

International Conversation Café

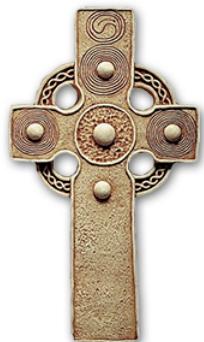
Community Group: The Death of Jesus Christ

Jesus spent the last three- and one-half years of his life as a traveling teacher and healer in Jerusalem and in the surrounding countryside. He taught about God's kingdom: what it was like, how valuable it was, and how to be a part of it. He taught that God shows favor to those who are humble but resists those who are proud and feel they do not need God. He showed people how to love one another.

Many believed and followed Him. However, there were many leaders and rulers that hated Him because He exposed their hypocrisy and pride. They did not believe that he was the King given to them by God. Their hatred, unbelief, and jealousy led them to arrest Jesus on charges of blasphemy. Blasphemy means to say untrue things about God thus showing disrespect.

Though Jesus was innocent, the Jewish leaders got permission from the Roman government to have him crucified. Crucifixion was the way the Romans put to death someone who had done a terrible crime. A person was nailed to a wooden cross and left to die a slow and painful death. To be crucified was very shameful.

Retell these 3 paragraphs in your own words.



Celtic Wheel Cross found at County Kilkenny, Ireland. 900 A.

Jesus is Crucified Luke 23:26-49

As they led Jesus away, they took hold of Simon. Simon was from Cyrene. He was on his way in from the country. They put a wooden cross on his shoulders. Then they made him carry it behind Jesus. A large number of people followed Jesus. Some were women whose hearts were filled with sorrow. They cried loudly because of him. Two other men were also led out with Jesus to be killed. Both of them had broken the law. The soldiers brought them to the place called The Skull. There they nailed Jesus to the cross. He hung between the two criminals. One was on his right and one was on his left.

Jesus said, "Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing."

The soldiers divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood there watching. The rulers even made fun of Jesus. They said, "He saved others. Let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One."

The soldiers also came up and poked fun at him. They offered him wine vinegar. They said, "If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself."

A written sign had been placed above him. It read, ~this is the king of the Jews~ One of the criminals hanging there made fun of Jesus. He said, "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself! Save us!"

But the other criminal scolded him. "Don't you have any respect for God?" he said. "Remember, you are under the same sentence of death. 41 We are being punished fairly. We are getting just what our actions call for. But this man hasn't done anything wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus answered him, "What I'm about to tell you is true. Today you will be with me in paradise."

It was now about noon. The whole land was covered with darkness until three o'clock. The sun had stopped shining. The temple curtain was torn in two. Jesus called out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my very life." After he said this, he took his last breath.

The Roman commander saw what had happened. He praised God and said, "Jesus was surely a man who did what was right."

The people had gathered to watch that sight. When they saw what happened, they beat their chests and went away. But all those who knew Jesus stood not very far away, watching those things. They included the women who had followed him from Galilee.

Discussion Questions

- 1. Define unknown words.*
- 2. Retell the story in your own words.*
- 3. Is anything confusing in this story?*
- 4. The 2nd criminal believed Jesus was the King, even though he did not look like a king as he was dying on the cross. What does his example teach us about faith?*

Why did Jesus die?

Christians believe that Jesus' life was given as a payment for our sins. He took the punishment we deserve. Because Jesus died, those who believe in Him can be forgiven and restored to God.

"Christ died for us at a time when we were helpless and sinful. No one is really willing to die for an honest person, though someone might be willing to die for a truly good person. But God showed how much He loved us by having Christ die for us, even though we were sinful. But there is more! Now that God has accepted us because Christ sacrificed his life's blood, we will also be kept safe from God's anger." Romans 5:6-7

Define unknown words.

Why is this story important and how does it affect your life?