



A dying criminal turned to Jesus.

Luke 23:32-43



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☆ Let's Talk and Wonder

SAY Jesus willingly went to the cross because he came to die for the sins of his people. He hung on the middle cross between two criminals.

SAY I wonder what the two men thought as they hung beside Jesus . . .

SAY One criminal mocked Jesus. "Aren't you the Christ?" he said. "Save yourself and us." The other man said, "We are getting the punishment we deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he looked at Jesus and said, "Remember me when you come into your kingdom." This man knew he was a sinner. He was asking for mercy. He was asking the Savior for his free gift of salvation.

SAY Jesus turned to him and said, "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

SAY I wonder how the criminal felt when he heard what Jesus said . . .

SAY The helpless man must have been filled with peace, knowing his sins were forgiven and he would be with Jesus in his kingdom. He trusted Jesus as his Savior and now he was forgiven! Like the criminal on the cross, we are all sinners and deserve to be punished for our sin. But the good news is that Jesus was punished in the place of sinners. God our Savior saves all those who come to him for forgiveness!

☆ Let's Make and Tell

Set out **building blocks**. Encourage the children to build three crosses to represent the crucifixion scene. As they build, children can retell the Bible story.

☆ Let's Do, Say, and Pray

- 1** Print *We thank God for his mercy* in block letters on a large sheet of **paper**. Let children color the letters.
- 2** As they work, mention the fact that we depend on God's mercy and forgiveness every day. God's mercy is his love and kindness to us. We would be helpless without it. Children can mention some of God's gifts to us—family, home, church, friends, and so on. Then talk about God's amazing mercy toward us in sending the Savior.
- 3** After coloring and sharing, lead the children in this prayer.

Dear God our Savior, thank you for your gifts to us that we enjoy every day. Thank you for your amazing kindness and love in sending Jesus. Thank you for saving those who come to you for mercy. In Jesus' name, Amen.