

Religion Class

Creative Projects with Jesus: Gospels Unit Project Ideas for Freshmen Religion



This is a project modified from a model originally designed by Bob U'Ren from Escondido Adventist Academy.

Grade Level(s)

9th

Content Area(s)

Religion/Bible

Description/Abstract of Lesson

This project is a construction of Christ's body on the cross. The activity provides students with a creative project to culminate their learning in a Gospels unit. Students are divided into teams that each are responsible for creating one of Jesus' pre-determined body parts: head, torso/chest, arms, hands, legs, feet, heart, and the cross.

Time Requirements

Preparation and Post-Production Time: There are lots of supplies that need to be purchased, either by you, the students, parents, etc. It will also take a team (I chose the cross team) an hour or so to assemble the entire body and properly attach it to the cross.

Class Time: This could take 3-4 days of class time, as long as your students are on task...I recommend one class period for

brainstorming about symbolism and materials, and then two days for construction. An additional day may be needed for the final assembly.

Concept/Enduring Understanding

With this project, students will be able to participate and contribute to the body of Christ, reflecting on their experience with the accounts of Jesus in the Gospels, accepting His gift of salvation as they look upon His body on the cross, and anticipating their role of assuming His mission in their own communities.

Essential/Guiding Questions:

- How can we visualize the immense value, beauty, and complexity of Christ?
- How can we take so many pieces of a story and see them tied together in a harmonious whole?

Journey To Excellence Standards Addressed

- J2E 1.1 Accept God as the Creator and the Redeemer.
- J2E 1.2 Have a growing knowledge of God's Word and enjoyment in its study.
- J2E 1.3 Embrace God's gift of grace by accepting Christ as one's personal Savior.
- J2E 1.5 Value God's revelation of Himself through inspired writings and creation.
- J2E 6.1 Broaden intellectual abilities through the study of God's Word.
- J2E 7.2 Apply a Christ-centered perspective to all forms of personal expression and media.
- J2E 8.5 Value cooperation and teamwork when interacting in groups.
- J2E 8.6 Develop conflict resolution skills.
- J2E 8.7 Manage time effectively.

Specific Learning Outcomes

Head (know): The learner will understand and internalize the revelation of Jesus Christ through the Gospel accounts.

Heart (feel): The learner will respond, through their creativity, to God's gift of salvation

Hand (do/respond): The learner will work together with classmates to both construct and emulate the body of Christ, utilizing his/her individual skills, gifts, and resources.

Assessment of Outcomes

- Students will participate in understanding Jesus within the context of Savior as they construct His body on the cross.
- The students will utilize information they have discovered from their reading and study of the Bible to construct a creative project.
- Students will apply personal, creative expression to the centerpiece of their faith: the cross and identity of Christ.
- Students will demonstrate effective use of cooperation, team work, and time management.

Teaching Strategies & Instructional Management

- Presentation of lessons and Gospel leading up to the activity
- Study of the character and actions of Christ throughout the Gospels
- Creative representation of the Jesus they have discovered
- Group work to infer the furthering of Christ's work through His "Temples"...his followers.

Project Guidelines and Required Materials

- Before this project commences, students should have each read at least one full Gospel. Their awareness of the accounts of Jesus' life will inform their concept and construction of Jesus for this project.
- Select one of the male students in your class to "model" for Jesus. Trace his outline on a large piece of butcher paper, and then cut that form into the different pieces for your different groups. This will help you to get the proportions correct.
- It is absolutely important that your students come up with how they want to portray the Gospels and Jesus through this project, but I've included some suggestions as to some of the lessons we learned in the building process.
- You'll need a team to construct the following pieces:

- **Head** (we found that a wig form, made of Styrofoam, covered with molding clay and painted, yarn for hair, a crown of thorns, works well)
- **Torso** (shoulders to hips) You're going to need a strong rod or wooden dowel for his spine, and two strong pieces for the shoulders and hips. This is the part of the body that most needs to resemble a skeleton because of the support it provides. When constructing the chest, leave the left hand side open for the heart. It's also cool if you can find a way to show the wound in the side as well. For the hips, we used an oval disc of Styrofoam, and then tacked a piece of fabric around it to act as a loincloth. The problem with this was that the legs didn't actually hook into the hips, and had to be attached to the cross in their proper positions. The look was ok, but the construction was shaky.
- **Heart:** Whatever you make it out of, make it lightweight! It has to suspend from the shoulders! We put the word "Grace" across ours.
- **Arms:** These will be nailed to the cross for support, so they can be of a heavier material. Have the students check to make sure they are even in length...they are the most obvious parts to be off on.
- **Legs:** Pre-determine which leg will be over the other if you are crossing them...that way the knees can be properly constructed.
- **Feet:** If utilizing clay, make sure to put a hole through the foot where you'll be nailing it to the cross before the clay dries. One of our groups trailed red ribbon from the front foot that had names of the places Jesus traveled to written in Greek on slips of paper attached with little nails to the ribbon.
- **Hands:** Gloves work well to get the shape. We also cast one out of plaster. We had one hand hold a miniature globe, and the other held a letter addressed to the world.
- **Cross:** You need a stand for the cross, and make sure the measurements of the cross are large enough to accommodate the size of person you measured for Jesus.

- If you wish to further delegate tasks within the group, you can have students assume specific roles:
 - **Concept/Design** (comes up with the design for the body piece)
 - **Resource provider** (does the shopping for the materials)
 - **Construction Foreman/woman** (directs assembly for time and work effectiveness...is in charge of quality assurance!)
 - **Researcher** (Utilizes the Gospels, a Bible Dictionary, commentary, concordance, etc., to come up with the most creative and meaningful components for the piece)
 - **Ambassador** (works to share the team's idea with the other teams to make sure that the design will work in a harmonious/complimentary way with the other designs)
- Understand going into this that this project is a large project, and you will have one of the world's largest pieces of art left at the end. Make sure you have a plan for displaying your students' expression!

Lesson Evaluation & Teacher Reflection

Students should be evaluated within their teams. They need to adhere to the following set of requirements:

- Completed their part
- Work was completed neatly and with quality as the goal
- Work was reflective and representative of the Gospel accounts of Jesus
- Students worked well as a team
- Work was completed on time

This has remained one of my students' favorite projects and brought them into a deeper appreciation of the beautiful imagery, deeper meanings, and the value of the body and person of Christ. Enjoy!