithful

IC XC  
THE PRAYER  
IN THE  
GARDEN



Jesus showed us how to truly be faithful to God. We see His great love for His Father in all He said and did. Jesus wanted to do all that His Father asked of Him, and He calls us to do the same.

Throughout His entire life, Jesus showed us how to live this way of love. Jesus was completely faithful to His Father to the very end of His life.

In the New Testament we read about the way Jesus says He will do whatever His Father asks of Him. **Read Matthew 26:39** and complete the following sentence:

He advanced a little and fell prostrate in prayer, saying, "My Father, \_\_\_\_\_ if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet, **not as I will, but as you will**"

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## Reading of Text

As the children read aloud, help them interact with the text using the comments or questions below which are keyed to the text phrases (in bold type).

### Jesus Is Always Faithful

*What do you think the title of this lesson means? (Jesus is faithful to God and everything He asks.) Today we are going to hear about the love and obedience Jesus has for His Father and His love for us even during His suffering and death. [Only the Gospel of Luke is included in this student lesson. You can add the following scriptural readings if you choose to have the students read about Jesus' crucifixion and death in all four Gospels:*

**Matthew 27:31-61; Mark 15:1-41; and John 19:1-37.]**

Soon after Jesus said these words, Judas and a large crowd came to arrest Jesus. Even though Jesus and His disciples knew they had done nothing wrong, Jesus let them arrest Him. **Read Matthew 26:47-54** to learn how Jesus reacted. After you read the Scripture, write the words that complete the following:

What did Judas say he would do to identify Jesus? "The man I shall \_\_\_\_\_  
**kiss is the one; arrest him.**" (Mt 26:48)

How did Jesus answer Judas' greeting, "Hail, Rabbi!" "Friend, \_\_\_\_\_  
**do what you have come for**" (Mt 26:50)

Jesus did not fight when they arrested Him. He accepted whatever He had to do to fulfill God's promise to send a Savior to His people. Jesus is totally faithful to His Father.



In the icon of the Crucifixion we see the pain and suffering Jesus accepted as Our Savior. Jesus fulfilled God's promise to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life.

Our Church gives honor to the cross as a sign of Christ's victory over sin and death. Also, the cross honors Jesus' faithfulness to His Father. Whenever we venerate the Cross, we bow in respect to the obedience of Jesus. Every time we honor the cross, we also are recalling the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Church never sees the Crucifixion apart from our Lord's Resurrection. Even the words of our Church hymns at the veneration of the Cross recall the crucifixion and the resurrection.

Jesus' saving death is the greatest mystery of our faith. Our Church remembers this in the Great and Holy Week observances. During all the services we read the Gospels. All four Gospels tell us about Jesus' saving death and resurrection because this is the most important event in the New Testament.

Let's read **Luke 23:1-49** to hear what happened to Jesus. Identify the verses where the following quotations are found:

"Crucify him! Crucify him!" **23:21** \_\_\_\_\_

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do." **23:34** \_\_\_\_\_

"Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." **23:43** \_\_\_\_\_

"Father, into your hands I commend my spirit." **23:46** \_\_\_\_\_

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### Jesus fulfilled God's promise to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life.

*Let's look at the icon of the Crucifixion [This icon is also in the Come Bless the Lord icon packet.] This icon asks us to recall the suffering and death of Jesus and the resurrection. Let's remain silent for a few seconds as we thank Jesus for everything He has done for us.*

### ... where the following quotations are found:

[When reading from the Gospel, try to have everyone read some of the words.]

*Our Church gives us a service during Great and Holy Week during which 12 Gospel readings are read. On what day is that service? [Answer according to your church schedule: in some churches Holy Thursday night and in others Great and Holy Friday]*

...died to save us from eternal death..

What do we do during the service on Great and Holy Friday? [Discuss the tradition in your church.] We sing troparia at every Divine Liturgy, but there is a special one for Great and Holy Friday. We sing it during the services for this day. We have learned that a troparion is a short verse which tells something of the feast or intention of the day. That day we are remembering Jesus' death and burial.

What greater way could there be to show such perfect love? There is no greater love than to offer one's life for someone else. Let's sit quietly for a moment and think about how sad we would be on the day of Jesus' death. But we have learned that our Church wants us to think about Jesus' resurrection whenever we think about His death. We know Jesus suffered and died to save us from eternal death and grant us eternal life.

**Words to Remember:** [Read the words together, and use them to introduce, summarize, and/or review the lesson.]

Even as Jesus was dying on the cross, He asked His Father to forgive those who had unjustly condemned Him to death. He also asked that God forgive the repentant thief. We can see how Jesus kept the New Commandment—even in His great sufferings He showed His love for us. Jesus loves us with the same faithfulness He showed to His Father.

Jesus was united perfectly to His Father in love, and He was complete in His love for us. We see this in all He said and did throughout His life on earth. Jesus' complete love for all people is expressed in His saving death. What greater way could there be to show such perfect love?

In the Gospel of John we read that Jesus wants us to love in the same way. Complete the following sentences as you read **John 15:12-13**:

This is my commandment: **love one another as I** \_\_\_\_\_  
**have loved you** \_\_\_\_\_. No one has greater love than this,  
**to lay down one's life for one's friends** \_\_\_\_\_

On Great and Holy Friday we recall the death of Jesus on the cross. We venerate the Holy Shroud that shows us Jesus in the tomb. In the troparion for that day we honor the burial of Jesus. Our Church wants us to remember Jesus loved us so much that He willingly suffered and died to save us from eternal death.



**Words to Remember:**  
**Prostrate in Prayer:** Lying with your face downward to show humility and acceptance  
**Venerate:** To show deep respect and honor.  
**New Commandment:** "To love one another as I love you" (John 15:12).  
**Holy Shroud:** The cloth with an icon of the body of Jesus. It is placed in the tomb on Great and Holy Friday.  
**Great and Holy Friday:** In the Church year, the most solemn day that recalls the death of Jesus on the cross.

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## Activity Tracks

### Basic: The Burial

[This worksheet is in the student text.]

Today our activity page asks us to read the words in the Scripture and answer the questions. Then we are to find those words in the word find. While you are looking for those words, think about the burial of Jesus. What would you say to Jesus the night of His burial?

### The Burial

I. After Jesus died, He was taken down from the cross and buried. Read **John 19:38-42** and answer the following questions by completing the blanks:

- Who asked to take down Jesus' body? **JOSEPH**
- What did Nicodemus bring in the mixture he brought to bury Jesus?  
**MYRRH** and **ALOE**
- With what did they bind the body of Jesus?  
**BURIAL CLOTHS**
- Along with what else was Jesus buried? **SPICES**
- What was in the garden that was in the place where Jesus had been crucified?  
**NEW TOMB**

II. Find the words you wrote above in the following word find.

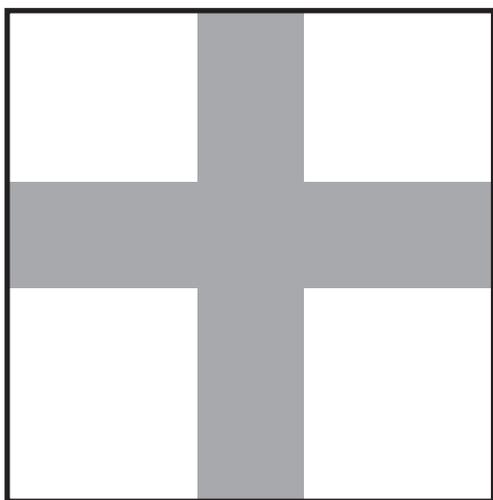
P	R	O	A	L	O	E	S	K	N	U	N
V	O	M	Y	T	E	A	Y	E	E	N	E
X	A	Y	B	C	R	P	M	R	W	R	C
B	U	R	I	A	L	C	L	O	T	H	S
R	T	R	R	L	L	V	K	P	O	R	P
A	B	H	M	O	N	R	I	E	M	O	I
U	P	Z	E	R	W	I	K	R	B	T	C
C	L	X	J	O	S	E	P	H	I	K	E
M	O	C	W	T	F	G	R	X	T	U	S

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**Group:** Verse Scramble

*Materials:* "Verses" worksheet, envelopes, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers

[In advance, cut out the words and place them in the envelopes. On the envelope, write the reference.] *In these envelopes are words from a scriptural passage and the reference. In your New Testament find the passage and connect the words in the correct order. Glue the words in order on a piece of construction paper. When we have all of them complete, we will read them aloud to hear what they have in common. [All of the passages show how faithful Jesus is to His Father.] We have to learn to be as faithful as Jesus to God's will.*



**Craft:** String Art Cross (Part 2)

*Materials:* The pattern from last week and the yarn

[Have sample ready to show children.] *Let's string the yarn on the nails on the pattern.*

1. Tie the yarn on to nail #1
2. Wrap one loop around each nail as you pass it.
3. Pass yarn from #1-2, 2-3, 3-4, 4-5, 5-6, 6-7, 7-8
4. String the vertical portion of the cross by wrapping yarn from # 8-1, 1-2, 2-7, 7-6, 6-3, 3-4. Tie string off at # 4.
5. Tie yarn on to # 9. Pass from #9-10, 10-11, 11-12, 12- 13, 13-14, 14-15, 15-16.
6. String horizontal portion of the cross by wrapping yarn from #16-9, 9-10, 10-15, 15-14, 14-11, 11-12. Tie string off at# 12.
7. Cut off all loose string ends.

**Closing:**

*Let's pray the Troparion for Great and Holy Friday. Listen for the words that we found in the Scripture we read for our activity. [Add the troparion to their booklets if they are making them.]*

**Directions:**

Cut each word separately from the verses.

Cut the entire reference as one piece, and place it into the envelopes.

*The Lord, your God, shall you  
worship and him alone shall  
you serve. (Matthew 4:10)*

*My Father, if it is not possible  
that this cup pass without my  
drinking it, your will be done!  
(Mt 26:42)*

*Abba, Father, all things are possible  
to you. Take this cup away from me,  
but not what I will but what you will.  
(Mark 14:36)*

*Prostrate  
in Prayer*

*Venerate*

*The New  
Commandment*

*Holy Shroud*

*Great and  
Holy Friday*

To show deep respect and honor.

Lying with your face downward to show  
humility and acceptance

The cloth with an icon of the  
body of Jesus. It is placed in the  
tomb on Great and Holy Friday.

"To love one another as I love you"  
(John 15:12).

In the Church year, the most solemn day  
that recalls the death of Jesus on the cross.

**The Veneration of the Cross**

We bow in worship  
before Your cross, O Master,  
and we give praise  
to Your holy resurrection.

Melkite  
Greek  
Catholic  
Church

**Troparion of Great and Holy Friday**

The noble Joseph took down from the wood Your spotless  
body. He wrapped it in clean linen with aromatic spices  
and laid it for burial in a new tomb.

Melkite  
Greek  
Catholic  
Church

**The Veneration of the Cross**

We worship Your cross, O Christ,  
and we praise and glorify  
Thy holy resurrection

Romanian  
Greek  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
Canton

**Troparion of Great and Holy Friday**

The venerable Joseph, taking Thy pure body down from  
the wood, and wrapping it in fine linen and sweet spices,  
laid it in a new tomb.

Romanian  
Greek  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
Canton

**The Veneration of the Cross**

We bow to Your cross O Lord,  
and we praise Your holy resurrection.

Ruthenian  
Byzantine  
Catholic  
Metropolitan  
Province

**Troparion of Great and Holy Friday**

The noble Joseph took down Your most pure body from  
the cross. He wrapped it in a clean shroud, and with  
fragrant spices laid it in burial in a new tomb.

Ruthenian  
Byzantine  
Catholic  
Metropolitan  
Province

**The Veneration of the Cross**

To Your cross, O Master,  
we bow in veneration,  
and we glorify  
Your holy resurrection

Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
St. Josaphat

**Troparion of Great and Holy Friday**

The nobleman, Joseph, took Your most pure body down  
from the tree. Wrapping it with a clean shroud and  
aromatic spices, he buried it in a new tomb.

Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Diocese of  
St. Josaphat

**The Veneration of the Cross**

To Your cross, O Master,  
we bow in veneration,  
and we glorify Your holy resurrection.

Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Synod

**Troparion of Great and Holy Friday**

The noble Joseph took down from the cross Your most  
pure body. Anointing it with spices, he wrapped it in  
pure linen and placed it in a new tomb.

Ukrainian  
Catholic  
Synod