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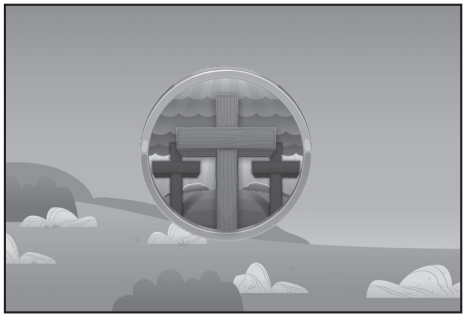


The cross
John 18:28-19:42; Luke 23:34-35, 44-45

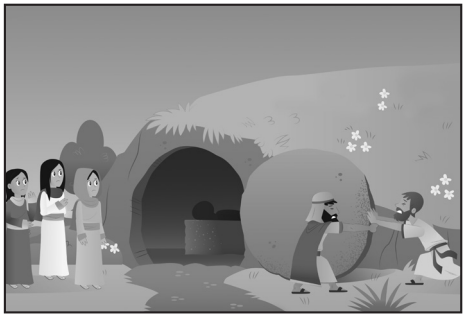
The religious leaders told the governor, Pilate, that Jesus was dangerous and wanted to be king. Pilate asked Jesus, "Is this true?" "I am King," Jesus answered, "but not of this world."

"Jesus is innocent," said Pilate. "There's no reason to kill Him. I will set Him free." But the crowd shouted, "Kill Him!"

So Pilate had his soldiers whip Jesus. They forced a thorny crown on His head. Then they laid a wooden cross on His back and led Him up a hill.

There on that hill, the Roman soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross, hands and feet. Then they raised it high. Jesus hung there between two criminals.

Around noon, the sky turned dark. Jesus' friends wept. The religious leaders laughed and said, "You saved other people. Why can't You save Yourself?" "Forgive them, Father," said Jesus.

When the time came for Jesus to die, He closed His eyes and said, "It is finished." He had completed what He had come to do because of His great love.

One of Jesus' followers, a man named Joseph, put Jesus' body in a brand new tomb. He rolled a huge stone in front of it. A long sad Friday was over.