



Life of Christ

The thief on the cross

Luke 23:32-43

Younger Verse

God wants all people to be saved (go to Heaven). 1 Timothy 2:4

Older Verse

God wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. 1 Timothy 2:4

Lesson Goals

Know when you can become a Christian.
Explain where you can become a Christian.

Welcome Time

Have you ever wondered when and where you can become a Christian? Today's lesson is probably one you have never heard before. Let's open our Bibles and learn something new.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Lots of people have ideas about when a person can believe in Jesus. Some people think you have to be 12 years old. Others think that you have to be an adult. The Bible does not say a certain time when we can trust Him. What it does say is that a person must really believe in Jesus with all his heart. It is easy to know about Jesus in your mind. That's not what God means. God wants you to believe in Jesus and trust Him with your heart.

For example, lots of people know **who** Emmitt Smith is. There are friends and family that really **know** Emmitt personally. You may know **who** Jesus is. However, He wants you to really **know** Him personally. You do that by believing Him and asking Him to come into your life.

Some people may think that a person has to ask Jesus into his heart at church or Bible study time. Guess what? The Bible tells us that there is no certain place that you have to do this. God is not so concerned about where you ask Jesus to come into your life. God is more concerned that you believe in Jesus and not put it off. You could pray at Bible study, in your room, with a friend, or even in the bath tub! The main thing is that you are serious about trusting Jesus and you want Him to be with you forever.

There is a lesson in the Bible that gives an example of how someone believed in Jesus. It was at a very unusual place and at a very unusual time. Let's see what happened.

When Jesus was being taken to the hill to be crucified, two criminals walked with Him. They were being killed because they had done wrong.

When they reached the place called the "skull", they crucified Jesus and the two criminals by hammering nails in their hands and feet onto a wooden cross. One man's



cross was on Jesus' left side and the other was on His right. Jesus was in the middle.

Suddenly, Jesus said something that surprised everyone. He prayed and asked God to forgive everyone because they did not know what they were doing. Can you believe it? Even when Jesus was in so much pain and suffering, He was thinking about others.

People that were standing and watching started making fun of Jesus. They yelled insults at Him. They chuckled at Him and said, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is Jesus." They did not realize that Jesus had to die in order for us to be able to go to Heaven. He died for all people—even the people who were yelling the insults!

One of the criminals on the cross started insulting Jesus too. He wanted Jesus to save all of them! But the other criminal told him to stop. He said, "We are punished rightly for the things that we have done wrong. We are getting what we deserve. Jesus has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."

Jesus told the criminal that he would be in Heaven. Why? It was because the man believed in Jesus and knew that Jesus was God's Son. He trusted Jesus and he became a Christian—even though he was about to die and he was hanging on a wooden cross.

Are you wondering what happened next? Well, soon after that, Jesus died. They laid Him in a grave and put a stone over the entrance. Three days later, on Sunday, something wonderful happened. Jesus came back to life! He was alive again! Because of what Jesus did for you, taking your punishment for your wrongs, you can go to Heaven, if you trust Him and ask Him to come into your life. Would you like to do this? Just like the thief became a Christian, you can too. Talk to me about it.

Learning Activities

Take time to help the children learn and respond to the lesson. Be sensitive to what they are thinking and feeling. Have a question and answer time to help them understand what it means to be a Christian. Emphasize the fact that they can become a Christian anywhere at anytime. Stress the importance of doing so soon and not putting it off to another day.

Memory Verse Activities

Try helping your kids learn the verse using sign language. It's a fun way to remember it. Or, you can play charades and get the kids to figure out the verse.

Prayer Time

Take prayer seriously. Make sure the kids are quiet and reverent during this time. If needed, tell the kids that they will only receive treats when the prayer is said. Explain the importance of respecting God.

Snack Time/CleanUp

Clean up and share some tasty treats with the kids. Encourage them to bring their friends next week.

Planning for Feb. 7th
Why should I become a Christian?
The story of the pearl and treasure
Matt. 13:44-45
Memory Verse: Romans 6:23