

The Resurrection

(Matthew 27, 28; Mark 16, and John 20)

Pre-Session Warm Up

Have you ever been sad because someone you loved had gone away? Has anyone you loved very much died? [Teacher, allow the children to discuss.]

There was a woman, one of Jesus' followers, that was very sad because Jesus had died. Jesus was the best friend she had ever had. Before Jesus had changed her life, no one loved her. She probably thought now that Jesus was dead, her life will never be the same again. Little did she know the big surprise that she was going to experience...

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You that we serve a living God. We look forward to seeing You face-to-face. Until then, may we walk worthy of Your calling us Your sons and daughters. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Memory Verse

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. (John 5:24)

Lesson

[Teacher, we will be reading verses from Matthew, Mark, and John. Put bookmarks into the children's Bibles before class to help them locate the various passages more quickly.]

For the past few Sundays we've been learning about the last week of Jesus' life. Last week we discussed His trial and crucifixion. Today we pick up the story right after He died on the cross.

After Jesus died, a man named Joseph asked the Roman soldiers if he could take Jesus' body down off the cross and bury it.

Matthew 27:57-60

As evening approached, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea who had become a follower of Jesus, (58) went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. And Pilate issued an order to release it to him. (59) Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a long sheet of clean linen cloth. (60) He placed it in his own new tomb, which had been carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a great stone across the entrance and left.

Joseph was a secret disciple of Jesus, an honored religious leader. In the past, Joseph had been afraid to speak against the religious leaders who opposed Jesus. Now he boldly came forward and courageously asked to take Jesus' body from the cross and to bury it.

Matthew 27:62-66

The next day, on the Sabbath, the leading priests and Pharisees went to see Pilate. (63) They told him, "Sir, we remember what that deceiver once said while he was still alive: 'After three days I will rise from the dead.' (64) So we request that you seal the tomb until the third day. This will prevent his disciples from coming and stealing his body and then telling everyone he was raised from the dead! If that happens, we'll be worse off than we were at first." (65) Pilate replied, "Take guards and secure it the best you can." (66) So they sealed the tomb and posted guards to protect it.

Early the next morning Mary Magdalene and her friends decided to go to the garden where Jesus was buried. They brought spices so they might wrap Jesus' body according to the customs of that day. [Teacher, they wrapped the corps like a mummy.]

Mark 16:1-3

Saturday evening, when the Sabbath ended, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went out and purchased burial spices so they could anoint Jesus' body. (2) Very early on Sunday morning, just at sunrise, they went to the tomb. (3) On the way they were asking each other, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?"

Grave stones weighed tons, these women knew there was no way they could move it. Yet, they went to the tomb in obedience to the Holy Spirit not knowing what to expect.

Matthew 28:2-4

Suddenly there was a great earthquake! For an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled aside the stone, and sat on it. (3) His face shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. (4) The guards shook with fear when they saw him, and they fell into a dead faint.

The angels did not roll away the stone from the entrance to the tomb so Jesus could get out. He could have left easily without moving the stone. It was rolled away so others could get in and see for themselves that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead, just as He said he would do.

Meanwhile, a group of religious leaders was plotting how to cover up the story.

Matthew 28:11-15

As the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and told the leading priests what had happened. (12) A meeting with the elders was called, and they decided to give the soldiers a large bribe. (13) They told the soldiers, "You must say, 'Jesus' disciples came during the night while we were sleeping, and they stole his body.' (14) If the governor hears about it, we'll stand up for you so you won't get in trouble." (15) So the guards accepted the bribe and said what they were told to say. Their story spread widely among the Jews, and they still tell it today.

At the same time as the religious leaders were plotting to cover up the story, back at the tomb the angel invites the women to see the empty tomb.

Mark 16:4-8

But as they arrived, they looked up and saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled aside. (5) When they entered the

tomb, they saw a young man clothed in a white robe sitting on the right side. The women were shocked, (6) but the angel said, "Don't be alarmed. You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! Look, this is where they laid his body. (7) Now go and tell his disciples, including Peter, that Jesus is going ahead of you to Galilee. You will see him there, just as he told you before he died." (8) The women fled from the tomb, trembling and bewildered, and they said nothing to anyone because they were too frightened.

[Shorter Ending of Mark]

Then they briefly reported all this to Peter and his companions. Afterward Jesus himself sent them out from east to west with the sacred and unfailing message of salvation that gives eternal life. Amen.

Since Mary knew that the disciples would not have taken Jesus' body, she believed that grave robbers had stolen it. So, she ran to tell the disciples...

John 20:2

She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

Peter and John ran to the tomb and found it empty except for the linen burial cloths in which Jesus had been wrapped.

John 20:3-7

Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. (4) They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. (5) He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. (6) Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, (7) while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings.

The fact that the grave clothes were all left as if Jesus had passed right through them was the first sign that a robbery had not taken

place. The headpiece was still rolled up in the shape of a head. A grave robber couldn't possibly have made off with Jesus' body and left the linens as if they were still shaped around it.

The disciples returned home, but Mary remained outside the tomb crying.

John 20:10-11

Then they went home. (11) Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in.

When Mary looked inside the tomb once again, she saw two angels dressed in white, sitting where Jesus' body had been.

John 20:12-13

She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. (13) "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her. "Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

Mary turned around and saw a man she assumed to be the gardener.

John 20:14-15

She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. (15) "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?" She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

The man asked Mary why she was crying and she told him that she wanted to find Jesus. When the man called Mary by name, she immediately realized that He was Jesus.

John 20:16

"Mary!" Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

When Jesus called Mary by name, she recognized His voice, realizing that He was her Lord who had truly come back to life! Mary was no longer sad, but rejoiced knowing that the Lord Jesus had died and risen for her!

Jesus instructed Mary to tell the disciples that she had seen Him.

John 20:17

"Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

Mary did not want to lose Jesus again. But, when He asked her to go to the disciples and tell them the good news, she immediately obeyed Jesus.

John 20:18-21

Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message. (19) That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. (20) As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! (21) Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you."

Mary did not meet the risen Christ until she had discovered the empty tomb. Like Mary, we cannot know Jesus as our Lord and Savior until we believe without a doubt that He is indeed alive and that His tomb truly was empty. Mary was so full of joy she couldn't wait to tell others about Jesus. She wanted to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with the disciples and others. We, too, should be excited to tell others that He wants them to rise with Him and live with Him forever in heaven.

Isn't it wonderful that because Jesus arose from the dead you will too, if you have received Him as your Savior. Jesus told us something very important...

Review the memory verse: John 5:24

Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

In conclusion...

Jesus' resurrection is the key to our Christian faith:

- He does not lie! Just as He said, Jesus rose from the dead. We can be confident, therefore, that He will accomplish all He has promised.
- He is alive and He wants a relationship with us! Jesus' bodily resurrection shows us that the living Christ, not a false prophet or imposter, is ruler of God's eternal kingdom. (All other religions have dead leaders — Mohammad, Budha, etc.)
- Death is not the end — there is future life! We can be certain of our own resurrection because Jesus was resurrected.
- Resurrection power is available to us! The same divine power that brought Jesus back to life is now available to us to bring our spiritually dead selves back to life.
- The resurrection is the basis for the church's witness to the world.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, You are alive! You have proven Who You are — the God of all gods. Because You live, we have hope; we can face tomorrow! Thank You! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

Learning Activities

Lesson Review Activity

Review the story by placing the following items into a bag. As you take out each object, explain the story, or ask the children to tell you what the object means:

- Bread — last supper
- Coin — Judas betrayed Jesus for money
- Rope — Jesus' hands were tied
- Purple cloth — Jesus was mocked in a purple robe
- Thorns — Jesus wore a crown of thorns
- Cross — Jesus died on a cross
- Nails — nails pierced his hands and feet
- Sponge — they gave him vinegar on a sponge
- Spear (wooden skewer/toothpick) — they pierced his side
- White cloth — His burial linen
- Stone — the stone that sealed Jesus' tomb

Game Center

Drama Activity

Don't miss acting out this lesson, it's so exciting! Bring pieces of fabric or towels, a robe for Jesus, bed sheets for the angels. Use your imagination for the props and costumes. Reading from Matthew 28:1-10, narrate the story using a children's, easy-to-understand Bible.

Pictionary Game

Play *Pictionary* or *Charades* using lesson themes from the past few weeks. Alternate between teams. Give one minute to guess the topic. If Team A guesses correctly they get 1,000 points. If team A doesn't guess it, but Team B does, then Team B gets 500 points.

Lesson Theme Idea:

- Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)
- Last Supper (bread & wine)
- Jesus Washes His Disciple's Feet
- Crucifixion
- Resurrection (empty tomb)
- Ascension (Jesus rises to heaven)
- Holy Spirit comes (tongues of fire)
- Lame man is healed

Cut the following into game cards:

Triumphal Entry (Palm Sunday)	Last Supper (bread and wine)	Jesus Washes Disciple's Feet
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Garden of Gethsemane	Crucifixion	Resurrection (empty tomb)
Ascension (Jesus rises to heaven)	Holy Spirit comes (tongues of fire)	Lame man is healed

Or, Use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. Who buried Jesus in his own tomb? (Joseph)
2. What was put across the entrance of Jesus' tomb? (A stone)
3. After Jesus died, what were the Pharisees afraid might happen? (That someone might try to steal His body.)
4. What did the women see when they went to Jesus' tomb? (They saw that the stone had been rolled away)
5. What did the angel say had happened to Jesus? (He is risen! He is not here.)
6. Who saw Jesus first after His resurrection? (Mary Magdalene)

7. Where did Jesus say the disciples should go to see Him? (Galilee)
8. Who told the guards to lie about what happened? (The chief priests and elders)
9. What were Jesus last instructions to His disciples? ("*Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.*")