

**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**

Christ Is Risen!

Goal for the Session

Third- and fourth-graders will celebrate the women’s witness to Jesus’ resurrection and demonstrate that they too are witnesses to the new life Easter brings.

■ 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

Children do love to tell what they know, don't they? It often seems extra challenging for them to keep big, exciting news a secret! This is exactly why the story of the women at the tomb makes sense to them. The women quickly ran to bear witness to the apostles, who then had to see for themselves. Jesus' resurrection is indeed big, exciting news; encourage your students to use their natural inclination to "tell all" to spread the good news of the empty tomb. And thank you for bearing witness to the risen Savior each week in Sunday school.

God, thank you for the gift of new life in the risen Christ. Make me bold to tell the good news! Amen.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ white cloth
- ☐ Christ candle
- ☐ matches or lighter
- ☐ Color Pack 1, 15, 32, 33
- ☐ Bible
- ☐ *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022; CD player
- ☐ copies of Resource Sheet 2
- ☐ Resource Sheet 1
- ☐ scissors
- ☐ fine-tipped markers
- ☐ craft sticks
- ☐ tape

For Responding

- ☐ option 1: Color Pack 15, mural paper or newsprint and tape, wide-tipped markers
- ☐ option 2: fillable plastic eggs, paper, fine-tipped markers, scissors
- ☐ option 3: craft sticks, paper cupcake liners, glue, fine-tipped markers

■ LEADING THE SESSION

GATHERING

Before the session, arrange the white cloth in the middle of your learning space and place the Christ candle and Color Pack 15 on it. If you are using option 1 in Responding, ask permission to hang the banner in a place where worshipers will see it as they enter the worship space. If you are using option 2, bring three fillable plastic eggs for each child. Cut 1" x 11" strips of copier paper, three per child.

Greet each child with an enthusiastic "Happy Easter! Christ is risen!" Gather around the candle and light it, saying that candles help us to remember that Jesus Christ is always present when Christians gather to learn and to worship. Recall that white is the church year color for festival days and celebrations. Ask a volunteer to move the arrow on Color Pack 1 to Easter Sunday.

Show Color Pack 32 and invite learners to read the words in unison. Sing "It Is Easter" (track 12 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022). Encourage the children to give high fives to one another as they sing "Alleluia!" Extinguish the candle.

Comment that Easter Sunday is indeed a most happy day, and the Bible story tells us why.

EXPLORING

Distribute copies of Resource Sheet 1 (Story Props), fine-tipped markers, and scissors. Ask:

- ✂ What is the most surprising thing you've ever heard?
- ✂ What do you say when you hear something that you don't understand or that is hard to believe (for example, What do you mean? What did you say? For real? How?)?

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

Have learners write some of these phrases inside the speech bubble with the question mark.

Ask:

- ✿ What is the best news you've ever received?
- ✿ What do you say when you hear good news or something really exciting (for example, Wow! Great! Awesome!)?

Ask learners to write some of these phrases inside the speech bubble with the exclamation point. Have learners cut out each speech bubble and tape it to a craft stick.

Open the Bible to Luke 24:1–12 and say this is where today's Bible story is found. Explain that all four Gospel writers tell the story of Jesus' resurrection and that today you'll be exploring Luke's account. Read aloud the directions on Resource Sheet 1 (Storytelling Guide) and then tell the Bible story, using the text on the sheet.

Comment on the number of questions and exclamations in the story. Discuss:

- ✿ What "questions" do you think the women were asking themselves before the men in white appeared?
- ✿ What questions do you think Peter and the other apostles asked when the women told them the news?
- ✿ Why do you think these friends of Jesus didn't believe that God had raised him from death, especially since Jesus had told them this would happen?
- ✿ What is the good news that Jesus' resurrection brings to us? (Accept a variety of responses, such as, God is stronger than death; God promises that God's love lasts forever; God promises life with God forever, even after we die.)

Some common Easter symbols: butterfly, sunrise, lily and other flowers that grow from bulbs, chick, egg, rainbow, empty cross, lamb.

Show Color Pack 15 and comment that a butterfly is a symbol of Easter because a caterpillar spins itself into a cocoon, which looks like a tomb, and later a beautiful butterfly emerges. Recall how Jesus' followers thought the tomb where Jesus's body was laid was a place that held death. But when God raised Jesus from death, the tomb became a place of God's promise of new life with God that never ends. Name other symbols of new life and hope that learners see at Easter.

Discuss who in the story had opportunity to tell the good news that Jesus had been raised from death. Ask:

- ✿ Who first told you the story of how God raised Jesus from death?
- ✿ Whom will you tell about the good news of Easter? How might you do this?

**EASY
PREP**

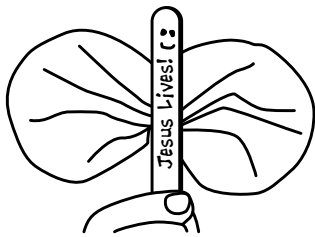
RESPONDING

Mark the activities you will use:

1. **Christ Is Risen Banner** Children will create a banner to bear witness to the good news of Jesus' resurrection. Invite learners to recall how the women couldn't wait to tell Jesus' other disciples that God had raised Jesus from death. Invite learners to recall the Bible story and to describe what they think the scene at the empty tomb looked like. Lay a piece of mural paper or several sheets of newsprint taped together on the table or

floor. Ask a volunteer to print “Christ Is Risen!” in very large, bold letters in the center of the paper. Around the edges of the banner, have learners copy phrases from the exclamation-point story props used in Exploring. Remind them to place exclamation points after their phrases. Have learners fill in remaining space with drawings of Easter symbols. Explain that you will hang their banner so that worshipers will see their good-news proclamations. Go as a class to hang the banner.

2. **Surprise Message Eggs** Children will place good news messages inside plastic Easter eggs and give them to others. Take a moment to review why Jesus’ resurrection is such good news for God’s people today. Distribute 1" x 11" strips of copier paper, three per learner, and fine-tipped markers. Have learners write an Easter message on each strip and decorate it with some Easter symbols. Show them how to accordion-fold the strip and place it inside a plastic egg. When all have finished their eggs, gather the group and ask learners to whom they will give their eggs. Say a prayer for these individuals, that they might experience Easter joy today. Encourage learners to follow through and deliver the eggs.



3. **Easter Butterfly** Children will make a butterfly to use to tell someone else about the new life Jesus’ resurrection brings. Show Color Pack 15. Review from Exploring why a butterfly is a symbol of Easter. Give each child two craft sticks and two paper cupcake liners. Set out fine-tipped markers. Lead learners in the following steps to make a butterfly: Draw eyes and a mouth at the top of the craft stick. Write an Easter message on the stick. Flatten the cupcake liner and decorate it with Easter symbols. Place your index finger at top of liner and your thumb at bottom. Pinch in these two edges to the center. Put glue on the center, where the paper is pinched together. Lay the craft stick, writing side up, on the glue and allow it to dry. Have learners make a second butterfly. Encourage them to keep one butterfly and give one to someone in worship today. Encourage them to use their butterflies to tell their families the good news of Easter.

Christ the Lord Is Risen Today

Christ the Lord is risen
today! Alleluia!
All creation join to say;
Alleluia!
Raise your joys and
triumphs high; Alleluia!
Sing, O heavens, and earth
reply, Alleluia!

CLOSING

Gather around the candle. Light it and sing “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today” (Color Pack 33; track 2 on *Singing the Feast*, 2021–2022). Invite learners to tell one thing they think everyone should know about Easter. Ask how they might spread this news.

Say good-bye to each learner by name: “(Name), Christ is risen! Go tell others!”

April 17, 2022
Christ Is Risen!

Teaching the Revised Common Lectionary

FEASTING on the WORD

CURRICULUM

Grades 3–4
Resource Sheet 1

Storytelling Guide

Directions: As you read the story aloud, when you reach a spot marked with an asterisk (*), pause for learners to indicate how they imagine the people in the story reacted by holding up the question mark, the exclamation point, or both.

Luke 24:1–12, CEV

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared. When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance, they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus, and they did not know what to think.

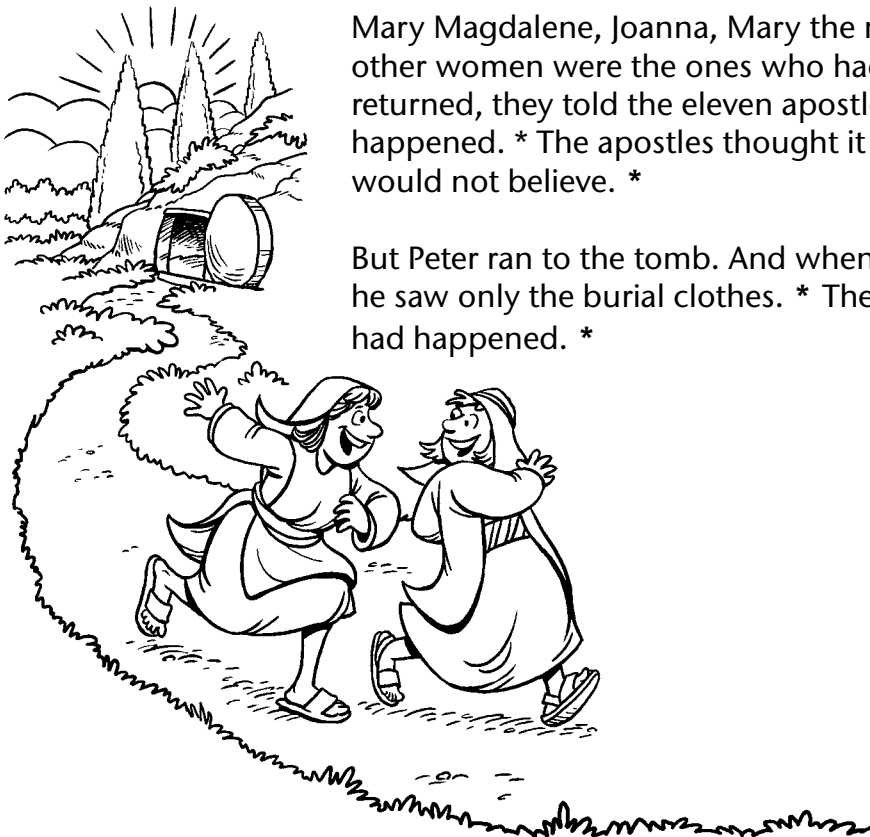
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Suddenly two men in shining white clothes stood beside them. * The women were afraid and bowed to the ground. But the men said, “Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive? Jesus isn’t here! * He has been raised from death. Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you, ‘The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life.’” Then they remembered what Jesus had said.

*

Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb. When they returned, they told the eleven apostles and the others what had happened. * The apostles thought it was all nonsense, and they would not believe. *

But Peter ran to the tomb. And when he stooped down and looked in, he saw only the burial clothes. * Then he returned, wondering what had happened. *



April 17, 2022
Christ Is Risen!

Grades 3–4
Resource Sheet 2

Story Props

