



TEACHER GUIDE

The disciples were without their Rabbi. Three days after the worst day any of their lives, Sunday morning dawned. Some women who had known Jesus—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Jesus’ mother, and others—went to visit the tomb. When they arrived, Mary was horrified to see the stone rolled away and Jesus’ body missing from the tomb. Believing that someone had stolen the body, she ran to tell Peter and John.

The two disciples quickly ran to see for themselves and found that Mary had spoken the truth. The body of their teacher—their Messiah—wasn’t there. In the account written by John, John says that when he saw the empty tomb, he believed.

Up until that point, the disciples had not understood that Jesus would rise again. But on that first Easter morning, the glorious truth dawned like the sun—Jesus was alive! He had fulfilled his mission. Through him, all nations would be blessed and all people could be restored to God and live as sons and daughters of the King. God’s Kingdom was here!

The road ahead wouldn’t always be easy for Jesus’ followers, but they knew that their Savior was alive and he promised to send them a comforter—the Holy Spirit. God’s Kingdom, which even a small child could be a part of, had been established through Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. And like a mustard seed, it would one day explode into full bloom.

FOR THE TEACHER:

Read the account of Jesus’ resurrection in John 20.

What stands out to you about this story?

What is something new you learned from reading it this time?

What is one important truth you think your students need to hear?

Jesus rising from the dead changed everything. Not only had he lived a sinless life, the Son of God had conquered sin and the grave, ushering in the new covenant and the Kingdom of God. What has Jesus’ resurrection meant in your life? Consider sharing your answer during “Going Deep.”

SETTING THE STAGE (10 MINUTES)

You'll need: Good news Sign on the Wall, Sticky notes, Pencils

Write the words "GOOD NEWS" on a piece of paper and tape it to the wall. As children arrive, ask them if they ever received some really good news. Have them write the good news they received on a sticky note and stick it under the words "GOOD NEWS."

INTRODUCTION & VIDEO (8 MINUTES)

You'll need: Week 4 Video

Introduce the video, saying something like:

I enjoyed reading about some of the good news you received! (Tell a story of a time when you received good news.) **It's really wonderful to get good news, especially if we've recently had some bad news. Last week, we ended with Jesus being arrested and suffering for our sins. Today we're going to hear more about that, but we're also going to hear about some really, REALLY good news. Let's watch as some friends tell us the story!**

PLAY Week 4 Video.

Follow video by saying something like this:

For the last four weeks, we've heard about what Jesus came to do. He came to seek and to save the lost, which is each one of us. We are born with sin and the only way to have our sin forgiven and be a part of God's Kingdom forever is to believe in Jesus, who willingly shed his blood for us and came alive again by the power of God. That's the gospel—which means good news.

GOING DEEP (10 MINUTES)

You'll need: crosses, stones, little shoes, mini slinkie (one per kid)

Storytelling with mementos: Tell the story of Easter Sunday from John 20, using the supplies above to give to kids as the story goes along. Each item serves as a memento from the story. Recruit a helper to pass out the supplies on your cues.

LEADER: Last week we ended the story on the worst day of Jesus' life. A day that—though sad and terrible—brought new life for the world. We celebrate the day Jesus died on "Good Friday." It was good because, through Jesus, we can have a restored relationship with God. Our sin is forgiven! Our debt has been paid! Jesus had fulfilled his mission.

Here's what happened: Jesus had been teaching in a way that challenged what the religious leaders had always believed. He had been living in a way that challenged how they lived their lives, and they didn't like it. So Jesus allowed himself to be arrested and the soldiers and a mob of people took Jesus and handed him over to a Roman governor, named Pilate. Pilate questioned the religious leaders to find out what charges they were making against Jesus. The leaders insisted that Jesus had committed crimes; why else would they have brought Jesus before him? Pilate and the leaders argued back and forth, but eventually Pilate took Jesus inside for questioning. Then he had Jesus taken back outside to the crowd. Pilate told the crowd he saw no reason why Jesus should be arrested. He offered to set Jesus free as part of the Passover tradition. But the crowd insisted that Jesus shouldn't be freed.

So, Pilate took Jesus and had Him whipped. The soldiers put a crown of thorns on His head, and they put a purple robe on Him. Pilate brought Jesus out before the crowd again, where he again told the angry mob that he saw no reason to keep Jesus. The crowd disagreed, though. The religious leaders got the crowd to join them in shouting: *Crucify him!* (John 19:6, NIV)

Eventually, Pilate gave up. He turned Jesus over to the soldiers, who forced Jesus to drag His own cross to Golgotha—a hill outside the city. I've got a tiny cross here for each of you to hold as you imagine what that might have been like.

Hand out the small crosses to the kids.

The soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross and raised it up high, with a sign that said 'King of the Jews.' Jesus' mother Mary, her sister, and Mary Magdalene were there. When Jesus saw them, He called down from the cross and asked John to take care of His mother. "Jesus hung on the cross, and eventually, He knew His time had come. He said His final words: *"It is finished"* (John 19:30, NIV), and then He bowed His head and died." But when Jesus died, his followers became very sad and confused. It was a dark time. They felt as if all hope was gone. *Dim or turn off the lights.*

After Jesus died, two men took His body to be buried. Their names were Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. Mary Magdalene followed the men as they took His body to the tomb to be buried. They rolled a heavy stone in front of the tomb. I can't give you a heavy stone today, of course, but I do have a little stone for each of you to hold.

Hand out the round, flat stones.

Early on Sunday, Mary went to the tomb. Jesus had been buried in a hurry, and she wanted to make sure He received a proper burial. But . . . wait! The heavy stone that had been blocking the tomb had been rolled away. The tomb was EMPTY! Mary RAN to the home where the disciples were staying. She told Peter and John that someone must have come and taken Jesus' body. The two men then also RAN to the tomb. Inside, they found the strips of linen and cloth that Jesus had been buried in. But Jesus wasn't there. Use this little shoe to imagine what it would have been like to run like Mary and the disciples and see the empty tomb of Jesus.

Hand out little running shoes

Peter and John didn't know exactly what had happened, but the book of Matthew tells us that after Mary Magdalene had left the tomb, angels appeared to the other women who had been with her, telling them that Jesus had risen!

Later, Mary Magdalene, who still thought Jesus' body had been stolen, returned to the tomb. She stood outside crying. While she was crying, she bent her head down to look inside the tomb. Do you think she hoped that maybe she had seen wrong the first time and his body would be there? When she looked inside, she saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. They asked her "Woman, why are you crying?" *In John 20:13 Mary replied, "They have taken my Lord away . . . I don't know where they have put him."*

Then, Mary turned around and saw someone. She thought it was the gardener. The man asked her why she was crying and who she was looking for. Mary pleaded with the man to tell her where Jesus' body had gone. Then the man said her name: 'Mary.' That was all it took. Mary realized that it was JESUS! He was alive! *Turn the lights back on.*

Mary turned toward Jesus and cried out, 'Teacher!' But before she could reach out to Him, Jesus spoke again. He said:

"Do not hold on to me. I have not yet ascended to the Father. Instead, go to those who believe in me. Tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" (John 20:17)

Mary ran to tell the disciples the best news ever: she had seen Jesus. He was alive!

Here—let's see if you can show me how Mary and the disciples must have felt. Let's celebrate that good news!

Hand out the mini slinkies and tell kids to wave them in the air in celebration for a few seconds.

Great job! Here—you can each put your mementos in a bag, because you'll get to take them home with you. You can use your, cross, stone, shoe, and slinkie to help you remember everything Jesus did at Easter. Maybe you can use them to share the story with someone else, too!

Hand out the plastic bags. Have each kid put his/her cross, stone, shoe, and slinkie in a bag and zip it up. Have the kids write their names on the bags (or you could do this in advance). You can pass out the bags when you dismiss the kids at the end of the service.

What an amazing story. Don't you wish you could have been there to see it for yourself? I do. Jesus was alive! Not even death could stop God's plan to save the world.

After Jesus rose again, he appeared to his disciples and over 500 other people. He was on earth for 40 days before he ascended into heaven. Before he left, he told his disciples to go into the whole world, teaching the good news and inviting people to join the Kingdom of God by believing in Jesus.

PICK A FEW DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO DO WITH YOUR GROUP:

- What did God see when his Son was hanging on the cross? (*The stain of sin.*)
- Why did Jesus say, "God, God, why have you left me alone?" (*Because the sin of the world on him separated him from his Father.*)
- What happened when the women went to Jesus' tomb early on Easter morning? (*Jesus was no longer in the tomb!*)
- What did Jesus tell his disciples to go and do? (*To tell the good news to everyone!*)
- What three things having to do with sin would Jesus take away? (*The stain of sin, the power of sin, and the presence of sin.*)

CLOSER LOOK (10-20 MINUTES)

Activity 1: THE KINGDOM OF GOD

You'll need: Kingdom of God Matching Worksheet (one per kid)

SAY: *Through his life, death, and resurrection, Jesus showed us that the Kingdom of God is real and provided a way that we can be part of it. Let's take a look at a few verses that tell us more about the Kingdom of God.*

Kids will draw lines between the verse reference and what the verse tells us about the Kingdom of God. You can work together as a class, let kids work individually or divide students into four small groups, and have each group look up one verse and talk about what it says about the Kingdom of God.

- Matthew 6:33 - We are rewarded when we seek God's kingdom first.
- Mark 10:15 - To enter the kingdom of God we must receive it with faith like a child.
- Mark 4:30-33 - The kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed. It starts small and then grows huge.
- John 3:3 - To enter the kingdom you must be spiritually born again.

Leaders ask:

What does this verse tell us about the Kingdom of God?

Why is that truth important?

What does it mean for your own life?

Activity 2: SPREADING THE GOOD NEWS

You'll need: Paper, Markers, Art supplies

SAY: Jesus told his disciples to "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15). With busy lives, it can be hard to remember that other people need to know Jesus too. Spend some time drawing a picture of one way you can share the good news with someone you know.

After children have drawn their pictures, invite some to share the ideas they thought of for sharing the good news.

THE GOOD WORD (10 MINUTES)

You'll need: **The Good Word Image**, Rubber Bracelets with verse (one per kid)

Introduce the good word, saying:

On the first Easter morning, some women went to the tomb with spices for Jesus' body. When they got there, the stone was rolled away and an angel as bright as lightning spoke to them! He said, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified." Then he told them the wonderful news in today's Good Word. Listen as I read it from God's Word.

Read Luke 24:6a.

He is not here; he has risen!

Explain unfamiliar words and concepts:

HE HAS RISEN — Jesus' body had been placed in the tomb, but on the third day, God raised him from the dead and brought him back to life.

Recite the verse together a few times. Pass out bracelets and let kids wear them or add them to their bag.

BIBLE TO-GO (5-10 Minutes)

You'll need: Empty Tomb Coloring Sheet (optional), Week 4 Take Home Activities (one per child or family)

SAY: *Jesus died on the cross and rose again so that we could be part of the Kingdom of God. At the start of today's class we wrote down some of the good news we'd received. But Jesus dying and rising again is the BEST NEWS EVER. It's news we can't keep to ourselves. We have to share it with others.* Have children stand in a circle or they can do this activity from their seats. Have the whole group say: "Jesus is alive!" Then any child who wants to can say, "That's good news because ..." and fill in the blank. Here are a few ideas to get started:

- I never have to be alone.
- He loves me.
- He conquered sin and death.
- I have nothing to fear.
- I have eternal life.
- He's coming back someday.

Repeat "Jesus is alive!" followed by the children's descriptions of the good news for as long as you wish. Close in prayer, thanking God for raising his Son from the dead and allowing us to be part of his Kingdom.

OPTIONAL EXTRA: Empty Tomb Coloring Sheet

Note: Use the optional extra activity if you need to fill more time, or for kids to do while waiting for their parents to pick them up.

TAKE HOME ACTIVITIES

Each week, use the provided Take Home Activities to encourage kids to keep learning at home with their parents. These thoughtful activities will guide the families in your church through a richer Lent and Easter experience.

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