

INTRODUCTION

GRAPPLE® JR. HIGH

Some of your students may already seem jaded about the Bible, and some of them have never cracked one open. Wherever your teenagers are in their spiritual journey, two things they all have in common are an inquisitive mind and a need for Christ-centered biblical depth. Grapple Jr. High is specifically designed to get junior highers grappling with tough topics in meaningful ways so they understand and own their faith. Each week, students engage with memorable Bible passages and characters, grapple with the issues that come to the surface, and discover a path that leads them straight to Jesus Christ.

During class, students follow the same schedule each week.

GRAPPLE SCHEDULE

5 MINUTES	HANG TIME
10 MINUTES	GRAPPLE CHAT
10-15 MINUTES	GRAPPLE TIME
20-25 MINUTES	TEAM TIME
10 MINUTES	TEAM REPORTS
5 MINUTES	PRAYER & CHALLENGE

Please note that times are approximate and should be flexible to fit your classroom needs.

WHAT HAPPENS?

GRAPPLE HANG TIME:

Kids enjoy snacks and friendship as they spend time getting to know each other as music plays in the background. Then play a three-minute countdown, included on your Grapple DVD, to let students know how much time they have until Grapple Hang Time is over. You can also use the countdowns to wrap up an activity in the lesson.

GRAPPLE CHAT:

Chat topics connect students to one another and to the Word of God. Two topics in each lesson are built on passages or characters from the Bible, and two topics challenge students to discuss their lives. Encourage students to choose one question from each of these categories. In each lesson, Questions 1 and 3 are the biblically based questions, and Questions 2 and 4 are the ones that tap into their personal experiences.



GRAPPLE TIME:

Grapple Time is the leader-led experience for your entire class. Grapple Time involves everyone in making discoveries; the experience helps students cultivate the desire to dig into the Bible for answers.

GRAPPLE TEAM TIME:

Students get into their Grapple Teams of six or fewer to dig into the Bible with the reproducible Grapple Team Guide.

Who leads a Grapple Team? If you have six or fewer students, have them stay together with you as the leader. If you have several Grapple Teams, try these ideas: Facilitate all the teams by moving from team to team, assign a student to be the team leader, or recruit adults or high school students to be team leaders.

GRAPPLE TEAM REPORTS:

Teams vote on how they want to report what they discovered during Grapple Team Time. Once teams are ready to report, they get with other teams that chose the other style of reporting. They then take turns reporting what they learned. If you have just one Grapple Team, consider dividing your team into two smaller groups to create and present reports.

GRAPPLE PRAYER AND CHALLENGE:

Kids choose, as a class, which prayer option they would like to do. After the class closes in prayer, give kids the weekly Grapple Challenge to live out their faith during the coming week.

ALLERGY ALERT

This guide may contain activities that include food. Be aware that some kids have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know the students in your class, and consult with parents about allergies their kids may have. Also be sure to carefully read food labels, as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

DEATH TO LIFE

Is Death the Same for Everyone?

The Point: Jesus Died on the Cross for Our Sins

The Passages: Psalm 68:20; Proverbs 11:19; 14:27; Ecclesiastes 8:8; Matthew 16:21-23; John 19:16-42; Acts 2:22-24; Romans 5:17

GET STARTED

Lesson 1. Is Death the Same for Everyone?

GRAPPLE SCHEDULE

5 MINUTES	HANG TIME
10 MINUTES	GRAPPLE CHAT
10-15 MINUTES	GRAPPLE TIME
20-25 MINUTES	TEAM TIME
10 MINUTES	TEAM REPORTS
5 MINUTES	PRAYER & CHALLENGE

SUPPLIES

Bibles, Grapple DVD, DVD player, music CD, CD player, copy of the Grapple Team Guide for each person, paper, pens or pencils, markers, small pieces of masking tape

BIBLE BASIS FOR TEACHERS

The Passage: John 19:16-42

Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, had offended the Jews before. He showed contempt for their religion and even murdered some Galileans who were offering sacrifices at the Temple (Luke 13:1-2). Maybe he knew not to offend the Jewish religious authorities this time around. Thus, even though it appears that Pilate felt Jesus was innocent, he was unwilling to stand up against the Jews. Against his better judgment, he granted their wish and sent Jesus to be crucified.

It is significant that Jesus was crucified between two criminals. Bystanders would assume that he, too, was a criminal. It seems likely that the religious leaders had exerted their influence to arrange for this positioning as one more way to humiliate Jesus. To add to Jesus' humiliation, Pilate posted a sign over him that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews."

Before Jesus died, he said he was thirsty. Upon tasting some sour wine, he said, "It is finished!" and died. Because the Sabbath was approaching, the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging on the crosses on the Sabbath day. In order to hasten death, the soldiers would break the legs of those being crucified. Without the ability to push themselves up with their legs to catch their next



breath, the condemned men would quickly suffocate. However, when the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead. In order to confirm Jesus' death, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water poured out.

How does this relate to the Grapple Question? Human beings die. Even Jesus died. The Grapple question isn't addressing the different ways people die. Of course people die in different ways and at different times. The question is more specific: Jesus died, but isn't death the same for everyone? What makes Jesus' death different from anyone else's? For this lesson, students will grapple with what made Jesus' death vastly different from the death of everyone else in the world.

How does this connect to Jesus? Jesus died. His death was not a trick or an illusion. There is evidence in Scripture that confirms his death, and the Romans typically didn't make mistakes when they crucified people. What makes the death of Jesus different from the death of everyone else is what Jesus died for. Some people willingly die to protect their loved ones. Other people willingly die to uphold their ideologies. Jesus willingly died to save everyone from eternal death. Jesus died to deliver people from their sins so anyone who believes in him can live with God forever. Jesus' death made it possible for us to live.

GRAPPLE HANG TIME: 5 MINUTES

Play music as kids enjoy snacks and friendship, and then play an opening countdown from the Grapple DVD to wrap up Grapple Hang Time.

GRAPPLE CHAT: 10 MINUTES

Have students form pairs; if you have an uneven number of kids, it's OK to have one trio in the mix. Ask each group to chat about two of the four topics below that relate to today's grapple topic. (Answers in parentheses are samples.)

IN PAIRS

Chat 1: Discover the first person whose death was recorded in the Bible and how it happened. (Abel, who was killed by his brother, Cain, Genesis 4:8)

Chat 2: How old do you expect to live to be, and why?

Chat 3: Find out which person in the Bible was taken to heaven in a whirlwind. (Elijah, 2 Kings 2:9-12)

Chat 4: Who is the oldest person you know, and what kinds of questions do you enjoy asking this person?

GRAPPLE TIME: 10-15 MINUTES

Get Ready: Cue the Grapple DVD to the "Crucifixion Scene Investigators: Golgotha" clip.

Lead the entire class in the following:

Form a group of three to brainstorm things that everyone in your group does—brushing your teeth, for example. Spend three to four minutes listing at least 10 things, keeping in mind that everyone is the key word. Write this list on your sheet of paper, and then give me your list.

As students form groups of three, distribute paper and pens or pencils. Give groups about three or four minutes to compile their lists. Then gather the lists.

OK, here's how this works. I'll complete this sentence using one of the favorite things from the lists you just gave me: "Everyone..." You'll turn to a partner—a new person each time—and vote on each statement with a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs in the middle. Then you'll explain to your partner why you voted that way. For example, "Everyone brushes his or her teeth" could be a strong thumbs up because bad breath and unhealthy teeth are yucky. Got it? So every time you hear a new "Everyone..." statement, find a new partner and vote on it.

Allow time for discussion between each statement. Go as many rounds as time permits.

TELL ALL

Which "Everyone..." statement was your favorite or least favorite, and why? Are there other things you wish everyone did or didn't do? If so, what?

IN PAIRS

When have you wanted to stand against what everyone else does? What did you do? If you could change just one of the "Everyone..." statements, which would you change, and why?

Show the "Crucifixion Scene Investigators: Golgotha" clip on the Grapple DVD.

Everyone breathes, blinks, drinks, eats, and moves. And everyone dies. Experiencing the death of a loved one can be heartbreaking, but clearly death is something we can't change. People usually don't like to think about their own deaths. Most of the time, we live as if we'll never die. But is death the end? Might death ever be a good thing? Could death ever produce more life? Is death the same for everyone? Let's grapple with that!

GRAPPLE TEAM TIME: 20-25 MINUTES

Break into Grapple Teams. Encourage Grapple Team leaders to check in with kids about their week. Grapple Team leaders will facilitate discussion, using the Grapple Team Guide on pages 7-8. Afterward, students will report what they learned.



GRAPPLE TEAM REPORTS: 10 MINUTES

At the end of Grapple Team Time, match Grapple Teams that chose Option 1 with Grapple Teams that chose Option 2 from page 8. Have teams present their reports.

(If you have an uneven number of teams, simply form one group of three teams for the presentations. If you have only two Grapple Teams, simply do the presentations one team at a time.)

GRAPPLE PRAYER AND CHALLENGE: 5 MINUTES

Read the Grapple Prayer options. Have the class choose one prayer option that everyone will do. Allow students time to pray about what they discovered. Then close in prayer.

Get Ready: For Option 1, distribute markers and small pieces of masking tape.

Option 1: Sticky Situations

Write one of your weaknesses on a small piece of masking tape. Put the tape on your arm, leg, or face. Then pray, asking God to be strong in your weakness. Ask God to speak up for you as your enemy tries to hurt you.

Option 2: Psalms That Pray

Get comfortable, preferably sitting apart from each other. Look through the book of Psalms and find a psalm that connects with a situation you're facing right now. Read the psalm quietly as a prayer to God.

GRAPPLE CHALLENGE

Psalm 86:13 says, "Your love for me is very great. You have rescued me from the depths of death." Everyone dies, but Jesus died willingly because of his incredible love for you. And he didn't stay dead—God raised Jesus from the dead so that death no longer has the final say; God does! And God loves you so much he was willing to sacrifice everything to rescue you from the depths of death and offer you new and eternal life. This week, I challenge you: Every time you say or hear someone say "I love..." pause and shoot up a silent prayer to thank God for the love that sent Jesus to the cross to die for your sins.

WEEKLY GRAPPLE CONNECTION

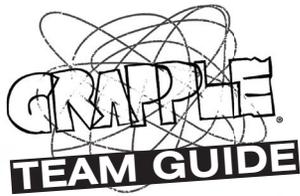
Grapple Question: Is Death the Same for Everyone?

Kids Learn: Jesus Died on the Cross for Our Sins

Dig Into the Bible: John 19:16-42

What experiences has your child had with death? Has a relative or close family friend passed away? Has your teenager attended the funeral of a classmate or peer around the same age?

No matter how these deaths have impacted your child, there is one person whose death makes a difference to everyone: Jesus. His death made it possible for us to have a relationship with God because he took responsibility for our sin. As you talk to your child about death, keep in mind that Jesus' death gives us hope. (For tips on talking to children and teenagers about death and grief, visit hospicenet.org.)



GRAPPLE TEAM GUIDE LESSON 1

In your Grapple Team, use this guide to grapple with today's question.

Sit in a circle facing out, and close your eyes. Do your very best to imagine what death might be like. After a few moments, you'll turn to someone near you and discuss what you imagine.

IN PAIRS

What do you think death will be like? How do you feel about death? Has anyone close to you died? If so, how did you handle it? What do you think happened to that person, if anything, after he or she died? Explain.

Read Proverbs 11:19; 14:27; and Ecclesiastes 8:8

In your own words, what do these verses say about death? How do you make sense of their seemingly contradictory messages?

Everyone dies, but one death was different from all others.

Read John 19:16-42

On a separate piece of paper, describe Jesus' death, step by step, starting with Pilate turning Jesus over to the priests to be crucified. Next to each step, write how you feel about it—surprised, angry, sad, no emotion, or something else.



IN PAIRS

What in this account stands out to you? Why do you think God allowed his own Son to die? How do you think Jesus may have felt about it? What do you think it has to do with you?

Let's take a look at what Jesus said about his death before it happened and how his followers explained his death afterward.

Read Matthew 16:21-23 and Acts 2:22-24

What do these passages say about how Jesus' death was different from every other death? Why does it matter that Jesus died?

Read Psalm 68:20 and Romans 5:17

What do these verses have to do with what you've learned about Jesus' crucifixion?

GRAPPLE TEAM REPORTS

With your team, choose one of the options below to report what you discovered.

Option 1: ABCs

Write the ABCs of what you learned today: a statement that starts with an A, a statement that starts with a B, and so on. Try to go as far into the alphabet as you can—even all the way to Z.

Option 2: New Perspective

Talk about how today's lesson has changed your perspective on Jesus' death on the cross. And then get a new physical perspective: Stand on a table, stand on your head, stretch out on the floor—whatever you want! Hold that position as one member of your team explains how today's lesson has provided a new perspective. Do a "test run" as a team before making your presentation to the other team.

