

Children's Resources

Good Friday



Unveiling the Kingdom

Mark 15:37-38 International Children's Bible (ICB)

Then Jesus cried in a loud voice and died. ³⁸ When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple split into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom.

GOOD FRIDAY

Good Friday is a very reflective day, one that is more solemn than others leading up to Easter. It is helpful for Good Friday to have a separate space and activity for children right from the start of the service. This is often also a slightly shorter service than normal. Below you will find an outline with some suggestions for a short kids' church lesson.

CONNECTING IN:

Who can tear things?

For this activity you will need:

- Items/objects that can be torn quite easily, such as paper, serviettes, piece of bread etc.
- Some cash – notes (ensure there are no rips in them where they could easily tear)
- A small piece of wood

Ask two volunteers to come up the front and tear the items/objects that can easily be torn.

Now give them the cash notes and ask them to tear up these, (they should not be able to tear these up).

Give them a piece of wood and ask them to tear it in half.

Explain that both the money and wood could not be torn. Both items are really hard to destroy, most likely only scissors, saws or fire could destroy either of these items.

Explain that today we are going to explore the 'Mystery of the Purple Curtain.'

THE MAIN THING:

For this activity you will need:

- A piece of purple material that could be used as a small curtain.
- Sunhat
- Sunglasses
- Sun top
- Sunscreen

Start by talking about what we do when we are planning to spend time outside in the sun.

- What do we put on that protects us from the sun? Have some items to show as the children make suggestions, (hats, sun tops, sunglasses, and sunscreen).

Focus on the sunscreen and chat about how when we place sunscreen on our skin it acts as a barrier between us and the sun. The sunscreen keeps the sun off our skin by blocking the sun's uv rays and helps us not get burnt which can be very sore, uncomfortable and itchy.

- Who here has been sunburnt before? (listen to their horror stories!)

Say: Sunscreen is a good barrier to use against the sun's uv rays. It helps prevent long term skin damage that could lead to skin cancer, so sunscreen is a very important barrier to place on our skin for protection.

Today we are going to look at a bad barrier, a barrier that was placed between humans and God a very long time ago.

When God made humans, we were created to have friendship with God and to have access to God all the time. Along came Adam and Eve who were the first humans. God would walk and talk with Adam and Eve and were close to God. They were really good friends with God. But something went drastically wrong!

- Who can tell us what Adam and Eve did? (They sinned, they did the wrong thing and straight away a barrier was made that separated humans from God.)

We no longer had automatic access to God because of our sin (the things we do wrong). Sin blocked out God's presence from human lives.

'The Mystery of the Purple Curtain' (hold up a purple piece of curtain).

In the temples during Bible times, there was a large purple curtain that was a visible reminder that God cannot live with sin. It first started when God asked Moses (remind them who Moses was) to build a tent where God would meet and talk to him. But God asked that a curtain be made and hung up in the tent, separating God from all the people who came in.

Now let's think about curtains.....

- When do you see a curtain? (theatre performance, at home, on a stage)

When we go to a theatre performance or a pantomime or a concert there is usually a curtain hanging up on the stage to block out what is going on behind the curtain. We usually can't see through it or under it or around it, it is completely blocked off. It is a barrier between us and the performers.

- Do you ever sit there and wonder what is going on behind the curtain?
- I wonder if you begin to imagine what it looks like behind the curtain.
- I wonder if you are ever tempted to go up and have a look.

You are usually not allowed up there to have a look, it is out of bounds and not acceptable to have a peek behind it.

Every temple in Bible times had a purple curtain up as a barrier between God and the people. Only the high priest was allowed behind the special curtain and said prayers on behalf of the people. Many people over the years tried to remove the curtain to have access with God but it was impossible. The curtain was always extremely thick and large and could not be torn by one person. (Refer back to trying to tear the money and wood.) People wanted to see what was behind the curtain but you see the curtain was just a symbol, it represented that God did not wish to be part of the sinful nature of people. He needed to keep that barrier up.

God got to a point where he did not want to be separated from humans any longer. He wanted to remove the bad barrier between himself and humans. We could not remove the barrier only God could.

God had a plan. He sent Jesus to the world, who was his son. While Jesus was on earth he talked about God's love and how God wanted to be friends with everyone but the things that we did wrong always got in the way.

- I wonder if you know what today is called. (Good Friday)
- Who can tell me what is special about today?

Remind the children that Jesus is God's son and that Jesus was perfect. He never ever sinned and did anything wrong.

- So why would they crucify Jesus when he hadn't done anything wrong?

That seems so unfair. But God allowed Jesus to take the punishment for all of our sins. Pilate demanded that somebody be punished and God allowed his only son and gave up Jesus who he loved so very much.

Wow, what do you think of that? But wait there's more!

The day that Jesus died, the bible tells us in Mark 15:37-38, 'Then Jesus cried in a loud voice and died. When Jesus died, the curtain in the Temple split into two pieces. The tear started at the top and tore all the way to the bottom'. (ICB)

(At this stage tear the purple piece of curtain down the middle from top to bottom.)

- Does anyone want to suggest what they could mean?

The day that Jesus died the curtain was torn in two from top to bottom. Jesus' death broke the barrier of being separated from God. This symbol of the curtain being torn was God's promise that he wants to have a friendship with us and that we can have a friendship with him. All we have to do is say sorry to God for the things that we do wrong and ask him to be our friend.

Jesus died to bring us back together with God.

TYING IN:

- I wonder what sorts of barriers do we put up to block God out of our lives.

Explain that our sin, things we do wrong blocks God from our lives and the only way to God is for us to say sorry. We need to trust God and ask Jesus to be part of our everyday lives. We don't want to put barriers up between us and them. We want to live everyday being friends with God and Jesus.

Read 2 Corinthians 3:14b (NLT). It says '...this veil can be removed only by believing in Christ.'

Ask the children if any of them would like to take the barrier (veil) down between themselves and God by telling God they are sorry, asking God to be their friend and believing in Jesus Christ.

Some example prayers could be:

- I am sorry for the things in my life that are wrong.
- Thank you Jesus for taking the punishment for my sin.
- Thank you that you love me so much.
- Help me when I am tempted to make the right choice.
- Thank you for dying on the cross for me.
- I would love you to be my friend and live in my life.

Spend time praying with the children and have a leader finish with a prayer.

Remind the children that Sunday is coming and it is an exciting day. They need to come and find out why?