

A Children’s Church Program for Lent (Six Weeks)  
Created by Julianne Nelson

Julianne Nelson serves in two part-time ministry positions: as pastor of First Christian Church,  
Clever, Missouri, and associate pastor of educational development at Evangel Temple Christian  
Center in Springfield, Missouri.

Supplies needed:  
Paper, crayons, described drawings to be colored, listed books, a small wooden cross to be  
displayed on the wall, basket, tape, and palms.

Week 1: Coming to the Cross Scared

For the next six Sundays we are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we  
bring ourselves just as we are. Today, we remember that sometimes we are scared.

1. Hearing

(Story 1) Read Ira Sleeps Over by Bernard Waber

(Story 2) There is a story in the Bible about 100 sheep being all huddled together. Then one of  
them got separated from the others and got lost. A lost sheep is a scared sheep. There is a lot to be  
scared about. There may be a wolf nearby, or a lion, or a bear. There may be thorns to get stuck  
in, or a steep cliff to fall off. There may be sharp rocks to cut his feet, or holes to fall into. Yikes!  
That is a lot to be scared about!

2. Seeing

(Pass out crayons and a picture of Jesus as good shepherd; have them color it).

When Jesus’ friends were scared, He would tell them, “Don’t be afraid.” Jesus promised to  
always be with them. He said He was like a shepherd who would go find the lost sheep and bring  
it back to be with all the other sheep.

3. Doing

(Tack a piece of paper at center of a wooden cross. As they name their fears, write them on the  
paper.)

Have you ever been scared? What made you feel afraid? Jesus understands when we feel scared.  
He probably felt afraid when He was going to the Cross. We will write our fears here to  
remember that Jesus understands them and will always stay with us.

4. Doing for others

You just heard lots of people say that sometimes they have felt scared. Since we are Jesus’  
helpers, what can we do when other people feel scared?

(Examples: find a grown up to help them; tell them we have felt that way, too; hold their hand or  
give them a hug; play with them, etc.)
Try helping someone this week if you see they are scared.

**Week 2: Coming to the Cross Lonely or Sad**

We are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we bring ourselves just as we are. Today, we remember that sometimes we are sad or lonely.

1. **Hearing**

*(Story 1)* *Read Big Al by Andrew Clements*

How did Big Al feel? Why? What did Big Al do to show the other fish what he was really like? How did they treat him then and how did that make him feel?

*(Story 2)* It’s not always easy to be a good friend. Peter was a good friend of Jesus’. Jesus called him a disciple, a close follower. But one day, Peter told people that he didn’t even know who Jesus was. And he didn’t say that just once. He said it *three* times: “I don’t even know that man Jesus!” That wasn’t being a good friend, was it? It made Jesus feel sad. Maybe He felt lonely, too. So Jesus can understand when we feel sad or lonely.

2. **Seeing**

*(Pass out a drawing of a crying child and crayons and have them color it.)*

3. **Doing**

*(Tack a large piece of paper to center of a wooden cross. As the children name things that make them feel sad or lonely, write those on the paper for them to see.)*

What makes you feel sad? Have you ever felt lonely? What do you do when you feel that way? Jesus cares about our feelings, and wants us to know that He is always with us when we feel that way.

4. **Doing for Others**

You just heard each other say that sometimes they feel sad or lonely. Everybody does. Since we are Jesus’ helpers, what can we do when we see somebody acting sad or lonely?

*(Examples: ask them what is the matter, tell them we will be their friend, invite them to play with us, sit with them, etc.)*

Try helping someone this week who looks sad or lonely. Tell us about it next week.

5. **Prayer**

Dear Jesus, sometimes You felt sad and lonely. You understand when we do. Thank you for always staying with us. Help us to be a friend to others when they feel sad or lonely. Amen.
Week 3: Coming to the Cross Angry

We are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we bring ourselves just as we are. Today, we remember that sometimes we are mad.

1. Hearing

(Story 1) Read Sometimes I’m Bombaloo by Rachel Vail

What made Katie very mad? What did she do when she was really mad? What helped her feel better?

(Story 2) Did you know that even Jesus got mad? Sometimes He talked in an angry voice to people. And one time He angrily made robbers leave the place where people were worshiping God. The robbers were making people pay to worship God. Jesus said, “That’s robbing people. God’s house is supposed to be a place where people pray, not where they are robbed.” Jesus knew the right things to be mad about.

2. Seeing

(Pass out a drawing of an angry child and have them complete the dots and color it.)

3. Thinking and Doing

What makes you feel mad? What do you do when you feel angry? We’re all going to feel mad sometimes. But we want to practice being angry by using our words, not our fists. And we don’t want to call names when we’re mad. We want to practice just saying what we’re mad about.

(Have them write what makes them feel bad on a sheet of paper and tack it on a wooden cross.)

4. Doing for Others

There are some things that God wants us to feel mad about. Things like children not having enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. Things like children being hurt by other children or by adults. Those things are not okay with God. So they should not be okay with us. We want to help hungry children have food. We want to share our clothes that are too small for us now. We want to pray for children who are being hurt. And if we see someone being hurt, we need to tell an adult right away. We want to be Jesus’ helpers, even with “mad.” Because sometimes being mad is necessary.

5. Prayer

Dear Jesus, sometimes You were mad, but always for the right reasons. Sometimes we are mad, too. Help us to be mad for the right reasons. And when we’re mad, help us find good ways to let it out.
Week 4: Coming to the Cross Hungry

We are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we bring ourselves just as we are. Today, we remember that sometimes we, and others, are hungry.

1. Hearing

(Story 1) Read *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* by Judi Barrett

That’s a wonderfully silly story, isn’t it? Long, long ago, God’s people got food that fell out of the sky every day to feed them! But that’s not the way we usually get food. Do you wish it was? Why?

(Story 2) Jesus cared a lot about people being fed when they were hungry. Two times in the Bible, we read about Jesus making food multiply. That was so all the people in a big crowd could have enough to eat. Another time, Jesus’ followers were picking corn and eating it on the day when they were supposed to rest. Some other people got mad and said, “You can’t pick food and eat it on the day when you’re supposed to rest!” But Jesus said something like this: “The day of resting is to help people and people need to eat to be healthy. They are hungry. Let them eat!”

2. Seeing

(*Pass out drawing of healthy foods and crayons and have the children color it*).

3. Thinking

Have you ever been very, very hungry? Did your stomach growl? Did it also make you feel shaky or crabby? How long were you hungry? Who helped you get the food you needed? Did you feel grateful?

4. Doing for Others

Jesus loved children. When He lived on earth, He held them and told people children were very special. Now we are following Jesus to the Cross. We know He would not be happy if children were hungry and didn’t have enough food to eat. Could we help Jesus by sharing some of our food with hungry children?

Maybe we could bring food to a food pantry or ministry for school children who don’t have enough food at home. Maybe we could give some of our allowance money to help feed children at a local community outreach. Can you think of some other ways you could help hungry children?

(*Pass out paper and crayons.*)

Write your ideas on a piece of paper and put it in the basket by the wooden cross. I will read them later and together we will find a good way to help hungry children.
5. Praying

Dear Jesus, when You lived on earth, You were human. So sometimes You felt hungry and thirsty. We know You care about hungry people. We are following You, so we care, too. Help us find some way to help hungry children. Amen.

Week 5: Coming to the Cross Sick

We are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, we bring ourselves just as we are. Today we remember that sometimes we, and others, are sick.

1. Hearing

(Story 1) Read Goldie Locks Has Chicken Pox by Erin Dealey

Have you ever had chicken pox? Did it feel very itchy?

(Story 2) Jesus cared a lot about sick people. When He lived on earth, He healed many of them. One day Jesus was in a house and many people crowded in to see Him. There was no room for anyone else to get in. But a sick man had friends and they wanted to get him to Jesus. So they thought very hard and they came up with this idea: they climbed up on the rooftop and took off some tiles. Then they lowered the man down on a stretcher right in front of Jesus! I bet Jesus was surprised to see him! Jesus said to the man: “I forgive you for any bad things you have done. And now you will be well, so you can get up off your bed.” That was a special day for the sick man!

2. Seeing

(Pass out drawing of Goldie Locks and crayons and have the children add chicken pox dots to her face and arms and then color the picture.)

3. Thinking

Have you ever been very sick? Did your head ache? Did your nose run? Did you throw up? That feels very nasty, doesn’t it? Did you have to stay home from school for a few days? What made you feel better — chicken noodle soup? A hug from your mom or dad? A favorite stuffed animal to hold?

4. Doing for Others

When Jesus healed the man who came down through the roof, that made the sick man feel better, of course. But it also helped the other people see what God’s world was supposed to look like. It was supposed to look like people getting help when they needed it. It was supposed to look like people caring for other people, like Jesus did. The sick man’s friends helped him.

How can we help people who are sick? Can we pray for them? Bring them a little gift, like a stuffed animal? Color or paint a picture for them? Write a poem for them?

If you hear of someone this week who is sick, see if you can do something to help them.

(Write down your idea and put it in the basket by the cross.)
5. Praying

Dear Jesus, we are following You to the Cross, and You care about sick people all over the world. Help me to care about sick people, too. I will pray for them. Give me good ideas of other ways to help them, and I will! Amen.

Week 6: Surprises on the Way to the Cross

We are walking toward the Cross with Jesus. When we follow Jesus, sometimes there are surprises. Today, we look at some of those surprises.

1. Thinking

Have you ever gone to a parade or seen one on TV? What things did you see? Usually, there are lots of people lined up on the side of the road to watch. There may be marching bands, decorated cars or trailers called “floats,” and people holding up signs, or throwing candy into the crowd. Anything else you have seen?

2. Hearing

(Have several palms to show.)

(Bible story) We call this day “Palm Sunday.” Long ago, people waved palms (wave one) and threw down their coats as Jesus rode by in a parade. People lined the sides of the road, like in most parades. But there were several surprising things about this one.

First, Jesus was the only one in the parade. That was because the people wanted Jesus to be their king. So this parade was for welcoming Him into town like a king. Jesus did so many wonderful things for the people that they wanted Him as their ruler.

The second surprising thing about this parade was that the “king” was riding on a donkey, not a chariot like kings did. In the Old Testament, there’s a verse which says a peasant king would ride on a donkey, and that’s what Jesus was doing many years after that verse was written. Jesus was showing what it looked like to lead in God’s kingdom. It looked like being among the people and helping them.

There’s a third surprise about this parade and it is a sad one. This parade was going to lead to a dark, painful place for Jesus. Several days after the parade, Jesus died on a cross. That doesn’t usually happen to kings. So that was a very sad surprise for the people who had waved palms in the parade.

But there is one more surprise. We will talk about that next Sunday on Easter.

3. Seeing

(Pass out a dot-to-dot picture of Jesus riding on a donkey. Have them connect the dots and color the picture.)

4. Doing for Others
Sometimes people have happy surprises in their life. This week, could you practice being happy for them (even if you’re a little bit jealous)? Sometimes people have sad surprises happen to them (like having to move or their parents getting a divorce). Could you practice being really kind to someone who gets a bad surprise?

5. Praying

Dear Jesus, sometimes things happen that surprise us. It was a sad surprise to people when You died. But we are glad that was not the last surprise! Amen.