

3. Jesus is condemned to death (cf *Matthew 26:57, 65; 27:1-2, 23-24, 27-29*)

Jesus was taken before Caiaphas the High Priest and the elders. They decided that Jesus should be put to death, and they sent him to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, to be sentenced. Pilate was frightened that the crowds would cause trouble, so he agreed to crucify Jesus even though he knew that he had done nothing wrong. The Roman soldiers made fun of Jesus and made a crown of thorns for the 'King of the Jews'.

DISCUSSION

Why did Caiaphas and the other Jews hate Jesus?

He did not fit in with their ideas because he followed his father's plan. He stood up for truth and what was right and would often disobey or ignore the Jewish priests. They were jealous of his popularity and wanted the people to do what they said, instead of following Jesus.

Pontius Pilate knew that Jesus had done nothing wrong so why did he agree to condemn him to death?

He was afraid that the crowds would riot and cause a great deal of trouble so he gave in to the demands of the Jewish elders.

The soldiers teased Jesus about being 'King of the Jews'. What did they make to put on his head?

4. Jesus carries the Cross. (cf *Matthew 27:31-32*)

The soldiers beat Jesus and then made him carry his own cross. After stumbling and falling several times, the soldiers told a man called Simon to help Jesus.

DISCUSSION

Why did the soldiers make a man in the crowd help Jesus to carry his cross?

What was his name?

5. Jesus is crucified. (cf *Matthew 27:33, 35-38*)

When they got to Golgotha, a name which means 'The Place of the Skull', they put Jesus on the cross. Above him they wrote, 'This is Jesus, King of the Jews'. They crucified a thief on either side of Jesus. One of them said to him, 'Jesus, remember me in your kingdom,' and Jesus answered, 'Today you will be with me in Heaven'. After hanging on the cross for many hours, Jesus called out loudly, 'Father do not forget me,' and then he died.

DISCUSSION

Where was Jesus crucified?

Who else was crucified that day and what had they done wrong?

In Roman times, people were often crucified if they had broken the law.

6. Jesus is placed in the tomb. (cf *Matthew 27:57-60*)

Later on that day, a man called Joseph, who had been a follower of Jesus, went to Pontius Pilate and asked if he could bury Jesus. Pontius Pilate agreed and so Jesus was taken away and laid in the tomb.

DISCUSSION

What was the name of the man who asked to take Jesus' body away for burial?

Where did they put Jesus?

They laid Jesus in the tomb and rolled a large stone across the entrance. This was late on Friday evening and Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath when no-one was allowed to do any work. When a person died the Jews used spices and ointments such as myrrh to prepare the body for burial. They could not do this on the Sabbath, so at first light on the Sunday morning the women would return to the tomb to prepare the Lord's body.

CREED

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord Jesus,
this week as we remember
your suffering and death,
help us to remember those in our world
who are suffering and dying every day.
Your death on the cross has allowed each one of us
to share in the glory of your resurrection
and life everlasting.

