

**Acts 10:34–43 or
 Isa. 65:17–25**
Ps. 118:1–2, 14–24
**1 Cor. 15:19–26 or
 Acts 10:34–43**
**John 20:1–18 or
 Luke 24:1–12**

Jesus Is Alive!

Goal for the Session

Children will celebrate the story of Jesus' resurrection and discover ways to spread the good news that Jesus is alive.

■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

Focus on Luke 24:1–12

WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Gregory A. Robbins

The women whom the evangelist names (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary “the mother of James”) are, for the most part (Susanna is not explicitly mentioned here), the very ones singled out in 8:1–3 as having provided for Jesus’ Galilean ministry “out of their resources.” These women from Galilee, who had witnessed Jesus’ crucifixion (23:49), who had seen the tomb and the deposition of his corpse therein (23:55), are the ones who, when “they found the stone rolled away” and the body missing, tell it “to the eleven and to all the rest” (24:2, 9). Surprisingly, not one of their names is found on the slate of candidates put forward to fill Judas’ vacancy (Acts 1:21–26), even though they fit all the enunciated eligibility requirements for taking his place in “this ministry and apostleship”!

WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Martin E. Marty

Thanks to these first-day witnesses, there came later sets of witnesses, namely members of a community that kept the saving story alive long enough for Luke to stitch together a rich narrative. Our reading or hearing their story moves “you,” whether you are named Mary or Joanna or not. Finally, thanks to all of them, twenty centuries later, we, who were not there to “see,” have now also “seen” and get to pass on the story to people who also were not there and to whom nothing was “proven.” They can be amazed and can tell others.

SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” John K. Stendahl

Let us exhibit our faith and our joy, not defensively or dishonestly, but with bold confidence. Such proclamation, excitedly retelling the story and being unafraid to love the peculiar ways in which each witness tells it, serves the community. The community that saw the risen Lord, not dead but alive (as in 1 Cor. 15), and that came to know him in the reunderstanding of the Scriptures and in the breaking of the bread (as in Luke’s Emmaus story), retells the discovery again as it encounters the tomb of his burial.

NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” Nancy Claire Pittman

“Why do you look for the living among the dead?” the angelic figures say to the tops of the women’s heads. We are just as guilty of such a fruitless search. We cling to former visions of ourselves and our churches as if they might come back to life as long as we hold on to them. We grasp our loved ones too tightly, refusing to allow them to change, to become bigger, or smarter, or stronger. The words of the unworldly messengers are a challenge to stop hanging on to the dead and to move into new life. They are reminders that the Holy One dwells wherever new life bursts forth.

FOCUS SCRIPTURE

Luke 24:1–12

Focus on Your Teaching

Much of the excitement the children bring with them to Sunday school today might have to do with chocolate eggs and Easter gifts. Still, the joyful story of Jesus' resurrection will catch their attention. Children will enter wholeheartedly into the mystery and the awesome power of God. They will gladly celebrate and want to share this incredible news. Don't be concerned if they do not understand the significance of Jesus' resurrection in the same way adults do. They will add to their understanding as they grow in faith.

Gracious and loving God, thank you for calling me again into the joy and wonder of Jesus' resurrection. Help me to take this joy into the days ahead. Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ white cloth
- ☐ battery-powered candle
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ Color Pack 15, 16, 33, 34
- ☐ small stones
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022; CD player

For Responding

- ☐ option 1: copies of Resource Sheet 2 on brown paper, scissors, white copier paper, markers, glue sticks
- ☐ option 2: refrigerator biscuit dough, large marshmallows, melted butter, cinnamon sugar, baking sheet, parchment paper, napkins
- ☐ option 3: copies of Resource Sheet 2, fillable plastic eggs, scissors, yarn, markers, small tree branch, vase, florist foam

■ LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, bring one small stone for each child. If you are using option 2 in Responding, arrange to use an oven and ask an adult to help. If you are using option 3, cut florist foam to fit snugly into a vase. Find a branch that is about 24" tall and has several "arms." Anchor it in the foam. Bring three fillable plastic eggs for each child. Cut yarn into 12" pieces, three per child.

Greet each child by name. Invite the children to help you spread a white cloth in the center of your learning space and place the candle on it. Invite the children to greet one another by shaking hands and saying, "Alleluia! Happy Easter!"

Light the candle and pray aloud, asking learners to repeat each phrase:

Alleluia! / Thank you, God, / for being with us this happy day. / Guide us as we learn more / about your amazing love. / Alleluia! / Amen.

Invite learners to tell about what their Easter Day has been like so far. (Be sensitive to any children who may not have had celebratory mornings.) Ask:

✠ Were there any surprises in your home this morning? What were they?

Show Color Pack 15. Ask:

✠ Why do you think the girl is surprised?

✠ What do you think these children will do next?

Say that today's Bible story is about a great and joyful surprise.

EXPLORING

Show Color Pack 16 and recall with learners how last Sunday they learned that Jesus had died on the cross and his body had been placed in a tomb. Say that this picture shows what that tomb might have looked like. Give each child a stone to hold to remind them of the tomb.

Open the Bible to Luke 24 and say this is where today's Bible story is found. Show Color Pack 15 and say that the writer of the Gospel of Luke, like the boy in the photo, has some great news to tell them today. Use Resource Sheet 1 (Story Script) to tell the story.

Discuss the Bible story:

- ✂ What do you think the women talked about while they were walking to the tomb?
- ✂ Show Color Pack 16. What would your idea have been for moving away the big stone?
- ✂ If you had been with the women, what would you have said when you saw the empty tomb?
- ✂ What news did the men in dazzling clothes tell the women?
- ✂ How did the women react when they heard that God had raised Jesus from death?
- ✂ Why do think the other disciples did not believe the women when they told them about Jesus being raised from death?
- ✂ What do you think Peter did after he saw the empty tomb?

I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing

I'm gonna *sing* when the Spirit says *sing*,
I'm gonna sing when the Spirit says sing,
I'm gonna sing when the Spirit says sing,
and obey the Spirit of the Lord.

I'm gonna *walk* when the Spirit says *walk* . . .

I'm gonna *leap* when the Spirit says *leap* . . .

I'm gonna *praise* when the Spirit says *praise* . . .

Invite the children to play a game of Freeze Tag. Assign one child to be "It." This child tries to tag as many children as possible. A child who is tagged must "freeze" in place until he or she is touched by another player who says, "Jesus is risen!" After the game, ask:

- ✂ How did it feel to be tagged?
- ✂ How did you feel when someone freed you?

Comment that Jesus' resurrection sets us free, too. Jesus promises that we will have life with God that never ends. Easter shows us that God's love is stronger than everything, including death. This is the good news of Easter.

- ✂ In what ways can you tell this good news?

Invite the children to imagine the women and Peter singing along with them as they sing "I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" (Color Pack 33; track 11 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022).

**EASY
PREP**

RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Empty Tomb Window Display** Children will make a window display to tell others the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Recall the good news the women received when they went to the tomb on Easter. Distribute scissors and copies of the "Empty Tomb Stained Glass" from Resource Sheet 2 (Responding Resources) made on brown paper. Ask learners to cut out the tomb, including the circular opening. Distribute white copier

paper and invite learners to use colorful markers to draw a joyful Easter design on the paper. Demonstrate how to glue the tomb shape on top of the design, and then to glue the circle off to the side of the opening to suggest the stone that was rolled away. Have them use a black marker to write “Alleluia!” somewhere on the page. Show how to hold the empty tomb up to a window to see the stained-glass effect. Encourage learners to put their empty tombs on a window at home to tell their families the good news.

If time is short, have learners make the rolls during Gathering. Ask an adult to take them away and bake them, and then bring them back for children to eat at the end of the session.

Option: If you do not have a tree branch, have learners prepare the eggs without pieces of yarn and place them in a basket.

2. **Resurrection Rolls** Children will bake sweet reminders of the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. (Be mindful of any allergies.) Have learners wash their hands. Follow directions on the packaging to open the biscuits. Give each child a biscuit to flatten. Demonstrate how to roll a marshmallow in melted butter, dip it in the cinnamon sugar mixture, place it on the flattened biscuit, gather up the sides of the dough to surround the marshmallow, and pinch the edges closed. (Comment that the spice smells sweet, like the spice the women were bringing to anoint Jesus.) Place rolls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350 degrees until golden brown, about 15 minutes. After the rolls cool, invite learners to break them open. Surprise! The roll is empty, just like the tomb on Easter morning. Say a prayer of thanks for food, and then eat and enjoy!
3. **Easter Blessing Tree** Children will decorate a branch with Easter blessings for others. Distribute copies of the blessings from Resource Sheet 2 (Responding Resources), scissors, and markers. Invite learners to read each blessing in unison with you. Comment that saying words like these are a good way to tell the good news of Jesus’ resurrection. Have them cut the strips apart and color them. Give each child three plastic eggs and three pieces of yarn. Demonstrate how to open an egg, place a blessing strip inside, close it around one end of a piece of yarn, and tie the other end of the yarn to the branch. Invite each child to pick an egg from the tree to take home. As families arrive to pick up learners, invite each person to pick an egg to take home as well.

It Is Easter

It is Easter, come and sing,
Alleluia!
Jesus is alive, we sing,
Alleluia!

This most happy day we
sing,
Alleluia!
Because Jesus is alive,
Alleluia!

Repeat

CLOSING

Gather around the candle. Show Color Pack 34 and read the words aloud. Play “It Is Easter” (track 13 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022) and invite learners to sing along.

Pray aloud:

Thank you, God, for the good news of Easter. Thank you for your love that is stronger than death. Alleluia! Amen.

Say good-bye to each child by name, offering this blessing: “(Name), Jesus’ love for you will never end. Alleluia!”

April 17, 2022
Jesus Is Alive!

Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary

FEASTING on the WORD

CURRICULUM

Grades (K) 1–2
Resource Sheet 1

Story Script (based on Luke 24:1–12)

It was early in the morning on the third day after Jesus died. The sky was glowing with the light of the rising sun. Three women were walking along a road, but they didn't notice the sky. They were hurrying to the tomb where Jesus' body had been laid. They carried spices to rub on Jesus' body, as it was their tradition to prepare bodies for burial in this way.

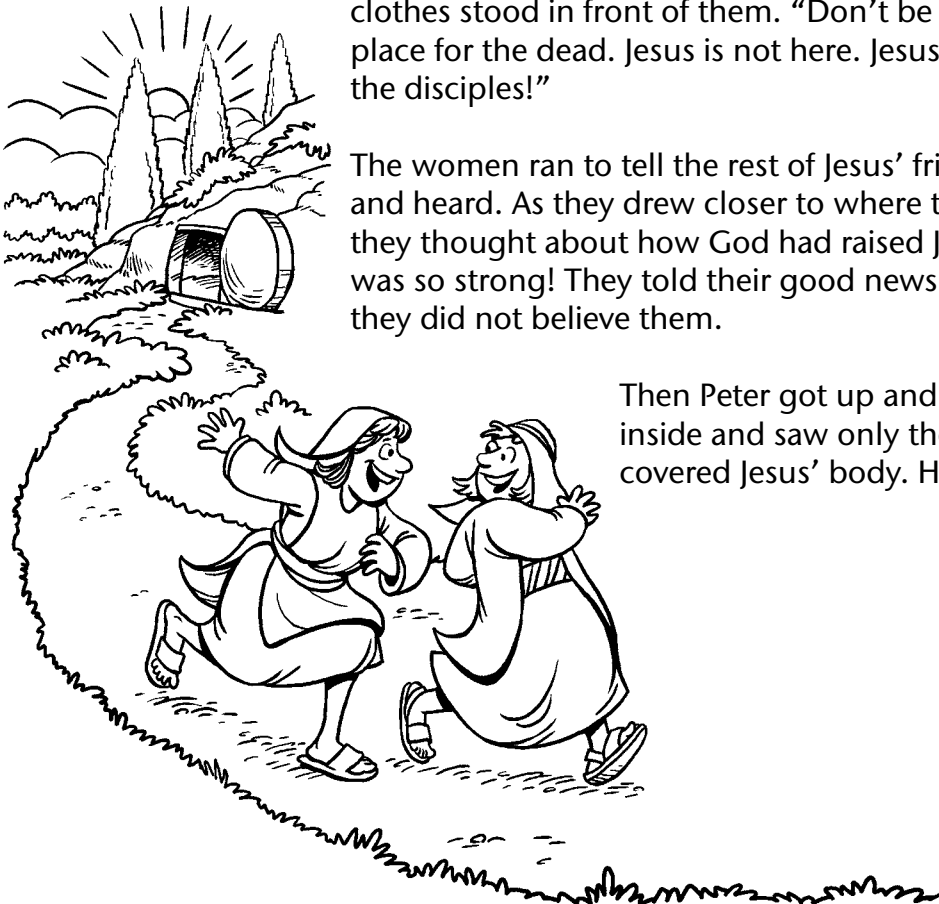
Mary Magdalene led the way, followed by Joanne and Mary, the mother of James. As they got closer to the tomb, they remembered that a huge stone had been rolled over the entrance of the tomb. Oh no! How were they going to get into the tomb?

But when they got there, they could see that the stone had been rolled away. They moved slowly to the entrance of the tomb and looked inside. It was dark. It was cold. It was empty!

The women were so surprised! And suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood in front of them. "Don't be afraid!" they said. "This is a place for the dead. Jesus is not here. Jesus is alive! Hurry, go and tell the disciples!"

The women ran to tell the rest of Jesus' friends what they had seen and heard. As they drew closer to where the disciples were staying, they thought about how God had raised Jesus from death. God's love was so strong! They told their good news to the other disciples, but they did not believe them.

Then Peter got up and ran to the tomb. He looked inside and saw only the linen cloths that had covered Jesus' body. He was amazed!

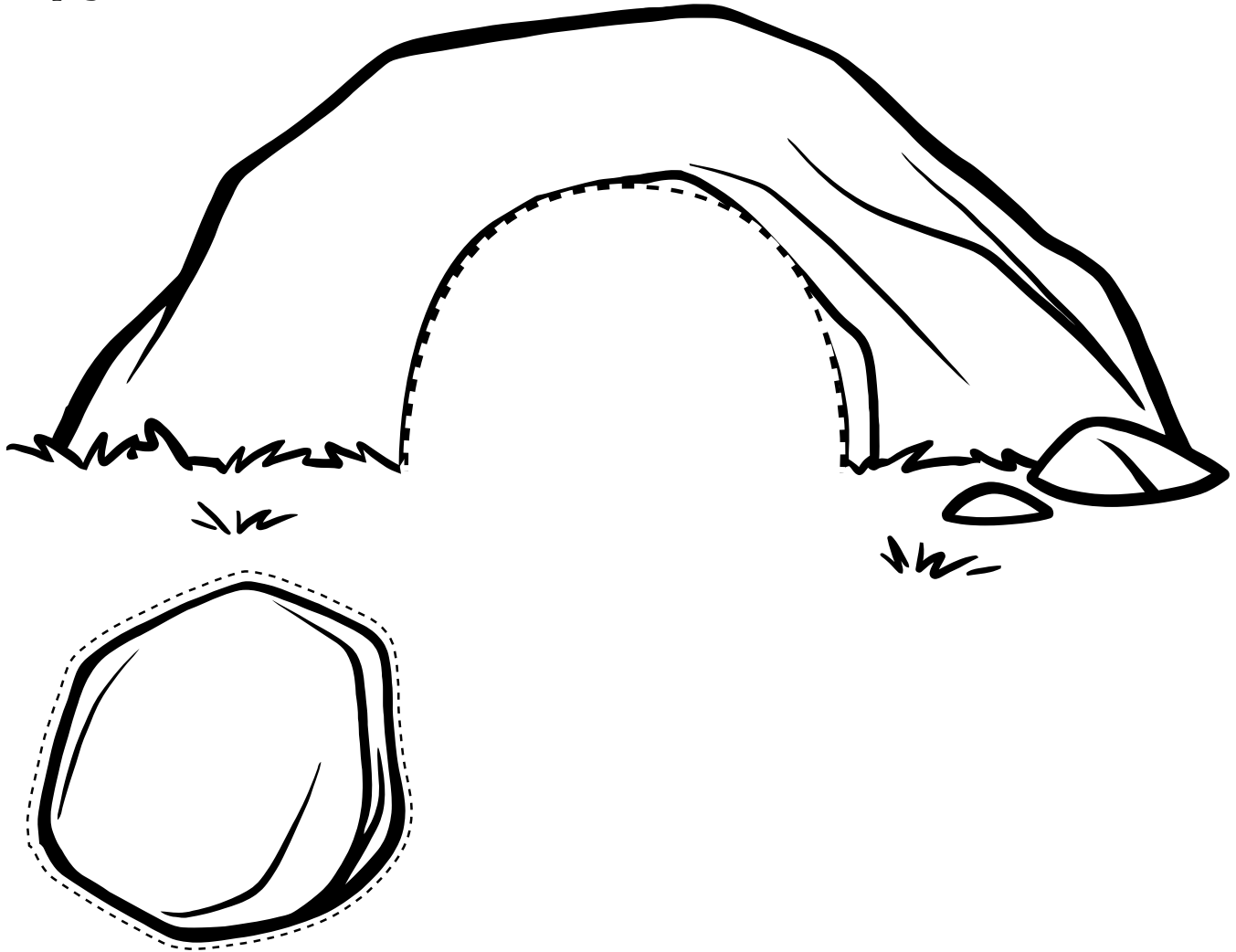


April 17, 2022
Jesus Is Alive!

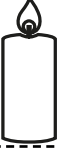



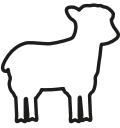
Grades (K) 1–2
Resource Sheet 2

Responding Resources

Empty Tomb Stained Glass



Easter Blessing Tree

	God's love for you will never end! Happy Easter!	
	Rejoice and celebrate—Jesus is alive! Happy Easter!	
	God bless you! Happy Easter!	