

Getting Started

1. Complete one of these statements.

- "The most spectacular game/play I ever saw was..."
- "Let me tell you about the time I was really frightened..."
- "One day I saw a simple act that changed my view of..."
- "Have I ever told you about the time I met..."
- "My view of life changed after I saw..."

In the Word (Most groups won't answer all the questions)

Jesus had told his Apostles the cross was where he was going (Mark 9:31; 10:32-34); One of them betrayed him (Mark 14:41-45); One denied him three times (Mark 14:66-72); All of them deserted him (14:50); His family watched from a distance (Mark 15:40); He was mocked by soldiers (15:16-20), his enemies (15:31), and even those who were crucified with him (15:32).

But at the cross, with the death of Jesus, there were witnesses who observed all that happened and declared, "Surely this man was the Son of God!" (15:39)

1. Read Mark 15:16-20 and Matthew 27:26-31.
 - a. How does this picture of Jesus being ridiculed by the soldiers make you feel?
 - b. Which of their actions do you consider the most demeaning?
 - c. Why would they have acted in this manner?
 - d. What is Jesus' reaction?
2. Read Mark 15:24-37.
 - a. At this point in time, who is surrounding the cross? Look at 15:33-34, who does not appear to be there?
 - b. Who appears powerful? What actions contribute to this perception?
 - c. Who appears powerless? What actions contribute to this perception?
3. Read Mark 15:38-39, Matthew 27:51-54, and Luke 23:44-48.
 - a. What was the reaction of the centurion and others to the events they witnessed?
 - b. What had the centurion, a soldier, witnessed that may have changed his perspective?

Application

Could people today arrive at a point where what they are observing seems to indicate the enemies of Jesus are winning? Can an encounter with the Christ of the cross still change people—even those who appear to be opposed to Jesus?

1. If there is a part of your life where you feel completely overwhelmed by the power of darkness, could you turn to God and say "into your hands I commit..." that problem? Before objecting and saying that's avoiding responsibility please note what Jesus had done, and was doing, at the very moment when he said it.
2. A centurion, and those with him, publicly declared that Jesus was the "Son of God." When and where would it be appropriate for you to make a similar declaration?

Prayers

1. How can the members of the Community Group pray for you this week?
2. Don't forget the "empty" chair—pray for those whom you'd like to invite to your group.

