

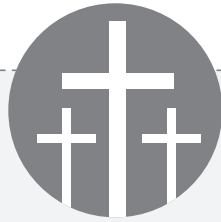
Note: The Easter lesson on the resurrection will be taught in the form of a skit by a few adults & students. It will be done once, for all groups together. So that means all groups will have lesson time from around 11 am to 11:20 am.

For small group time (approx. 11:20am to 12:00pm), 2 activities are planned and supplies will be provided:

-He Is Risen Sticker Scene (See page 4 of this packet.)

-Roll the Stone Relay (See page 5 of this packet.)

During small group time, you can also play a Review Game with the review questions. (See pages 6-11 of packet for lists of questions and a few game options.) Please let Jacob or Alicia know if you need any supplies for the game you choose.



Jesus Rose from the Dead

Jesus conquered death when he rose from the grave.

Lesson Focus

Jesus was crucified and placed in a tomb, but on the third day he rose from the dead! He appeared to Mary, his disciples, and other followers to show he had risen. Jesus' death and resurrection conquered sin and death so we can have forgiveness of sin and the promise of eternal life in heaven with God.

Key Passages

Matthew 27:65-66; John 20:19

Memory Verse

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The previous Easter lesson covered Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey, his last supper with the disciples, his betrayal by Judas, and his arrest, trial, and crucifixion. Jesus' death on the cross paid the punishment for the sins of mankind—past, present, and future. He also fulfilled numerous Old Testament prophecies about his sacrificial death (Isaiah 53), the soldiers casting lots for his clothing (Psalm 22:18; Matthew 27:35), his bones not being broken (Psalm 34:20; John 19:36), and the spear that pierced his side (Zechariah 12:10; John 19:34–37). Joseph of Arimathea requested Jesus' body from Pilate, who was surprised that Jesus was already dead. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linens and placed it in his tomb near the place of the crucifixion. The women who followed Jesus and witnessed the crucifixion saw where Joseph laid the body and covered the entrance with a stone (Mark 15:46–47). But the chief priests weren't satisfied that the tomb was secure. They went to Pilate with concerns that Jesus' disciples would steal his body and claim that Jesus had risen from the dead on the third day as he'd prophesied. Pilate agreed to station guards at the tomb, and they sealed the stone (Matthew 27:62–66).

Early on Sunday morning, the women returned to the tomb with spices. They found an angel sitting on the stone, which was rolled away, and the guards incapacitated from fear. The angel announced that Jesus had risen! He was alive! He instructed the

Historical/Apologetics Background

Even secular historians cannot deny the evidence of Jesus' death by crucifixion, the empty tomb, and the disciples' eyewitness accounts of seeing the resurrected Jesus. The later conversions of Paul and Jesus' brother James were also based on them seeing the risen Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:7–8). The Bible is our most reliable source because it is inspired by God who cannot lie. Over 17 ancient documents besides the Bible, written within 100 years of the events, speak of Jesus' death and resurrection.

In spite of the evidence, many skeptics have proposed theories to discredit these events. The heart

women to go tell the disciples. As they hurried away in fear and with joy, Jesus appeared to them and comforted them (Matthew 28:1–10).

Some guards who were at the tomb went to the chief priests and reported what happened. The Jewish leaders did not want the news of the empty tomb to spread, so they paid the guards to say that Jesus' disciples came and took the body while they slept. This lie was spread among the Jews (Matthew 28:11–15).

The Gospels record how the disciples didn't believe the news the women shared that Jesus was alive. But Peter and John ran to the tomb and saw the linens left there (John 20:1–10). In addition to appearing to the women (Matthew 28:8–10) and Mary Magdalene (John 20:11–18), Jesus appeared to his disciples in a locked room (John 20:19–20), again to his disciples with Thomas (John 20:24–29), to two followers on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35), to the disciples in Galilee (John 21), and to numerous followers (1 Corinthians 15:1–8). These witnesses who saw Jesus were commanded to proclaim the good news of who Jesus is (the Messiah and Son of God) and the forgiveness of sin offered through Jesus' death and resurrection (Luke 24:45–53; John 20:30–31). The book of Acts records how they obeyed Christ's command and boldly proclaimed the gospel despite persecution. The gospel changed the disciples from frightened men to bold witnesses willing to give their lives to share the message of Christ. May God give us the same boldness to share the message of hope and salvation found only through Jesus Christ.

issue behind these attacks is that people don't want to be responsible to a holy God for their sins. If Jesus is the Son of God as he claimed, then he will return to judge the world as King. There is no alternate way to God from other religions; Jesus is the only way. Adam's sin brought death into the world. Jesus had to become a descendant of Adam, die physically, and rise to conquer death. And that is what the Bible says he did.

Here are a few theories proposed by some to deny the death and resurrection of Jesus:

Mistaken Identity: It wasn't Jesus who died on the cross; it was a disciple who was supernaturally

transformed to look like Jesus and crucified in his place (e.g., Judas). The Qur'an proposes that the disciple on the cross just looked like Jesus; Jesus was taken up to heaven by Allah. However, this theory requires deceit on the part of Allah, which means he is untrustworthy. It also cannot explain the nail marks people saw on the risen Jesus.

Legend Theory: The beliefs about Jesus' resurrection were legends that developed over decades by Christians who spread across the Roman Empire. This theory accepts that Jesus died but rejects the evidence of the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus after his resurrection. One problem with this theory is that if Christians were inventing legends to make the account more acceptable or reputable, why would they record things like Jesus first appearing to women, including Mary Magdalene, when women's testimonies were not considered valid during that time? Also, there are no signs of legendary development in the biblical accounts of the resurrection; rather, the writers recorded details based on their perspective, audience, and purpose.

Vision Theories: The people who saw the post-resurrected Jesus (women, disciples) were experiencing visions or hallucinations of Jesus due to their grief. However, this would be a great miracle since that many people don't mass hallucinate (i.e., the 500 witnesses mentioned in 1 Corinthians 15). This theory, although popular today, also cannot account for the conversions of skeptics like Paul and James, who were not distraught like the women or disciples. Paul was an enemy of Jesus, persecuting Christians at the time of his conversion.

Swoon Theory: Jesus fell into a coma-like state on the cross and later revived in the tomb. This theory was popular in the early 1800s, but when you understand the brutality of crucifixion, to think someone could survive it is absurd. The Bible records the spear through Jesus' side and the confirmation of Jesus' death from the centurion and Pilate. Jesus would have had to unwrap in the tomb, roll back the stone, and escape past the guards, and then convince the disciples that he was the resurrected Lord of glory. Jesus couldn't have said he conquered death if he were clinging to life. Plus, his followers would not have risked their lives for a fraud.

Stolen Body Theories: Jesus' body was moved or stolen prior to Sunday morning. These theories have many problems. If Jesus' enemies stole the body, why didn't they simply produce it to prove he was dead? For the disciples to have stolen the body, they would have had to get past the guards, move the stone, and escape with the body. This is unlikely since the disciples were denying and fleeing from Jesus, not rushing toward danger to rescue him. They were huddled behind locked doors, hiding from the Jews when Jesus appeared to them. Jesus' appearances following the resurrection are also unaccounted for in these theories. Another problem is that if the guards were sleeping, how did they see who stole the body?

A closer look at these theories reveals that they are sad attempts to deny the truth of Scripture. Those who don't want to believe will come up with far-fetched attempts to avoid the one way to salvation and reconciliation with God—the Savior, Jesus.

He Is Risen Sticker Scene



Roll the Stone Relay

Materials

- Balloons
- Masking tape or chairs **Lines in the main children's area can be used.**
- Optional: fly swatters or pool noodles, one per team **Pool noodles can be used to hit the balloons with.**

Instructions

Blow up several balloons per team. Teams will use only one balloon at a time, but the extra are in case some pop. Use tape to mark a start line then make another line of tape or set up some chairs across the room.

Explain that students will be using one hand, with the other behind their backs, to bat their team's balloon (the stone) along the floor to the line/chairs across the room and back.

Divide the class into teams and have them line up at the start line. Give the first student on each team a balloon to represent the stone covering Jesus' tomb. When you say "Go," the students will keep one hand behind their backs and use their other hand to bat the balloon along the floor across the room and back, where the next teammate will take over batting the balloon. Students may not use two hands or their feet to move the balloon. The first team to have all the students finish wins. Repeat as time allows. You may want to have students switch and use the hand they had behind their backs for the second round.

*Option: Give each team a **pool noodle** to use to bat the balloon across the room and back then hand it off to the next runner.*

Suggested Discussion

The stone that covered Jesus' tomb was quite large. The women who went to the tomb wondered how they would roll it back to prepare Jesus' body with spices.

? But who had rolled the stone away at the tomb? *An angel.*

That's right! An angel rolled the stone away so everyone could see that Jesus had risen. He was alive! This fact was witnessed by Jesus' followers and also by the Roman guards, who were paid to lie about what happened.

Review Questions

K-1st Review Questions

1. Who took Jesus' body off the cross and placed it in his tomb? *Joseph.*
2. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linens. What are linens? *Strips of cloth.*
3. Was the tomb a hole in the ground or more like a cave? *Like a cave.*
4. Was this a new tomb, or were there other bodies buried there? *It was new.*
5. Who went with Joseph so they could see where Jesus was buried and come back later? *Jesus' mother, other women.*
6. What was rolled in front of the doorway of the tomb where Jesus was laid? *A huge stone.*
7. What did the leaders and Pilate do to keep anyone from stealing Jesus' body? *Sealed the stone and put guards on watch.*
8. Who came to the tomb early in the morning? *Women. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.*
9. Who rolled the stone away from the tomb? *An angel.*
10. Why did the angel roll the stone away? *So people could see that Jesus had risen.*
11. What did the guards do when the earthquake happened and the angel came down from heaven? *They fell down with fear or fainted.*
12. What great news did the angel tell the women? *Jesus was risen. He was alive!*
13. When the women ran to tell the disciples, who appeared to them and spoke to them? *Jesus.*
14. What does the word "resurrection" mean: to die or to come back to life? *To come back to life.*
15. Why did the disciples have the doors locked? *They were afraid of being arrested for following Jesus.*
16. How did Jesus get in when he went to see the disciples while they had the doors locked? *Jesus just appeared.*
17. How many people saw Jesus after he rose from the dead: only 3 or 4, over 500, or just the two Marys? *Over 500.*
18. Did the disciples stay afraid, or did they tell everyone the good news of Jesus' resurrection? *They told everyone the good news of Jesus' resurrection.*
19. Because Jesus died and rose again, what promise do we have if we put our trust in him? *Forgiveness of sins and life with him in heaven.*
20. What two things did Jesus say he is in the memory verse? *The resurrection and the life.*

Pre-K Review Questions

1. Who took Jesus' body off the cross and placed it in his tomb: Joseph, Pilate, or Judas? *Joseph.*
2. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linens. What are linens? *Strips of cloth.*
3. Was the tomb a hole in the ground or more like a cave? *Like a cave.*
4. Who went with Joseph so they could see where Jesus was buried and come back later? *Jesus' mother, other women.*
5. What was rolled in front of the doorway of the tomb where Jesus was laid? *A huge stone.*
6. What did the leaders and the Roman governor do to keep anyone from stealing Jesus' body? *Sealed the stone and put guards on watch.*
7. Who came to the tomb early in the morning? *Women. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.*
8. Who rolled the stone away from the tomb? *An angel.*
9. Why did the angel roll the stone away? To let Jesus out or to let people see that Jesus had already risen? *To let people see that Jesus had risen.*
10. What did the guards do when the earthquake happened and the angel came down from heaven? *They fell down with fear or fainted.*

11. What great news did the angel tell the women?
Jesus was risen. He was alive!
12. What does the word “resurrection” mean: to die or to come back to life? *To come back to life.*
13. How did Jesus get in when he went to see the disciples while they had the doors locked? Did he knock on the door? *No. Jesus just appeared.*
14. Because Jesus died and rose again, what promise do we have if we put our trust in him? *Forgiveness of sins and eternal life with him in heaven.*

Jesus spoke to them and showed them the marks in his hands from the nails on the cross. And the disciples believed it was really Jesus—he had risen from the dead!

Jesus appeared to other followers besides the women and his disciples. He showed himself to many other people—over 500 people saw Jesus after he had died and risen.

Jesus reminded his disciples that they were witnesses of his death and resurrection. They saw him die, and they touched the nail marks in his hands when he came back to life. Now it would be their job to tell everyone all that had happened.

Soon Jesus was taken back up into heaven. But his disciples weren't sad; they were filled with joy! They immediately began sharing the good news with others. They were no longer afraid. They knew Jesus was alive and that their sins were forgiven. No matter what happened, they had Jesus' promise of heaven when they died.

And guess what! We have that same promise. Because Jesus died and paid for our sins then came alive again, everyone who believes and puts their trust in him can have their sins forgiven and live forever with him. That's why we can say, "Happy Resurrection Day!"

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.



Review Game—Easter Basket Toss

We encourage you to play the following review game. Students give the correct answer and toss the eggs to see how many points they can collect for their team. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

Review Questions

Large plastic Easter eggs or beanbags

Three large Easter baskets, laundry baskets, or boxes

Masking tape

Small pieces of paper

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Set the three large Easter baskets in a line, making each one a little farther away from the tossing line. Use small pieces of paper to label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the basket farthest away is the highest score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team

a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss two Easter eggs or beanbags into two of the baskets then go to the end of the line. Keep track of the scores for each team on the board. If the eggs miss, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Continue asking questions, repeating them if necessary, until all students have had a turn to toss.



Story Time

We are going to read a story about a boy named Justin and his friend Jessie. Show the picture as you read the story.

- ? How many of you have been to a funeral before? Show of hands.

A funeral or a memorial is a time to remember a person who has died. We may feel sad and miss that person very much. But if they knew Jesus as their Savior, we don't need to feel sad for them because they will go to heaven and live with Jesus forever! And like Mrs. Smith said in her note, it's all because Jesus is God, and he's powerful enough to win over death and rise again. So now we can be alive with him in heaven even after our bodies die.

Ellie didn't want to let go of the balloon, did she? She didn't quite understand. But the other kids knew that the balloons were supposed to remind them of Jesus' promise that we can have eternal life with him in heaven. It's just like Jesus said in our memory verse, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live."



Song Time

Practice the following song using the lyrics on the Song Sheet at the end of this lesson. You may want to add clapping, clapping, musical instruments, or make up hand motions.

Tell the Gospel News

Let's sing about how Jesus died for sinners and rose again! Review the song and sing it a few times.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students before you dismiss them.

- Thank God for his great power that raised Jesus from the dead.
- Thank God for the salvation he offers to everyone through Jesus, the risen Savior.

death if we've repented of our sins (by turning away from them and turning to Jesus) and put our trust in him as our Savior.

Many people today try to say the resurrection is not true because it shows that Jesus is God. They don't want to be judged for their sins by a holy God. Instead, they say that Jesus didn't really die on the cross. But we know that is silly. We can read how Jesus suffered and died at the hands of the Romans. No one survived crucifixion.

Others try to say that the women and disciples who saw Jesus were all having hallucinations, just imagining that they saw Jesus because they missed him so much and were so sad. But we know that's impossible for so many people to imagine the same thing at different times and places. The Bible tells us that over 500 people saw Jesus after he'd been crucified and before he returned to heaven. That's a lot of witnesses!

It's sad that people try to say the Bible isn't true. But we trust in God's Word. God promised a Savior would come, and he sent Jesus. Like the disciples, we can be changed from frightened followers to bold witnesses and share the good news of Jesus with others.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students.

- Praise God for Jesus' resurrection and victory over sin and death!
- Ask God for faith and courage to trust Jesus and share the gospel with others.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse.



Review Game—Grab the Egg

We encourage you to play the following review game. Students will race to grab a plastic egg and answer questions to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions

Large plastic egg, beanbag, bell, or other object

Table

Optional: small treats

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place a table at the front of the room and put the egg/object on it in the middle.

Divide the class into two teams. Have teams stand or sit in two rows facing each other. Have the first two students in each team come up to the table and stand with their hands behind their backs. Read a review question then say, "Go!" The

first student to grab the egg will answer the question. If it is correct, award 10 points to that team. If it is incorrect or the student takes too long to answer, the other student may answer correctly to earn 5 points for his team. Both students return to the end of their team's row and the next two students come to the table.

Keep track of scores on the board or a piece of paper, or have an assistant/student do it. Continue until all students have come to the table at least once and all the questions have been asked. The team with the highest score at the end wins. If desired, award treats to the winning team or to the whole class.