

**7th Grade New Testament (Gospels)****Lesson Plan:** Jesus' Death

**Learning Goals:** Students should be able to recount the events surrounding Jesus' death and burial and their significance to us today.

**Question:** Have you ever seen a dead body? (maybe at a funeral) If so, what was it like?

Prayer

Discuss Question on Board

**Read Matthew 27:45-66****1. What happened in the land from noon to three?**

Darkness covered the land from noon to three.

The specific cause of Jesus' death is not given in the Gospel accounts.

- some have suggested it was due to a "broken heart"
- others have suggested asphyxia
- whatever the cause, the gospels are clear that Jesus gave his life, it was not taken from him

**2. At the death of Jesus, what happened to the curtain in the Temple? (Matthew 27:51)**

At the death of Jesus, the Temple curtain was torn in two.

**Why do you think this was significant? What might it symbolize?**

- The tearing of the curtain is symbolic of judgment on the temple, the city, and all those who are cooperating with Rome
- The language is significant - "was torn" is passive because God was the active one doing the tearing.
- It is significant that it was torn from top to bottom, showing that it is God who has now provided a way for his people to be restored.
- The curtain separated the people from the Holy of Holies where God dwelled. God now resides in the hearts of believers. Our hearts are his temple.

**3. Where does God make His home today? (see 1 Corinthians 6:19)**

Within us. We are a "temple of the Holy Spirit."

**4. What other signs accompanied Christ's death? (Matthew 27:51-53)**

There was a great earthquake and rocks split (Matthew 27:51)

- These were signs of divine judgment

Tombs were opened and the dead were raised (Matthew 27:52-53)

- This was a sign of the new age
- Who were these people? How long did they make appearances? What happened to them next? We don't know Much of this is shrouded in mystery.

- Connection here to Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:20 - Jesus is the first fruit of a harvest of new life. These that are raised are a testimony to what will happen to all at the end.

**5. What happened to the Roman Centurion that was a witness to Christ's death?** (*Matthew 27:54*)

A Roman Centurion is converted and becomes a believer in Jesus.

**6. According to Matthew, who was present to witness Jesus' crucifixion?** (*Matthew 27:55*)

The women present - Mary Magdalene, Mary Jesus' mother, the mother of James and John (27:55)

**7. Where was Jesus buried? Who was the owner of that place? What do we know about him?** (*see Luke 23:50-51; Matthew 27:57*)

Jesus is buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea

- He is a member of the Sanhedrin, but had not consented with the council's verdict (Luke 23:50-51); also listed as a "secret disciple" (Matthew 27:57)
- Jewish law that a body not defile the land on the Sabbath (began at nightfall)

**8. What did the Jewish leaders do in response to Jesus' burial? Why?** (*Matthew 27:62-66*)

- The Jewish leaders want the tomb sealed and guards posted so no one will come and try to steal the body (Matthew 27:62-66)
  - Similar to sealing a crime scene by taping the door shut
- Why do you think Matthew emphasized the presence of the armed guards?

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**Lesson Summary/Review:**

Students should review and highlight the following vocabulary terms and concepts from this lesson in their notes:

- Joseph of Arimathea
- According to Matthew, who was present at the crucifixion?
- What were the signs that immediately followed Jesus' death?