

Easter is the most important time of year for Christians. It is when we remember how Jesus died on the cross and then two days later was raised back to life.

Good Friday – Jesus or Barabbas

Matthew chapter 27 verses 15 – 26; Mark chapter 15 verses 6 – chapter 16 verses 15; Luke chapter 23 verses 13-25; John chapter 18 verses 38 – 40.

Good Friday was the day when Jesus stood trial before the priests and later a Roman Governor called Pilate. There was a custom in those days that on the feast of the Passover the people could choose to set a prisoner free. Although Pilate could not find any wrong in Jesus, the crowd was given the choice of releasing either Jesus or the outlaw and criminal, Barabbas, who by the laws of those times deserved to die. The crowd chose Barabbas so Jesus was sentenced to death by crucifixion. Later that day Jesus was crucified. He died in the afternoon. His body was taken from the cross and put into a guarded tomb.

Good Friday is a day when Christians remember what Jesus did for them. It is the day that Christians remember God allowing Jesus, his perfect son, to take the world's sin – all the things people think, say and do wrong – onto Himself. Christians believe that when Jesus died He took the punishment for all of their individual sins. This means that they have been forgiven, and because of this God can be friends with them – both here on earth and when they die, in Heaven.

Good Friday is only half of the Easter story. The other is Jesus' resurrection. On Easter Sunday, the disciples visited Jesus' tomb but found the stone covering the cave had been moved and Jesus' body was gone. They reported seeing Jesus alive at the garden that morning, and then again at their house later. Christians believe that God raised Jesus to life again and believe that Jesus is alive today.

Reflection

- Reflect on the events of Good Friday and what Christians believe they mean:
 1. God loves each and every one of us.
 2. Jesus died in our place, just as he died in Barabbas's place, for all our sins, the wrong things that we think, say and do.
 3. We can choose to say sorry to God for our sins, the wrong things that we think, say and do, and be forgiven and be friends with God.
- The puppets talked about different kinds of love. Think about the things and people that you love – special foods, pets, family members, friends etc. - and how that love is demonstrated.
- Christians believe that God loves each one of us. How did he show that love at Easter?

Links

Here are some links to retellings of the Easter story:

https://youtu.be/J_E-3BqgeiU

<https://youtu.be/LgFZDCguR8E>

You might find these links helpful to understand what Christians believe about Easter:

<http://request.org.uk/restart/2015/11/24/the-cross/>

<https://www.whyehaster.com/>

Please check that these are suitable for your group.

Inspire Prayer Space Activity – The Cross Means Love

Equipment

Some form of modelling clay, plasticine or playdough

Description

Christians believe that Jesus died on a cross for the wrong things we think, say and do, because he loves us and wants us to be forgiven and have a brand new start.

Instructions

Make a cross shape out of the clay and think about what Christians believe about Easter – that Jesus died for us. Turn the cross into a heart shape as you remember that the Bible says that he did this because he loves each one of us – the cross means love.



Adapted from a Prayer Spaces in Schools resource



See below for activity ideas

Easter Garden



Make an Easter Garden to remember the events of Good Friday and Easter Sunday:

<https://request.org.uk/resource/restart/2017/02/23/make-an-easter-garden/>

Bible Verse Wordsearch

In the sketch, Barabbas saw that Jesus died in his place. There is a Bible verse that records what Jesus says about this, which can be found in the book of John, written by one of Jesus' friends:

C	G	N	E	M	E	H	T	F	E
O	H	V	O	L	D	S	L	I	S
J	I	A	O	S	E	I	I	F	R
G	O	V	P	T	R	H	F	T	E
C	E	H	A	T	H	E	E	E	V
A	L	E	N	O	E	R	P	E	V
N	R	H	A	V	E	R	O	N	E
G	S	S	D	N	E	I	R	F	Y
O	T	H	I	R	T	E	E	N	U

“The greatest love a person can have for his friends is to give his life for them.”

John chapter 15 verse 13.

See if you can find all of the words in the wordsearch. Cross them off from the list underneath.

Now write down the letters you have not used (in order). They spell out something that Barabbas learned at Easter.

THEM
FOR
CAN

LOVE
PERSON
FIFTEEN

THIRTEEN
FRIENDS
CHAPTER

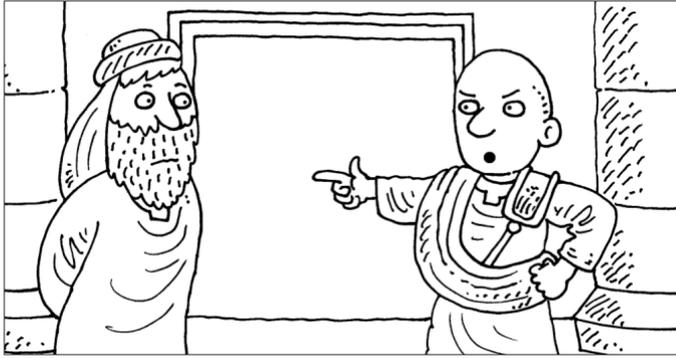
HIS
JOHN
GREATEST

THE
HAVE
VERSE

LIFE
GIVE

What did Barabbas learn? _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

An Easter Colouring Story



1. Jesus was arrested and taken to be judged by the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, who was in charge of the country where the Jews lived. Pilate couldn't find anything that Jesus had done wrong.



2. Once a year Pilate could release one Jewish prisoner. He decided to ask the people if he should release Jesus or Barabbas, who was a very nasty man who had done lots of bad things.



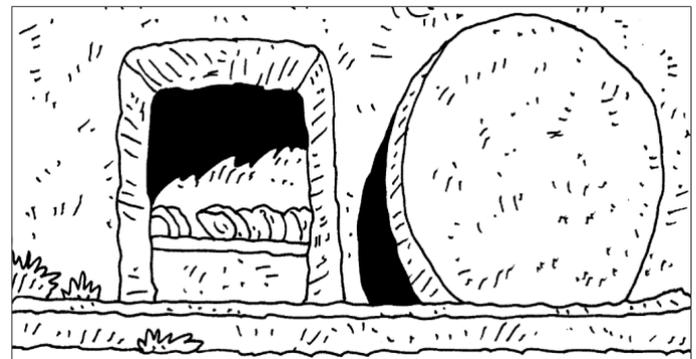
3. The crowd shouted that they wanted Pilate to release Barabbas rather than Jesus. Pilate was surprised. The crowd called for Jesus to be crucified.



4. Pilate did what the crowd wanted. But Pilate didn't think Jesus did anything wrong so he washed his hands to show that he didn't want to be responsible for Jesus' death.



5. Jesus was beaten by the Roman soldiers and then taken to a hill to be nailed on a cross. There he died. His body was put in a stone tomb.



6. Two days later, the tomb was empty. No-one knew what had happened to Jesus' body. Then Jesus appeared to his friends, walking and talking. God had raised Jesus to life again!