



Early Childhood DEVOTIONS



FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

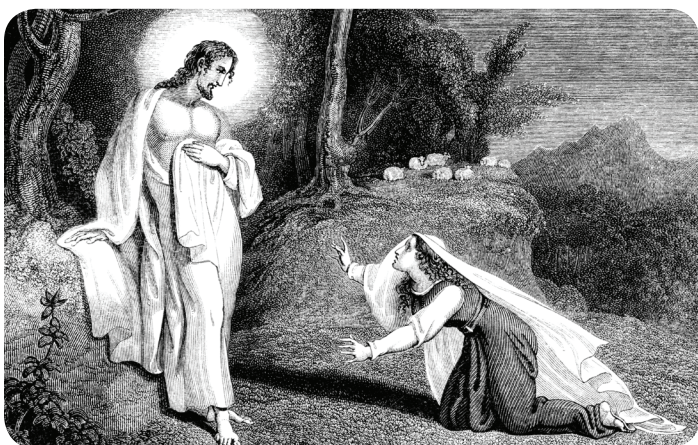
LIFE TOGETHER

FOCUS: GOD ACTS AT JUST THE RIGHT TIME

"Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock" (Is. 26:4).

The Resurrected Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

BIBLE STORY: JOHN 20:1-18



BEFORE YOU TEACH

In John's Gospel, Mary Magdalene is left alone early that first Easter morning after finding the tomb of Jesus empty. There, Jesus' quiet voice calls her name. Suddenly, at that moment in time, the cosmic miracle that was the resurrection of the Christ became for Mary a personal encounter with her living Lord. That one word, "Mary," spoken by Jesus at just the right time, changed everything! The resurrected Jesus changes everything! Our name is personal — the most important word each of us ever hear. Jesus calls each of us by name because we cannot come to Him on our own. Nothing after that is ever the same. Your sin does not have the last word. Death does not have the last word. Jesus' resurrection is the last word. Jesus, the risen Lord, comes to each of us personally. Heaven is ours! We have a message to tell!

Greeting

Greet each child by name every day as they enter. Say, "Good morning/afternoon, child of God. Today we celebrate! Jesus is alive!"

Gathering

Gather children in or around your worship center. Introduce the biblical narrative by singing the first line of the Easter hymn "Jesus Christ Is Risen Today" (LOSP, P. 96).

Tell the Story

You will need: a "book" of colors created with 8-inch diameter circles cut from construction paper (one black, four tan, one gray and four white) and a binder ring.

On the tan circles, draw sad faces on three and a happy face on one. Next, draw simple outlines of Jesus on two of the white circles. Punch a hole in the top of all the circles, binding them together in story order (see below) with the ring.

For a simplified version, create a happy face and a sad face, showing each at appropriate times as the narrative unfolds.

Early Sunday morning, while it was still dark (**black circle**),
2. Mary Magdalene (**tan sad face**) went to the tomb where Jesus had been laid after His death on the cross. **3.** When she arrived, she saw that the giant stone (**gray circle**) placed at the entrance of the tomb had been removed. **4.** Mary then ran to

Note: Throughout the year, you will need the songbooks *Little Ones Sing Praise and Songs of God's Love*, both available from Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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Simon Peter (*tan sad face*) and another disciple, saying, “They have taken the body of our Lord away, and I don’t know where they have taken Him.” So Peter and the other disciple ran to the tomb. **5.** The first disciple to arrive at the tomb saw strips of linen lying there (*white circle*), but did not go in. **6.** When Simon Peter (*tan sad face*) arrived, he went into

the tomb and saw the strips of linen and the folded cloth that had been around Jesus’ head. Finally, the other disciple went inside, seeing and believing that the body of Jesus was gone. Both disciples left while Mary stood outside the tomb crying. **7.** Looking into the tomb, Mary saw two angels in white (*white circle*) seated where Jesus’ body had been. They asked her, “Why are you crying?” Mary answered, “They have taken my Lord away, and I don’t know where they have put Him.” **8.** Turning, she then saw a man (*white with outline of Jesus*) standing there. “Woman,” He said, “why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Mary, thinking it was the gardener, said, “Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you have put Him, and I will get Him.” **Then at just the right time**, Jesus called her by name, saying, “Mary.” She turned toward Him and cried out, “Rabboni!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Go! Tell My disciples I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.” **9.** Then on that very first Easter morning, Mary Magdalene joyfully (*tan happy face*) went to the disciples and told them the good news, saying, “I have seen the Lord!” She then told them all that Jesus had said. **10.** (*White with outline of Jesus*) At just the right time, according to God’s plan, Jesus rose from death and showed Himself to Mary, who then told this Good News to the disciples. We tell can tell others “Jesus is alive!”

Note: Place this Easter “book” where children can review.

PRAY TOGETHER: Dear Jesus,
You have called me by my name.
I will never be the same.
From death You have arisen.
My sins are now forgiven.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Amen!

Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Note: Once children learn the Bible words, have each insert his or her name as indicated.

Pre-K & K: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you [_____]; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Is. 43:1).

Grades 1 & 2: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you [_____]; I have called you by name, you are mine” (Is. 43:1).

Activities

CREATE: Self-portraits.

You will need: pre-cut “fancy” picture frames with nameplates at the bottom of each for children’s names.

As children draw their self-portraits, review the biblical narrative and remind them that, like Mary, Jesus calls each of us by name. Together review the Bible words. Display portraits with the heading “I Have Called You by Name. You Are Mine.”

SING: “Hello, Everybody” verses 1 and 6 (LOSP, P. 7); “Christ the Lord Is Risen Today; Alleluia” (LOSP, P. 96).

DO: Play a name game. You will need a bean bag. Together speak the memory words from Isaiah, inserting a child’s name where indicated. Toss the bean bag to the named child. Repeat, naming a different child each time.

Live the Story

People need to meet Jesus, and the resurrection makes Him accessible. Programs, classes, worship services and fellowship events are all good, helping us know that our relationship to our Lord is not solitary. We teach and nurture students and families so that those who have met the Christ might grow as His disciples. However, it is the personal encounter with Jesus that creates and sustains the Church. It is Jesus calling each of us by name that transmits the resurrection power that forms and drives His Church.

Sending

As children depart, say to each: “Jesus is alive! He has called you by your name, (child’s name). You are His!”

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