

Glow In The Dark

Week 4

**BIG IDEA**  
God hears our cries.

**BIBLE**  
Jesus Dies on the Cross:  
Luke 23:32–49; Psalm 31:9–16

LARGE GROUP TIME

Easter is almost here! I can almost see that early morning Easter sunrise sending sunlight rays of hope into the darkness. Before we head off into that *glow*-rious celebration, we must remember the deepest darkness that Jesus had to go through for you and me and how the light of his love never flickered out.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Tic Tac Glow

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Create [tic-tac-toe grids](#) using neon tape or glow sticks. Tape together five "O"s and five "X"s using glow sticks for game play. Split kids up into as many even-numbered teams as grids you made. Have members of teams take turns placing their markers on the grid, but the trick is they have to toss it onto the grid from a designated distance.
- The goal of this game was to get three in a row. That reminds me of today's Bible story, where we see not one but three crosses in a row on the day Jesus died. We'll find out what happened in just a minute.

POLL | Things That Make Us Cry

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Poll your kids' responses to the following questions by having them show you their best crying faces whenever they hear a statement that might make them sad.
- I know a lot of us might not want to admit this, but we all cry sometimes. Sometimes it's because we're sad or frustrated, and other times it's because we were laughing so hard that it made us cry. Sometimes we even try not to cry, even though we really want to.
- Which of these things might make you want to cry?**
  - You watch a sad scene in a movie.**
  - You have to move away to a new town.**
  - You walked into the kitchen while someone was chopping onions.**
  - Your best friend won't talk to you anymore.**
  - You have to get a shot at the doctor's office.**
  - You lost a pet.**
  - Your friend lost a pet.**
  - You got in trouble because you made a big mistake.**
  - You got in trouble for no reason.**
- Today's Bible story is about a time when Jesus got in trouble for no reason . . . well, there was a very good reason he had to suffer, but it wasn't because he did anything wrong. It was so awful that even Jesus cried out.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Luke 23:32–49 (Jesus Dies on the Cross)

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Stand under a single spotlight (or have it pointed at you) as you read from the passage and tell the Bible story. Create three crosses with glow-in-the-dark [tape](#) on a wall near where you are teaching, and illuminate it with a blacklight. Give each kid a battery-operated tea candle. Turn down the lights before you begin teaching.
- Now it's time to turn the spotlight on the Bible story. Each time I say, "Scripture Spotlight!" hold your candle up in the air. **Are you ready?** Let's glow!
- The time had come for Jesus, God's son, to die on the cross. Up until now, he had shown that he hadn't done anything wrong, but the religious leaders, Pilate, and the crowd chose to have Jesus sentenced to death. As if that wasn't enough, Jesus was humiliated and beaten severely before his execution.
- Scripture Spotlight: Luke 23:32–38.**
  - Jesus was nailed to the cross like a criminal. Even as he was dying, people were gathering to watch. They divided up his clothes. They mocked him for not rescuing himself.
  - Can you imagine how much sadness Jesus was experiencing?** He was in excruciating pain, and he was betrayed and despised by the people he came to love and save. He was hurting so much that in a different account of this story, Jesus cried out to God because he felt like God had left him.
- Scripture Spotlight: Luke 23:39–43.**
  - That second criminal, regardless of what he had done in the past, understood who Jesus was. When he cried out to Jesus, Jesus answered back. He listened to the criminal and showed him love and forgiveness. Even in his darkest moment, Jesus offered hope and light.
- Scripture Spotlight: Luke 23:44–49.**
  - Jesus cried out to God one last time before he died. We know God heard Jesus' cry! Why? Because this is not the end of the story. Nope! This is just the beginning. Even though Jesus had died and was placed in a tomb, God does something amazing just three days later. More on that next time!
- The way we experience pain and sadness is nothing like what Jesus went through, but that doesn't mean we can't cry out to God, too. God did not leave or forget Jesus when he was on that cross, even though it might have felt like it. Just like how God doesn't leave or forget us.

BIG IDEA | God hears our cries.

ACTIVITY | God Hears My Emojis

- INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each team a set of emoji [printables](#). Call out a statement below and see how quickly each team could locate a corresponding emoji and bring it to the front. If the emojis brought up are different from each other, ask them to explain why they made their choices. Afterward, have them discuss in their circles a time when they might feel each of the emotions portrayed by the emoji expressions.

- **What face would you make when you are feeling . . .**
  - **Angry?**
  - **Happy?**
  - **Scared?**
  - **Tired?**
  - **Excited?**
  - **Sad?**
  - **Doubt?**
  - **Pain?**
- God doesn't mind it when we show our emotions, every single one of them. God is always listening to us and wants us to share how we are feeling.
- **When are some times when you might feel these types of emotions?**
- We were created to have all kinds of emotions. God is with us all the time, when we are happy and when we're sad. And we can go to God with everything. God hears our laughter. God hears our screams. God hears our questions. God hears our yawns. And **God hears our cries.**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 31:9–16

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage aloud.*
- The first half of this scripture talks about being sad, feeling alone, and being in physical pain. We all have felt these emotions before. Even Jesus felt these emotions. In fact, they are so common there's a word for it: lament.
- It's a kind of prayer or truth-telling that admits we are sad and we need God. Jesus lamented, old prophets wrote laments, and even today we can lament when we wish a situation is better than it actually is.
- **But let's read verse 14 again.** The writer of this psalm is crying out to God. Why? Because God is listening. **God hears our cries.**

VIDEO | Glow in the Dark, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of Press Play.*

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | How Can I Cry Out to God?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *As kids reflect, you might want to switch off the lights or have them cover their eyes with their hands.*
- God created us with feelings. You may be incredibly sad, upset about something that has happened to you, or frustrated with a situation that you have no control over. There are so many things that happen to us and around us that we simply can't control.
- **Do you share these feelings with God?**
- Crying out to God doesn't mean you have to literally cry. But it does mean you should talk to God about it. And we know that God hears us when we do.
- **What are some ways you could cry out to God?**

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 27:1a (NIV)

- **"The Lord is my light and my salvation — whom shall I fear?"**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Get [glow-in-the-dark flying discs](#) or [light-up frisbees](#) to pass around in the dark. Each time the disc changes hands, everyone has to recite the next word of the memory verse. See if they can get through the whole verse without dropping the disc.

PRAYER

- God, thank you for sending us Jesus, even though that meant letting your own son go through incomparable pain, suffering, and sadness. Because of this, we know you understand the tough things we experience, too. Thank you for hearing us when we cry out to you. Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
  - **Who cried out to Jesus things like, "Save yourself if you're really the king?"** *Soldiers, rulers, people watching.*
  - **Who cried out to Jesus, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom?"** *One of the criminals beside Jesus*
  - **Who cried out to God, "Into your hands I commit my spirit?"** *Jesus*
  - **Psalm 31:14–16. How can you tell the writer of this psalm knew God hears our cries?** *The verse says things like "I trust in you," "my times are in your hands," and "save me in your unfailing love."*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
  - **When are times that you feel sad, worried, or any other big emotion?**
  - **What are some words you can use to cry out to God when you are feeling these things?**
  - **How do you think crying out to God can help when things are tough?**