

Word One Bible Study

He Has—And We Shall—Overcome

by Mark Barz

Text: 1 John 5:1-6 for the Sixth Sunday of Easter, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVE

Participants will know and rejoice that because Jesus is both fully human and fully God He has overcome sin and death. . .and so do we!

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles
White sheet
Acrylic fabric paint
Spray bottle(s)
Hymnals

GROUP GUIDELINES

[Note to leader: You will need to be sensitive to any recent deaths in the families of these youth, in their schools or the community.]

Divide the larger group into smaller groups of 3-4. The small group leader will be the person who will have to wait the longest to get his/her driver's license. Or, if everyone drives, the one who has had her/his license the shortest time.

In the small groups, ask each person to respond to any or all of these statements.

1. The first/last time I was at a funeral was. . .
2. Funerals make me uncomfortable because. . .
3. We cover up death in our society by. . .
4. When a Christian I know dies I feel. . .

BUILDING COMMUNITY

Save the obituaries from the local paper. Gather some national news magazines that feature covers or articles about the death of one or more prominent people in the past weeks or months.

Discuss the following questions in your small group:

1. What can you discover about these people from reading a newspaper or a magazine obituary?
2. What can't you know by reading a few sentences about them?
3. How would you respond to a classmate who asked you, "Did anything change because of last Sunday's celebration?"
4. Is death any less real just because we celebrated Christ's resurrection?

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

Respond to the following questions in small groups or with the whole group:

1. Read John 1:14, 18 and Galatians 4:4,5. How do these verses help you understand how and why Jesus needed to be born?
2. How does John describe who Jesus is and how He can be known? Is this the Jesus you would have expected had you been living in A.D. 30?
3. Jesus came by water and blood (verse 6). This curious statement is an assertion of Jesus' divine and human natures combined.
4. What events does John refer to when he writes that Jesus is the one who came by water and blood?
By water:
By blood:

5. How do these events demonstrate the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God?
6. How is this truth central to the salvation that Christ won for us? (Hebrews 4:14-16 and Hebrews 7:26-27)
7. Read Acts 3:14, 15 and Acts 10-12. What was the primary event that asserts that Jesus is true God?
8. What does this victory mean for you as you live in a world filled with dying and death?
9. What will you overcome when you breathe your last breath? (John 11:25-27 and Romans 6:3,4)

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. Prepare some acrylic fabric paint (available at any hobby shop) in gold and/or another color(s) of your choosing. Do this by diluting the paint with water until it can be sprayed out of a simple spray bottle. *(Experiment with your distance from the fabric and the nozzle adjustment. This painting technique will give you less precise lines and shapes, but can be mastered to make wonderful images.)*
2. Use the sheet to make a "Funeral Pall" to close your discovery. If your congregation uses a Funeral Pall, you may wish to have it available for the group to view.
3. Recruit two or three volunteers to create a simple design of a cross, a cross and crown, a cross with a sunrise, or any other appropriate symbol.
4. Paint the design on the sheet with the fabric paints you have prepared. If you're doing this indoors, work with plastic drop cloths or other sheets to catch any overspray. If you're able to work outdoors--on a non-windy day--use a clothesline or hang the sheet on an exterior wall.

CLOSING

Provide hymnals and ask each participant to choose a favorite Easter hymn verse to read or sing together for your closing prayers. Or, you may wish to use the Canticle, "This is the feast of victory" (from Divine Service II).

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