

BIBLE POINT

Day 4

Jesus' power lets us live forever.

Bible Story: Jesus' death and Resurrection. (Matthew 26:17–28:10)

Bible Verse: “The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you.”
(Romans 8:11)

Catholic ID: Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saint of the Day: Saint Mary

Consider This...

- ▶ The Passover meal shared between Jesus and his disciples commemorated God's miraculous provision for his people centuries earlier. In this traditional celebration, Jews remembered the sacrificial lamb, whose blood (marked on their doorposts in Egypt) saved them. How appropriate that Jesus—*our* sacrificial Lamb—completes his work on earth with such a significant event and gives us *himself* truly present in the Eucharist as our new and complete Passover, preparing us for eternal life.
- ▶ In Jesus' culture—and in some Middle Eastern cultures today—eating together equaled friendship. Scholars equate sharing a meal with trust and intimacy, adding weight to Jesus' comment to Judas: “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me” (Matthew 26:23).
- ▶ The Roman government had deprived the Sanhedrin of the right to carry out most capital punishments. Therefore, even though the chief priests and elders found Jesus guilty, they had to turn him over to Pilate for execution.
- ▶ At Jesus' death, Matthew 27:51 records that “the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom.” There were actually two curtains in the Temple. One divided the Most Holy Place from the Holy Place; the other separated the Holy Place from the court. Matthew doesn't specify *which* curtain tore, but a rending of either one would symbolize changes between God, ritual law, and humanity.
- ▶ Even Jesus' followers found his Resurrection hard to believe! Matthew 28:17 tells us, “but some doubted.” Yet Jesus eased their doubts by appearing to them repeatedly over 40 days (Acts 1:3; 10:40-41).

Why It Matters...

Death is an uncomfortable—and even scary—topic for children *and* adults. Even though we don't like to talk or think about it, it's likely that most kids will experience the death of a pet, friend, or relative. That's why it's critical that we help children understand the hope we have through Jesus. Even though death may mean the end of *this* life, kids can celebrate the astonishing promise of eternal life with Jesus. Use today's lesson to help children understand their need for Jesus. He has given us the Sacrament of Reconciliation, which lets us maintain loving friendship and closeness with God by confessing our sins, and the Eucharist as the strengthening food for our journey toward Heaven. These purify us and make us holy and strong, like the Blessed Virgin Mary, our Mother, who is the perfect disciple of Jesus. She was a witness of Jesus' death and Resurrection and was assumed into Heaven at the end of her life. Reconciliation renews the perfect holiness of our Baptism, bringing us fully back into the loving arms of our Father. It is there for us to receive frequently so we can maintain that close relationship with God, and so that when we die we can be in that state of friendship and sanctifying grace that will allow us to be with God in loving friendship forever! Guide the children as they discover that, through Jesus' miraculous power and the grace of his Sacraments, we can live forever in Heaven.

