

YEAR A | QUARTER 1

12

Love on a Tree

Service
We serve self-sacrificially.

POWER TEXT

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!'" (Matthew 27:54).

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 27:27-66; Luke 23:26-49
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 78, pp. 741-757; chap. 79, pp. 758-764
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 105-117
- Student story on page 132 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 9, The Life, Death, and Resurrection of Christ
- No. 4, The Son

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that we can share God's love with others.
- **Feel** inspired by Jesus' example.
- **Respond** by telling others in their neighborhood about Jesus.



Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

As Jesus hangs on the cross, He is aware of those around Him. His conversation with one of the criminals hanging near Him demonstrates His desire to share God's love with others to the last moments of His earthly life. Service is sharing God's love with others, regardless of the circumstances of their lives.

This is a lesson about service.

Jesus' last act of service on this earth was dying on the cross for us. We can serve others by sharing the story of His death and sacrifice with them.

Teacher Enrichment

"Crucifixion, a cruel, torturing, agonizing death, was reserved for those whom men particularly wanted to dishonor, such as slaves and political rebels" (Roy Allan Anderson, *You Can Be Free* [Mountain View, Calif.: Pacific Press Pub. Assn., 1977], p. 84).

"On occasions some were bound to the cross, but a frequent method was nailing of the hands and feet. At the place of execution, the victim was laid on the cross, and the nails were driven through the flesh. . . .

"Between 'the bones of the wrist is a free space' . . . generally know as 'Destot's space.'. . . Those skilled in such executions knew exactly where to drive the nail both for security and infliction of pain. . . .

"When the hands were fastened to the crossbeam, the crucifiers would raise the victim to an upright position suspending him by his hands, then fastening the *patibulum* (the crossbeam) to the *stipés* (the upright). Thus hanging, the victim's knees would then be flexed and the feet crossed and fastened with one long nail. . . . The unnatural angle of the arms and the weight of the hanging body tended to bring on asphyxiation. . . . If the body could be raised for short intervals, it enabled the one crucified to exhale, thus prolonging life—and also prolonging the suffering.

"Only in this raised position was the victim able to speak. We know that Christ spoke at least seven times from the cross. . . .

"Christ's death was from neither exhaustion nor asphyxiation—He *gave* his life" (*ibid*., pp. 85-87).

How and when do I share the story of Jesus' death and resurrection with others? What difference does my willingness to share, make in the lives of those around me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson. Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the readiness activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness Activities	10-15	*A. Love Gifts* *B. Token Sacrifice*	bag(s) of small items 15 tokens for each student
* Prayer and Praise	15-20	See page 127. Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	two copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 159) headlines from newspapers, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Get and Give Away*	*10 pieces of fruit/other healthy treats for each student
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Share the Good News*	scissors, stiff white paper, markers or crayons
* Closing		Prayer and Closing Comments Reminder to Parents Coming Up Next Week	

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

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READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ bag(s) of small items

Love Gifts

Prepare in advance a bag with a variety of things placed inside. On the outside of the bag write: Love Gifts. You should have a bag prepared for every 12-15 students in your class. The bag should contain items that a student will be excited about sharing and things that will seem "silly" or "undesirable" to share. Items might include: individual packets of salt/pepper; small pebbles; coupons for ice cream/treats; dollar bill; individual candy; small toys; or other trinkets. Divide the class into groups of 12-15 and ask half the group to reach in—sight unseen—and remove an object. They then find another student with whom to "share" the item and give them the item, with an explanation of why this is such a great "gift."

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel about sharing your "gift"? What was different about sharing the less desirable gifts versus sharing the candy, treats, and toys?** Say: **When we like, or are excited about the gift we are giving, it seems to make sharing it much more fun or enjoyable.**

Ask: **How is this like what happens when we try to share God's love with others? Say: If we have experienced the great gift of God's saving grace we will not want to keep it to ourselves. We will want to share it with others. Let's say our power text together.**

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!' " (Matthew 27:54).

The power point reminds us that

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ 15 tokens per student

Token Sacrifice

Arrange the students in small groups in circles. Give everyone 15 small tokens, such as coins, pebbles, or beans. One person begins by saying something they have never done. For example, "I have never built a snowman." Everyone who *has* done what the speaker has never done gives the speaker a token. Play a few rounds.

Debriefing

Say: **Think about the life of Christ. What are some things that Christ has done that you have never done? For example, you could say, "I have never healed anybody."**

Allow time for responses. (Never forgiven anyone, walked on water, died on a cross, raised the dead, turned water into wine.)

Say: **Jesus did a lot of things we would find hard to do in the same situation. One of the most wonderful things He did was to save a man while He hung on the cross dying. Let's say our power text, Matthew 27:54:**

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!' " (Matthew 27:54).

As the power point reminds us,

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

Prayer and Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"The Old Rugged Cross" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 159)
"Let's Talk About Jesus" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 46)
"Lord I Want to Be a Christian" (*Advent Youth Sing*, no. 126)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission* for youth and adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students identify and mark with pushpins the location where the mission story is taking place.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **Jesus offered Himself for us. Because of this love, we can choose to give Him our hearts and our offerings.**

Prayer

Ask students to share prayer requests and write them down. Pray for the prayer requests. Close by praying for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ two copies of *Net Kids* script (p. 159)

Introducing the Bible Story

(Note: The *Net Kids* are an imaginative way to introduce the Bible story. If you prefer not to use this imaginary element, read over the script yourself and introduce the lesson concept in your own words.)

(Refer to Lesson 2 for background and setup information.)

Make two copies of the *Net Kids* script found on page 159 of this guide. Distribute to the students you have selected as early as possible. Allow practice time before using this activity.

Present the skit.

Debriefing:

Say: **We are told we should spend about an hour a day thinking about the life of Jesus, especially the time just before His death.** (See *The Desire of Ages*, p. 83.)

Ask: **Why do you think that is?** (So we can understand and appreciate how much Jesus loves us; so we can tell others.)

Say: **Today we are going to talk about how we can share God's love as Jesus did, even with the last breath.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ headlines from newspapers
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Experiencing the Story

Have the students read the story of the Crucifixion from Matthew 27:27-44. When they are finished, display a collection of headlines that you have cut out from newspapers prior to Sabbath School.

Talk about how the students would write the headline for the story of the Crucifixion. Encourage many possible headlines. As they are created, write them where all can see.

Say: **By believing in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, we receive the assurance of salvation.**

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Exploring the Bible

Say: **Jesus fulfilled many Old Testament prophecies about His mission. Probably the most famous is that of the "Suffering Servant" of Isaiah 53:7-12. This prophecy about Jesus was fulfilled in the New Testament in Matthew 27. Let's read the passage in Isaiah and compare it with Matthew 27.**

Help the students find the following comparisons:
Isaiah 53:7—Matthew 27:12-14, 31
Isaiah 53:8—Matthew 27:30, 31
Isaiah 53:9—Matthew 27:38, 57-60
Isaiah 53:12—Matthew 27:38

Let's say our power text together:

"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!' " (Matthew 27:54).

(Adapted from V. Bailey Gillespie, *The Sounds of Grace in Our Churches,* 1996 [Pacific Union College Church Resource Center, 1996], p. 58. Used by permission.)

YOU NEED:
- ☐ 10 pieces of fruit
- ☐ OR healthy treats for each one

*Get and Give Away**

Give each student 10 pieces of fruit or other healthy treats. Give a quick quiz over the facts in the Bible lesson. The quiz should include 10 questions. After each question, point to the first student to answer correctly and instruct each student in the class to give that student one of their fruits/treats. At the end of the quiz, ask students to compare the number of fruits/treats each one has.

Debriefing

Say: **Let's follow Jesus' example right now and share equally with everyone in our class. Put all your fruits/treats on the table. We'll divide them up so that every student gets to take home five fruits/treats**.

As the power point reminds us,

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

*Be aware of any food allergies and adjust accordingly.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:

- ☐ scissors
- ☐ stiff white paper
- ☐ markers or crayons

Share the Good News

Invite students to share with the class if they had the opportunity last week to tell others the story of Jesus. Ask: **What did you share with someone about Jesus? What is your personal experience with God? Did you share with someone how you came to know Jesus and to accept Him in your heart? What response did you get?**

Prior to class cut out cards from stiff white paper. Hand out the cards to the students. Have them write John 3:16 on them, and decorate them. Encourage the students to share their cards with neighbors, or leave them in strategic places such as phone booths or bus stops.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

In closing, repeat with the students the power point once again:

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **Jesus is alive! As we serve others we can tell them the good news about Jesus' resurrection.**

Notes

Student lesson

Love on a Tree

Have you ever been in pain? You just wanted to be left alone, didn't you? What would it take for you to be able to reach out to someone else while you are in pain?

Jesus' followers wanted to forget the horror of Pilate's court. Jesus had been beaten, and the soldiers had mocked and insulted Him. People had even spit in Jesus' face. Now He was going to die on a cross. The people following Jesus, many of whom He had healed, couldn't believe what He had gone through. And yet He had not shown any resistance.

Finally, the group reached the top of Golgotha, the Place of the Skull. The surprised followers saw a large crowd gathered on the hill. Many people who had followed Jesus had come to see Him one last time. They were wailing in grief. But others were mocking Him. Two other prisoners, convicted thieves, already lay on crosses on the ground.

The soldiers roughly took Jesus' cross and threw it on the ground. They stripped Jesus of His cloak and pushed Him onto the cross. As Jesus' weakened frame lay on the rough wood of the cross, the crown of thorns sank deeper into His head. Fresh blood flowed onto His already bruised, battered, and bloody face. Yet Jesus was still, waiting for the Roman soldiers to finish their cruel work.

Two of the soldiers knelt on either side of Jesus' arms. Each held a thick metal spike in his hand. The soldiers positioned the spikes over Jesus' wrists. Together they raised their hammers into the air and then brought them down to make contact with the spikes. Jesus' followers turned away, but they couldn't escape the sound. *Clang. Clang. Clang.* As the hammers beat against the spikes, the sound reverberated across the hilltop. The soldiers moved to Jesus' feet, placing one on top of the other. One soldier held a spike as the other raised the hammer. Again Jesus' followers looked away. Again the sound penetrated to their core. *Clang. Clang. Clang.* The followers marveled that Jesus never said a word as the soldiers drove the thick spikes into His flesh. When the echo of the hammers and spikes had subsided, those close to the scene heard Jesus speak.

"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke 23:34). His followers drew in their breath, and tears sprang to their eyes as they witnessed Jesus' words of forgiveness.

As the soldiers roughly lifted the crosses with their human burdens upright, one could see Jesus' back. It was all torn from the whips the soldiers had used on Him. His raw flesh ached profoundly as it came in contact with the rough wood of the cross. Still He said nothing.

One thief, who had been struggling, screamed at the soldiers and at the crowd. He was angry and wasn't going to die without everyone else knowing about it. Suddenly he turned to Jesus.

The thief tried to provoke Jesus to speak. The crowd watched as, turning His head slowly, Jesus forced open His swollen eyes. Without responding, He looked at the thief with pity.

"Aren't you the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" sneered the thief.

Twisting in pain, the other thief started to reprove him. "Don't you fear God," he said, "since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong."

He painfully turned his head and focused his eyes on Jesus, saying, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus struggled to open His eyes again. He raised Himself on His feet and hands as He tried to get enough breath to speak through His pain, "Trully I tell you today, you will be with me in paradise" (see verses 39-43).

Jesus' followers stood in awe as they watched this exchange. Although it was terribly painful for Him to speak, Jesus still offered words of loving comfort, serving others even as He hung dying on the cross.

KEY REFERENCES

- Matthew 27:27-66; Luke 23:26-49
- *The Desire of Ages*, chap. 78, pp. 741-757; chap. 79, pp. 758-764.
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 9, pp. 105-117
- Our Beliefs nos. 10, 9, 4

POWER TEXT

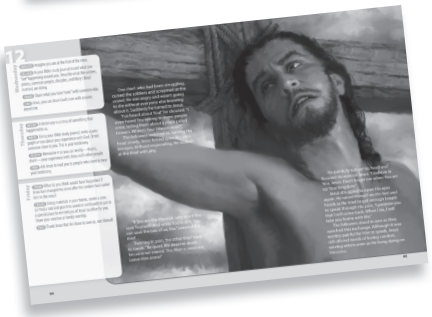
"When the centurion and those with him who were guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and all that had happened, they were terrified, and exclaimed, 'Surely he was the Son of God!' " (Matthew 27:54).

POWER POINT

Like Jesus, we can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 89.

Sunday

READ Read Luke 23:26–34 and this week's lesson, "Love on a Tree."

THINK Think of how crucifying Jesus may have impacted the soldiers who nailed Him to the cross.

REVIEW Review the power text, Matthew 27:54.

PRAY Pray that you may share the story of the cross.

Monday

READ Read Luke 23:35–49.

THINK How would you have felt if you were watching Jesus die on the cross?

WRITE Write your answer in your Bible study journal.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank Jesus for His sacrificial death on the cross, which offers you salvation.

Tuesday

READ Read Matthew 27:33–44.

THINK Think about the crucifixion of Jesus and about the great pain He endured to offer you eternal life.

SHARE Talk about Jesus' matchless love and infinite sacrifice for our salvation.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Pray that you may share God's love with anyone.

Wednesday

READ Read Mark 15:22–32.

RECORD In your Bible study journal, describe the scene taking place at Jesus' crucifixion, referring to the soldiers, priests, common people, disciples, and Jesus' mother.

SHARE Like Jesus, you can share God's love with anyone, anywhere.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Praise God for the call to tell others about His love.

Thursday

READ Read John 19:17–24.

WRITE Using your Bible study journal, write a paragraph or two about your experience with God.

TESTIFY Memorize it so you can testify of—that is, share—your experience with Jesus with other people.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask Jesus to help you share your testimony with someone who has not yet experienced Jesus' great love.

Friday

READ Read John 3:16, 17.

THINK How would our future be if Jesus would have decided not to die for us on the cross?

CREATE Using materials in your home, create a cross (or find a nail and glue it to wood or cardboard) to put in a special place to remind you of Jesus' sacrifice for you. Share your creation at family worship.

REPEAT Say your power text aloud by memory.

PRAY Thank Jesus that He chose to save us, not Himself.