

LESSON 42 The Passion of Jesus

GROUNDWORK

- In this lesson we plan to:
 - read and become familiar with the gospel accounts of the death of Jesus.

DIGGING DEEPER

How does the passion of Christ impact on the lives of Christians today?



Key Concepts

Sacrifice/Martyrdom

The Passion of Jesus refers to his great suffering between the night of the Last Supper and his death on the cross. All over the world today, there are people who are suffering. The following story is a tale of great suffering and, unfortunately, it is a story that continues to unfold.

Story: Innocent Voices

Innocent Voices is a film based on the true story of screenwriter Oscar Torres' difficult childhood. It is a story about Chava, an eleven-year-old boy who suddenly becomes the 'man of the house' when his father leaves the family in the middle of a civil war. The story is based in El Salvador in Central America in the 1980s. At that time, the government's armed forces were recruiting twelve-year-olds to fight against the peasant rebels. Young boys were snatched from their classrooms or caught on the streets. In the film, Chava has just one year of childhood left. On his twelfth birthday, he will be recruited to fight in the government's war. Chava's life becomes a game of survival, not only from the bullets of the war, but also from the tension and conflict that wars always bring. By day, he tries to make money to pay the bills and by night he tries to keep alive the childish spirits of his brother and sister. All the while, he runs for his life and hides from the army sweeps. The tension of battle is all around.



Unfortunately, Oscar Torres' story is not unique. Today, an estimated 300,000 child soldiers – boys and girls under the age of eighteen – are taking part in more than thirty conflicts worldwide. Many are as young as Chava. Wars kill and maim children, forcing them out of their childhood and disrupting their societies. For decades, organisations like UNICEF have worked to help children affected by armed conflict.

KNOW WHAT

1. What does the title tell us about the film?
2. Why was Chava's life full of tension and conflict?
3. What did he do to make the best of his situation?
4. What does this story tell us about the violence and terror that always accompanies armed conflict?



DIGGING DEEPER

What do you think could help in difficult situations such as the one outlined above?

Find out more about this award-winning film on www.innocentvoicesmovie.com.

Sacrifice

What does the word 'sacrifice' mean to you? Look at the following pictures and, in each case, outline what the sacrifice might be.



Jesus sacrificed himself for others by giving his time and energy to do what God wanted and to love others as himself. Jesus knew that he would be killed if he continued to preach his message, but he was prepared to suffer and even to die in order to do so. He made this huge sacrifice because of his love for God and for all God's people. He knew that, through his sacrifice, others would enter the new life of the Kingdom of God because his Spirit would pour into their hearts.

KNOW WHAT

1. Lent is a special time of sacrifice for Christians. Explain why this is so.
2. Have you ever made a sacrifice during Lent? Discuss your answer in class.



Martyrdom

The word 'martyr' comes from the Greek word for 'witness'. The word 'witness' in this sense describes someone who stands up for what they believe in, even if there is a heavy price to be paid for doing so. Jesus gave his whole life as a witness to God's love, particularly in his death on the cross. Ever since, people who have died for their faith have been called martyrs. St Stephen is the first martyr to be mentioned after the death of Jesus. (You can read about his death in Acts 6.) His feast day is on 26 December. This day was chosen to link Stephen directly with Jesus. Like Jesus, Stephen was a witness to belief in God's love, even in the face of death.

KNOW IT ALL

Copy the following into your Religion folder and complete the sentences.

1. A martyr is...
2. St Stephen was a martyr because ...
3. 26 December is the feast of St Stephen because...

