

RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS



Teaching the Easter Story

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RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS TITLES

Teaching the Christmas Story

Teaching Jesus of Nazareth

Teaching the Easter Story



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Easter in the Gospels

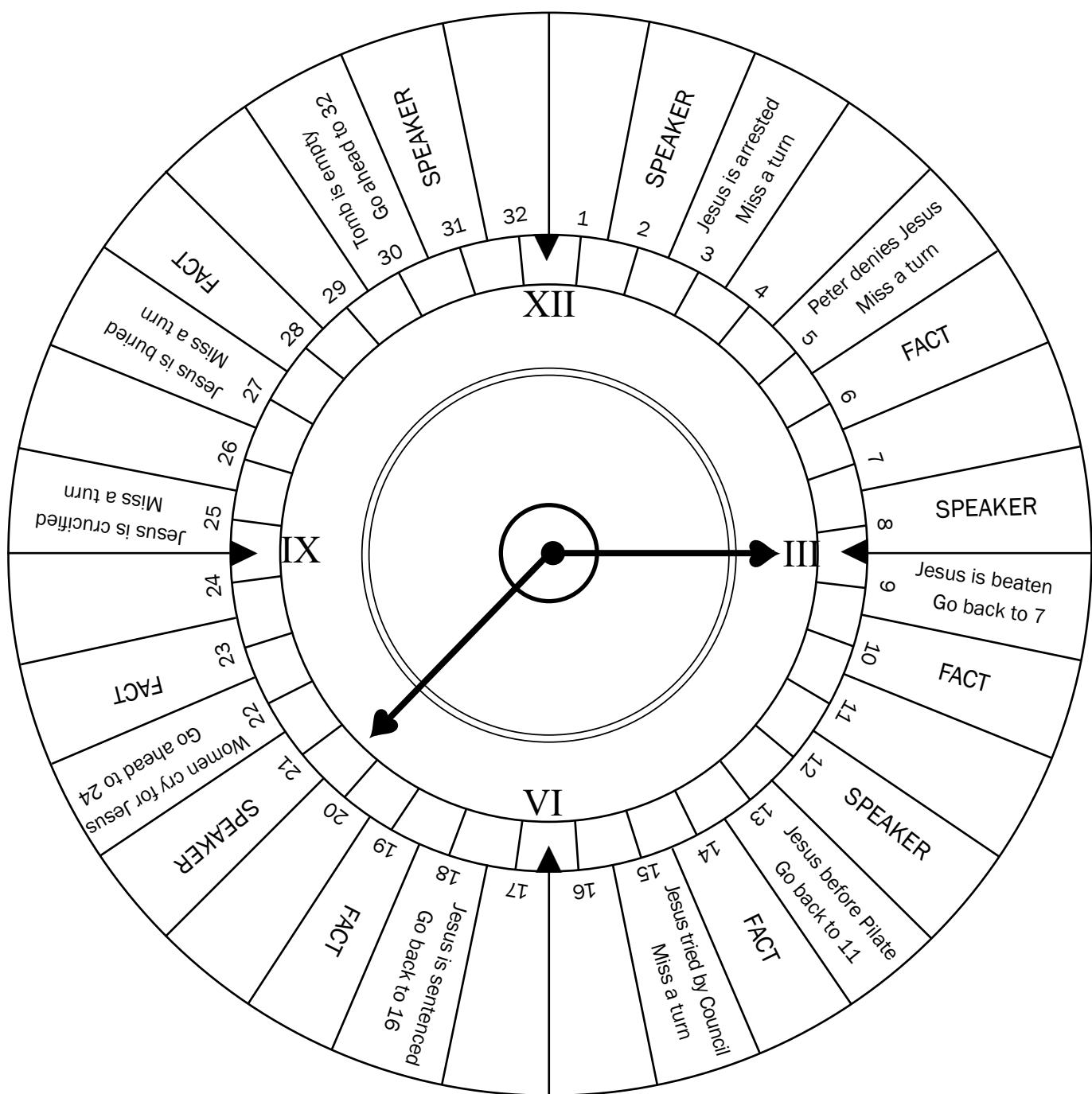
Each gospel contains an extended section on the Passion of Jesus. The word Passion comes from the Latin word that means, to suffer, endure, bear. The same Latin word gives us the word, patience. The story of the Passion recounts the events in the short final period in the life of Jesus. Opinions vary on what is included in Jesus' Passion, but these often include his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the Last Supper, the agony in the garden, his arrest, his trials, his suffering, execution, death, burial and resurrection. Each gospel writer deals with the Passion of Jesus in his own way. We can notice some variation in details between each account. Little, however, is said in the gospels about the details of the crucifixion. While we do not know much about the actual circumstances of Jesus' crucifixion from the gospels, historians have been able to glean some consistent features of how the Romans practised the deadly craft of crucifixion.

Each gospel author was challenged to make sense of the death of Jesus and explain its meaning to their readers. This was a difficult task given that the way Jesus died - crucifixion at the hands of the Romans - was hideous and humiliating. In his first letter to the Corinthian Christians, Paul wrote that Jesus' crucifixion was an impediment to his preaching: "a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles" (1 Corinthians 1:23). To Jews, crucifixion signified that the person was cursed by God, as stated in Deuteronomy 21:22-3: "for anyone hung on a tree is under God's curse". For Jews to embrace Jesus as the messiah would be to embrace an oxymoron - a cursed messiah. For Gentiles, Paul's message of a crucified saviour would be considered ridiculous, a sign of the victim's defeat at the hands of opponents and so not worthy of serious consideration.

So, Jesus' followers were faced with big questions: what was the purpose of his death? and, why did he die like this? Each gospel writer placed his own interpretation on the events of Jesus' Passion. We can see the story unfold in Luke in this way: Jesus shares the Passover meal with his followers in Jerusalem, according to the customs of the religion of Israel. The Passover celebration was one of the major festivals on the Jewish calendar and it is no surprise that Jesus and his followers would have been drawn to Jerusalem for the festival from their Galilean homes in the north. Passover is a celebration of freedom and a memorial of the great events of liberation from slavery in Egypt at the hands of Pharaoh. The Passion of Jesus in Luke will be played out against the backdrop of the Jewish Passover. The Passover themes of liberation and freedom from all that enslaves people will be employed to help Luke's readers understand the meaning of Jesus' suffering and death.

After the meal, Jesus goes to the Mount of Olives to pray. Here he experiences the agony of expectation about the unfolding events. He has compassion for his disciples who have fallen asleep "because of grief" (Luke 22:46). Then, he is arrested by a crowd that comes from the Jewish Temple authorities. From here, he undergoes the first of his "trials". At daybreak, he is brought before the Jewish advisory council of priests and elders, who ask him whether he is the messiah and if he is the Son of God. Jesus replies that it is they who are claiming he is both (Luke 22:70). They take Jesus to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, where he is accused of political crimes: forbidding the people to pay taxes, claiming to be a king in stirring up the people (Luke 23:2-5). Pilate finds no proof of such charges, but decides to hand Jesus over to Herod Antipas who is responsible for Jesus' home region of Galilee. Herod Antipas was glad to see Jesus "for he had been wanting to see him for a long time, because he had heard about him and was hoping to see him perform some sign" (Luke 23:8). After a "trial" of lengthy questioning, Herod hands Jesus back to Pilate. Due to insistence from sections of the Jerusalem crowd, Pilate agrees to the execution of Jesus. Jesus is led away for crucifixion. Simon of Cyrene is prevailed upon by authorities to carry Jesus' cross-beam, following behind Jesus to the place called The Skull where the execution occurs. Simon is offered as a model of discipleship in following Jesus to his death, bearing his cross.

Jesus' Passion Clock Board Game



Fact
Cards

Speaker
Cards

How to Play Jesus' Passion Clock Board Game

Assemble Fact and Speaker cards. Use the cards that follow below, and/or make your own based on the Passion narratives. Fact cards have questions and answers based on the narratives. Speaker cards ask, "Who said this...". A correct answer gains a player another role of the dice. You act as adviser, card reader, and referee while your classmates play your game. The winner is the first to make it around the clock face an agreed number of times.

FACT CARDS

What Jewish festival was being celebrated when Jesus was arrested?
A: Passover

What is the name of the garden where Jesus was arrested?
A: Gethsemane

How many male disciples did Jesus invite to join him in his mission?
A: Twelve

Who kissed Jesus on the cheek in the garden?
A: Judas Iscariot

What is the name of the council of chief priests and elders in Jerusalem?
A: Sanhedrin

How long did Jesus stay in the tomb?
A: Three days

What was the name of the prisoner released by Pontius Pilate?
A: Barabbas

Who carried the cross for Jesus?
A: Simon of Cyrene

SPEAKER CARDS

Who said when Jesus died:
“Truly this man was the Son
of God.”

A: Roman centurion

Who asked Peter in the High
Priest’s courtyard if he was a
follower of Jesus?

A: The High Priest’s servant
girl

Who told the Temple guards
where to find Jesus?

A: Judas Iscariot

What was the name of
the Roman governor who
interrogated Jesus?

A: Pontius Pilate

Who said at the Last Supper
that he would never deny
knowing Jesus?

A: Peter

What was the name of the
High Priest who interrogated
Jesus and tore his own robes?

A: Caiaphas

How many times did Peter
deny knowing Jesus?

A: Three times

Who asked who was going
to roll away the stone from
Jesus’ tomb?

A: Mary Magdalene

Who asked Pontius Pilate for
the body of Jesus for burial?

A: Joseph of Arimathea

Who put a purple cloak on
Jesus and said, “Hail, King of
the Jews”?

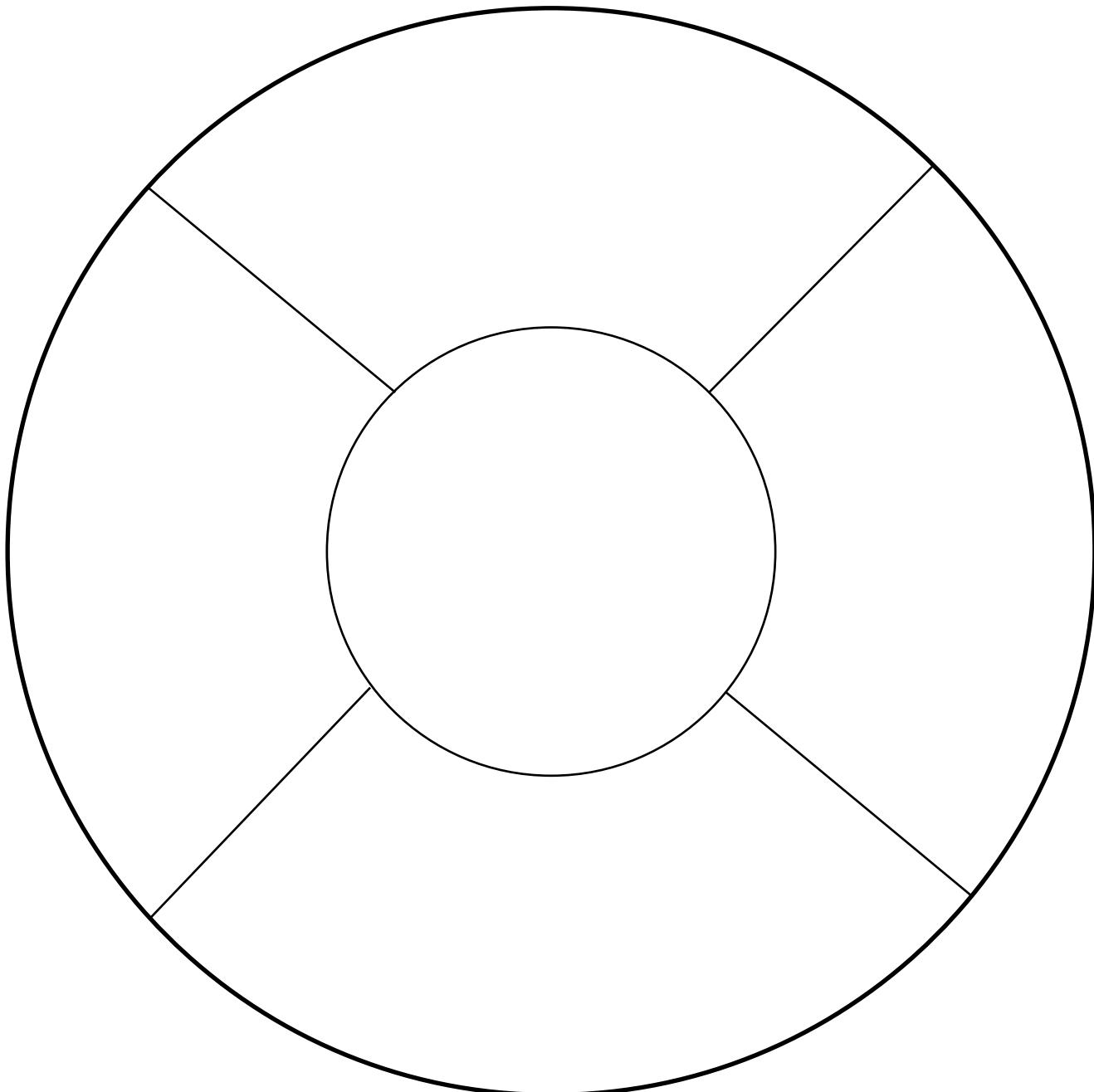
A: The Roman soldiers

Jesus' Passion in Four Gospels

MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN
Supper - Passover (26:17-30)	Supper - Passover (14:17-25)	Supper - Passover (22:14-30)	Supper - <i>not</i> Passover - washes disciples' feet (13:1-11)
Peter's denial foretold (26:31-5)	Peter's denial foretold (14:26-31)	Peter's denial foretold (22:31-4)	Discourse with disciples (13:12-17:26)
Gethsemane, prayer (26:36-46)	Gethsemane, prayer (14:32-42)	Mount of Olives, prayer (22:39-46)	
Arrest (26:47-56)	Arrest (14:43-52)	Arrest (22:47-53)	Garden, arrest (18:1-11)
Trial - Caiaphas, the High Priest (26:57-68) (<i>at night</i>)	Trial - High Priest (14:53-65) (<i>at night</i>)	To High Priest's house, Peter's denial, mocking and beating (<i>through the night</i>) (22:54-65)	Interrogation - High Priest Annas (18:12-23)
Peter's denial (26:69-75)	Peter's denial (14:66-72)	Trial - Chief priests and scribes (22:66-71) (<i>next morning</i>)	Sent to High Priest Caiaphas, Peter's denials (18:24-7) (<i>early in the morning</i>)
Taken to Pilate (27:1-2) (<i>next morning</i>)	Taken to Pilate (15:1) (<i>next morning</i>)	Taken to Pilate, accusations by priests (23:1-2)	Taken to Pilate, Pilate appeals to crowd (I), Pilate summons Jesus, Pilate appeals to the crowd (II), Pilate releases Barabbas (18:28-40)
Death of Judas (27:3-10)		Pilate hearing (I), Pilate refuses (23:3-5)	Pilate has Jesus flogged (19:1)
Pilate hearing, Pilate refuses, calls for Barabbas, Pilate's wife expresses concerns, crowd calls to crucify Jesus, Pilate washes hands, crowd replies, release of Barabbas, Jesus is flogged. Pilate hands Jesus over to be crucified (27:11-26)	Pilate hearing, Pilate refuses, calls for Barabbas, calls to crucify Jesus, release of Barabbas, Jesus is flogged. Pilate hands over Jesus for crucifixion (15:2-15)	Trial - Herod Antipas, sent back to Pilate (23:6-12)	Mocking by soldiers, crown of thorns (19:2-3)
Mocking by soldiers, crown of thorns (27:27-31)	Mocking by soldiers, crown of thorns (15:16-20)	Pilate hearing (II), Pilate refuses (II), crowd calls for Barabbas, Pilate refuses (III), crowd calls to crucify Jesus, Pilate refuses (IV), calls continue. Pilate releases Barabbas and hands over Jesus (23:13-25) (<i>No flogging</i>)	Pilate appeals to the crowd (III), chief priests and police call to crucify Jesus, Pilate appeals (IV), crowd answers, Pilate addresses Jesus, Pilate appeals (V), crowd responds, brings Jesus out and asks again, priests answer, Pilate hands Jesus over for crucifixion (19:4-16)
Soldiers lead Jesus away, compel Simon to carry cross (27:31-32)	Soldiers lead Jesus away, compel Simon to carry cross (15:20-21)	Soldiers lead Jesus away, compel Simon to carry cross (23:26)	Jesus led away, carrying cross by himself (19:17)
Arrival at Golgotha: offer drink, "When they had crucified him", soldiers divide clothes, and keep watch (27:33-36)	Arrival at Golgotha: offer drink, "And they crucified him", soldiers divide clothes (15:22-24)	Jesus speaks with women along the way, two <i>criminals</i> sent for crucifixion (23:27-32)	Arrival at Golgotha: "They crucified him, and with him two others" (19:17-18)
The plaque (27:37)	The inscription (15:25-26)	Arrival at place called The Skull: "They crucified Jesus there with the criminals", Jesus speaks from the cross, soldiers divide clothes (23:33-34)	Pilate and priests argue over the plaque (19:19-22)
Two bandits crucified (27:38)	Two bandits crucified (15:27)	Leaders mock Jesus, soldiers mock Jesus. [<i>The inscription</i>] One criminal mocks, the other defends: Jesus blesses (23:35-43)	Soldiers divide clothes (19:23-4)
Bystanders mock Jesus, priests, elders and scribes mock Jesus, both bandits mock Jesus (27:39-44)	Bystanders mock Jesus, chief priests and scribes mock Jesus, both bandits mock Jesus (15:29-32)	Cries out and dies, all his friends watch on (23:44-49)	Jesus speaks from the cross to Mary, John, Beloved Disciple (19:25-27)
Final cries from the cross and death, women followers mourn (27:45-55)	Final cries from the cross and death, women followers mourn (15:33-41)		Final words from the cross, Jesus dies (19:28-37)
Burial by Joseph of Arimathea (27:57-61)	Burial by Joseph of Arimathea (15:42-47)	Burial by Joseph of Arimathea (23:50-56)	Burial by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus (19:38-42)

Concept Wheel - Easter in the Gospels

Write the central concept in the hub of the wheel. Then add ideas or examples in the spokes of the wheel. You can use the box underneath to add more ideas or notes.



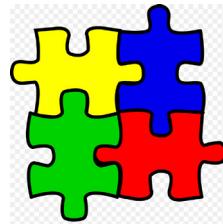
The Story of Easter SCAMPER

The acronym SCAMPER stands for Substitute, Combine, Adapt, Modify/Magnify/Minify, Put to Other Uses, Eliminate and Rearrange/Reverse. This strategy encourages flexibility in thinking and creative brainstorming. It fosters originality and elaboration of ideas and concepts. For more background see: www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCT_02.htm/. Use the SCAMPER table to discuss and to generate new and different ideas about the story of Easter.

ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLE	YOUR OWN EXAMPLE
Substitute	Substitute another person in a story, or put the story in another time or place.	What if Simon Peter did <i>not</i> deny knowing Jesus? What if Judas had <i>not</i> betrayed Jesus? What if Jesus had <i>not</i> gone to Jerusalem for Passover?	
Combine	Combine characters, ideas or objects into one.	What would Mary and Pontius Pilate say to each other if they ever met?	
Adapt	Change one thing so that it may be improved or used for another purpose.	What other aspects of the Easter story might be emphasised today?	
Modify Magnify Minify	Modify involves making changes to suit particular objectives, alter, change meaning. Magnify is to enlarge, add time, multiply. Minify - make smaller, slower, less frequent.	What difference would it make if Jesus had entered Jerusalem: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in a fancy car? • walking? • at night when everyone was asleep? 	
Put to other uses	Suggest new ways to use current objects. Describe other uses in addition to the original intended use.	How can an Easter egg be used to convey the meaning and significance of Easter?	
Eliminate	Elimination - an extreme summary of essential elements; cut out large chunks of an item while maintaining its integrity; develop captions, titles to convey complex material in a few words.	What Easter tradition could be removed so that the true meaning of Easter is emphasised?	
Rearrange Reverse	This involves making a larger image from smaller fragments; or, rearranging the pieces of one item to make another.	What would it be like if Easter was not celebrated today? What if the events in the Gospels did not happen in the order that they are presented?	

Think-Puzzle-Explore

Consider your prior knowledge and experiences of Easter that you know from the Gospels. Use the following framework to identify what you already think you know, what questions you have and what you want to discover more about:

What I THINK about Easter in the Gospels	What questions or PUZZLES I have about Easter in the Gospels	How I can EXPLORE this topic
		

SPAWN Strategy

S - SPECIAL POWERS	These powers could be, to change the course of history/events/incidents; to change the order of events, and/or to add or delete characters from events.
P - PROBLEM SOLVING	You are able to solve problems in different ways to the ways they were in history, stories or personal experience.
A - ALTERNATIVE VIEWPOINTS	You are able to think about things differently, or see things differently from established views.
W - WHAT IF?	Consider different scenarios to the one described.
N - NEXT	What happens next in a story? To people? After a crisis?

- S** You have the power to stop the Roman authorities executing Jesus. How would the course of history be different if you choose to use your power in this way?
- P** The Jewish authorities in Jerusalem were concerned with Jesus' popularity among sections of the Jewish people. How would you have solved their problems if you had been a member of the Sanhedrin?
- A** You are a journalist travelling around Jerusalem at Passover time. What are people who live in Jerusalem saying about Jesus and his followers? What are people from rural areas saying about him? What are the Roman soldiers saying?
- W** What if the gospels had never been written? How might things have been different?
- N** You have been a follower of Jesus since his earliest days in Galilee. He has just been executed by the Romans. What do you do next?

Who Said It at Easter?

"I have seen the Lord."

JOHN 20:18

"My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

MARK 15:34

"Hosanna, blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord."

MARK 11:9

Jesus

Mary Magdalene

Crowd in Jerusalem

Peter

Jesus

Roman centurion

"This very night, before the cock crows you will deny me three times."

MATTHEW 26:34

"Truly this man was the Son of God."

MARK 15:39

"Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you."

MATTHEW 26:35

Draw a line to join the name of the person with what they said at Easter.

THE BOOK

Teaching the Easter Story has been written to support teachers in planning and teaching their classroom programs focused on the Passion of Jesus.

This book combines practical, classroom-ready resources with comprehensive background information for teachers on the people and events presented in the bible on Easter.

A wide range of resources is included in this collection for immediate use in classrooms. In addition, copious teaching and learning activities are described that assist teachers to create engaging presentations for their students.

All teacher background discussions, guidance for students, and teaching and learning materials are expressed in clear, uncomplicated language.

The aim of this book is to provide teachers across all year levels with resources they can select, adapt and readily implement in their classroom programs.

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