

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Holy Cross Day

Preparation:

Read the Epistle and Gospel for the day over [1 Corinthians 1:18-24](#) and [John 3:13-17](#) – Pay attention to the words or phrases that jump out at you.

Read over the lesson so that you are familiar with what is intended to happen. Gather the materials that you will need for each section of the lesson. For deeper thinking or for ways to extend the lesson take a look at the following websites:

http://www.textweek.com/festivals/holy_cross.htm

http://www.cyberfaith.com/proclaiming_faith.cfm?reading_id=401&language=eng&book=0

<http://www.word-sunday.com/Files/Seasonal/Exaltation/A-Exaltation.html>

<http://www.digitaljive.com/stdavids/sermons/sermon21/sermon21.html> - a sermon from an Anglican priest

http://cowo.culham.ac.uk/reflections/063s_holycross.php - a good short power point presentation with some different crosses in it

<http://www.seiyaku.com/customs/crosses/index-all.html> - this is a good site with lots of different crosses and explanations about each of them

This is probably the first Sunday back for the Sunday School. If this is your first time with the children take time to introduce each other. If you have an older group you might want to spend some time to deciding on group norms together; that is, the rules of behaviour for the group. If you are teaching younger children you probably want to give them some simple guidelines to follow.

Holy Cross Day is considered a holy day on the Anglican calendar – if you have a church calendar you might want to take a look at what other holy days are marked on the calendar. Holy days take precedence over the regular readings for the day which is why we are not using a story from Matthew's gospel for today's lesson.

Gathering:

Materials needed:

Small table or end of one table

White candle

Bible & Bookmark

Red cloth (optional)

Newsprint and markers

As many different crosses – wall, jewellery, pictures – that you can find

Gather around the small table or at the end of one table. If you have the red cloth put it down and place the candle on it and put the Bible near the candle (you may want to let the children help with this). Write the prayer up on the newsprint so that everyone can see it.

Light the candle.

Pray the following prayer together:

Loving God be with us today,

Loving Jesus be with us today,

Loving Spirit be with us today,

Amen.

Blow out the candle. Place the different crosses on the table. Ask the children if they know what they are. If there is a cross there that is important to you tell the children about it – where it came from, why it

means so much. Ask the children if they know why the cross is so important for Christians. Explain today they will be hearing why the cross is still so important to us.

Story Time:

Materials needed: print out the story if able and place in an envelope – on the outside of the envelope print **TO THE CHILDREN OF NAME OF YOUR CHURCH.**

Show the children the envelope and if you have a reader in the group invite them to read the address on the front of the envelope. Explain that the letter has come from Paul who was a leader in the early church and he wants to share with them why the cross is so important to Christians. Start reading the letter:

“Greetings dear children in the name of Jesus who is the one who came to save us all. I have something very important to tell you. It is so important that I had to put it in a letter for you.

You may have heard that Jesus’ cross doesn’t mean anything anymore. It seems to be a little foolish to many people. I tell you it is the most important part of what makes us Christians. It is the power of God. It is the wisdom of God. Let me tell you why.

It is on the cross that Jesus gave up his life for all of us. It is on the cross that love shone through with the power of God. It is on the cross that the wisdom of God shows all people the true meaning of power.

God’s power and wisdom are not for the big and the strong. They are for the ones that follow God right to the end. This is what Jesus did for us on the cross. He showed us that love given freely can open up so many doors. He showed us that we can come to God through the cross.

The cross is not the end of the story. We all know that God raised Jesus from the dead. This is why the cross is so important to us. It reminds us what can happen when we trust fully in God. It reminds us that the love of God will always be with us.

Whenever you see a cross remember the gift that Jesus gave to all of us. Remember that each one of you is a child of God because of that gift.

May God bless each one of you.
Your friend,
Paul

Response:

Idea #1: Mosaic Cross

With this craft the children will be able to connect with having their own cross to share the story of their faith to others.

Materials needed: poster board, marker, scissors, tissue paper (various colours), and glue sticks

Instructions: Draw a cross on to the poster board that measures 8 cm/3 inches across the bottom and 16 cm/6 inches up on each side before doing the cross part and then make the dimensions slightly smaller than the bottom part. Cut it out and use it as a template to make one cross per child. Show the children how to tear up the tissue paper and glue on to the cross shape. Suggest that if they overlap the colours it will look even more beautiful. As the children are decorating their crosses ask them to think about where they would like to place them in their homes. Remind them to think about the gift that Jesus gave us as they make their crosses. If they want have them print **POWER OF GOD** across their crosses.

Idea #2: Cross Rubbing

Rubbings is something that has been done in European churches for a long time. This idea will be good for children who need a more concrete activity.

Materials needed: cardboard (from a box preferably), markers, scissors or box cutters, masking tape, crayons and newsprint

Instructions: Take a look at the [cross website](#) and choose some of them to make copies of and print them up. On the cardboard trace and then cut out the various crosses that you have prepared. Tape the crosses down to the work area using loops of tape with the sticky side on the outside. Place the newsprint over the crosses so that the children can't see where they are. Invite the children to feel the paper and see if they can find anything under the newsprint. When they do give them a crayon (let them choose the colour) and invite them to rub the crayon over the shape that they have found. If you can remember the name of the cross then print it underneath the cross when finished. When all the crosses have been found and rubbed invite the children to come up with a name for the rubbings and then put it up where others in the congregation can see it.

Idea #3: Bead Cross Necklace

If you have an older group this will probably be a good idea for them to do. Even boys can do this craft, because even if they don't want to wear the necklace they can give it to someone else.

Materials needed: strong, flexible wire, cutters, variety of beads, and plastic lanyard

Instructions: Cut pieces of plastic lanyard about 60 cm/24 inches in length. Cut the wire into 30 cm/6 inch lengths. Help the children to fold the wire into a cross shape. Push beads onto each of the cross's four arms. At the top of the cross put the lanyard through the loop and tie the lanyard ends together. It might be necessary to twist the ends of the wire loops where the beads are in order to keep the beads in place.

Closing:

Gather with the children around the worship table again. Relight the candle. Say the prayer line by line and encourage the children to repeat it after you:

Thank you God for our time together,

Thank you Jesus for being our friend,

Thank you Spirit for showing us the way,

Amen.