The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

The sign of Christ's saving love

Ages about 7-11 | Video 3:04 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth The story explains why Christians honor the Cross as a sign of Jesus's saving love rather than celebrate suffering itself.

Learning goals Children will recall Simon's help and Jesus's forgiveness, explain the sign of the Cross, and choose a safe loving action.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Ask: Why might a sign remind us of love? Explain that Christians honor the Cross because of what Jesus did for us.

Watch and notice

Notice Simon helping, Jesus praying for forgiveness, Mary and John nearby, and the Cross becoming a sign of hope.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. Who helped Jesus carry the Cross?
Simon of Cyrene.

2. What did Jesus pray while suffering?
He asked the Father to forgive; his love continued even on the Cross.

3. Why do Christians honor the Cross?
It recalls Jesus's self-gift and victory through his death and Resurrection, not the goodness of cruelty.

4. What safe act of love can be difficult but good?
Apologizing, helping with a task, or forgiving with adult support and safe boundaries.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

The Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw Simon helping, without graphic harm, then an everyday caring action.

Read & Write Recall the helper, explain the Cross's meaning, and plan safe kindness.

Adapt by readiness

Ages 7-8: practice a simple prayer while making the sign of the Cross as appropriate.

Ages 9-11: distinguish honoring Christ's saving love from approving cruelty or avoidable harm.

A cross of caring choices | Optional 4 minutes

Draw a paper cross. In its arms write prayer, truthful words, help, and forgiveness. Add one small, safe action to a chosen arm. Do not lift heavy wood, reenact execution, or ask children to endure pain.

Look for understanding Children name Jesus's love as the meaning of the sign and understand that seeking safety and help is right.

Closing prayer Jesus, thank you for saving us through your love. Help us forgive wisely, ask for help, and care for others safely. Amen.

At home Ask an adult about the sign of the Cross and choose one safe act of care.

Handout answer notes Helper: Simon of Cyrene. Sign: Christ's saving love, death and Resurrection. Plans: practical, safe caring choices.

Teach with care

Preview Jesus carrying the Cross and dying; keep discussion non-graphic. Explain that following Jesus never means accepting abuse or refusing help. The retelling combines Gospel scenes with a reflection on the feast; some dialogue is dramatized. The feast honors Christ's saving work, not suffering for its own sake. Forgiveness does not remove boundaries, justice, or the need to report harm. Christians' hope rests in the Crucified and Risen Lord.

Words to explain Exaltation: raising up and honoring. Cross: the instrument of Jesus's death, honored because of his saving love. Crucifix: a cross bearing an image of Jesus.

Sources for the leader

Story source: Servus Dei video and English subtitle

Scripture: Jesus's Passion: John 19 - USCCB

Scripture: Simon's help: Matthew 27 - USCCB