



## THE RESURRECTION

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: MATTHEW 27:62 - 28:16

*Even though Jesus truly rose from the dead, not everyone believes.*

## The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

### Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

**Soldiers were positioned to guard Jesus' tomb** – Even though the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant when He said that He would rise again on the third day, some of the Pharisees seemed to understand. Though they knew, they did not believe. They asked Pilate to order the tomb guarded and sealed until the third day. Consider that around the time of Jesus' death, the sky grew dark, and the moment of His death the earth shook and rocks were split (see Matthew 27:51). In addition, many holy people who had died were raised to life and appeared to many people in the city of Jerusalem. It would be hard to keep quiet when a family member whom you buried months ago suddenly appeared and shared the account and time of their resurrection. Given that there were many people raised, these reports likely reached the ears of the religious rulers as well. It is interesting to note they did all this "work" on the Sabbath.

**Jesus rose with great power** – A wax seal and a Roman guard could not stop the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. In fact, if the whole Roman army had been present, Jesus would have risen just the same. Imagine the soldiers' shock as the earth began to shake, then an angel bright as lightning rolled the stone away and sat upon it. What a glorious moment-- death was defeated!

The guards were so afraid that they shook and fell to the ground (see Matthew 28:4). The angel spoke to the women, telling them that Jesus had risen from the dead just as He said! The angel sent them to report back to the disciples.

John 20:15 tells us that Mary saw Jesus but mistook Him for the gardener. But when Jesus called her by name, she instantly believed. Matthew 28:9 records that Jesus met the two women on their way to tell the disciples. The women fell down, grasped His feet and worshipped Him. The response of these two women demonstrates their faith. Jesus commissioned them in the same way He commissions all believers: "Go and tell" (see Matthew 28:10).

**Not all who know the truth will be set free** – Some of the guards returned to the chief priests and reported to them everything that happened. Consider that they told the chief priests about the earthquake, the angel, the bright light, the rising of Christ and the visit of the two women who met and conversed with the Lord. They heard all of this, and yet the chief priests did not believe. Instead they hatched a scheme to keep the guards quiet, actually spreading a rumor that the disciples stole the body. The soldiers accepted the money and agreed to lie (see Matthew 28:12-15).

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### WHERE IS THE GOSPEL?

*Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.*

Jesus is no longer in the tomb! This is the most critical part of the gospel. Paul said it like this:

"If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain. . . . If Christ has not been raised your faith is futile and you are still in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:13,14,17).

Paul goes on to say in 1 Corinthians 15:20-23 that Christ is the firstfruits (the first to be raised) and that we will also be raised! If Jesus had died but not risen again, we would all be lost! The Resurrection is not a tagalong to the cross. It is an integral part of the gospel message without which the gospel would have no power!

### ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

**Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.**

**Bible Passage: Psalm 34:19,20**

#### **Connecting the passage to Christ:**

While Jesus was still on the cross, the soldiers came to break his legs. But they saw He was already dead, and therefore did not need to break his legs. John tells us those events fulfilled Psalm 34:20 (see John 19:36). In a demonstration of God's sovereign control over every detail, none of Jesus' bones were broken.

#### **Questions for reflection:**

- Is God able to do what He says? (Yes, God is able to do what He says.)
- Was God able to keep Jesus' bones from being broken? (Yes, God did work it out that Jesus' legs would not be broken.)
- Why didn't God prevent Jesus from the agony of the cross? (God could have stopped the Crucifixion. Jesus Himself said He could call down legions of angels (see Matthew 26:53). God sent His Son to die for us, which required that Jesus endure great suffering in fulfillment of the Scriptures.)

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### SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

#### BE A DOER OF THE WORD

*Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.*

### ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

*Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?*

#### ACT OUT THE RESURRECTION

**Supplies:**

costumes as desired

Do a three act play. The first act is the guarding of the tomb (Matthew 27:62-66), the second act is the resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10), and the final act is the guards' report (Matthew 28:11-15). The extra students without main roles can play the guards at the tomb who fall to the ground in fright.

#### A LITTLE MAGIC

**Supplies:**

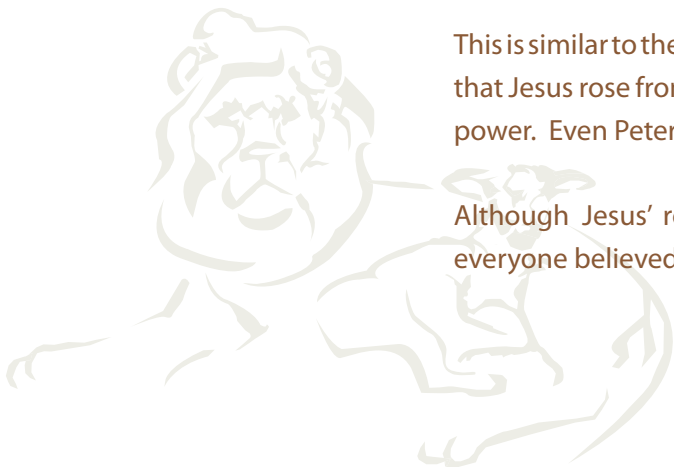
Gather materials for the magic trick of your choice.

The object of this lesson is to demonstrate the difference between seeing what happened and believing.

Although all the class will see you do the trick, they are not likely to believe that you actually have special powers. For instance, if you do a trick which identifies a card that they pick out, they will believe that you told them the identity of the correct card. They would not believe you did it by special powers. So, on one hand they believe because they see, but on the other hand they deny your power.

This is similar to the resurrection. The soldiers and the chief priests may have believed that Jesus rose from the tomb, but they did not believe he actually rose by almighty power. Even Peter in Luke 24:12 was trying to figure out what happened.

Although Jesus' resurrection is reality, not a slight of hand or an illusion, not everyone believed.



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### I WAS A GUARD

**Supplies:**

guard costume

Retell the story of the resurrection from the perspective of one of the guards. Assume the guard witnessed Jesus speaking to Mary and add the details of John 20:10-18 where Mary thinks Jesus is the gardener. Have the guard tell about going back to the chief priest and being paid to lie.

Add a fictional twist. The guard is telling you because he is beginning to believe. Have him explain the difference between seeing it happen and truly believing. At first he didn't know what to think and just couldn't believe. But the words of Jesus to Mary, "I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," are affecting him. For the first time the guard is seeing God as his heavenly Father.

End the skit by having the guard think he hears someone coming. At first he quiets down, afraid someone will hear him. Finally he blurts out, "He is risen." He repeats it over and over then turns and looks at the class and says, "I don't care if I get in trouble, I just can't hold it in anymore. There are some things you've just got to tell." One more time the guard looks to the class and says, "He is risen, for me!"

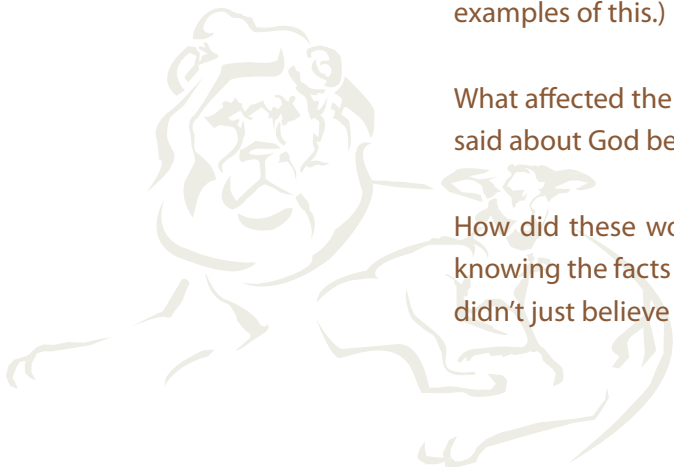
Ask the children the following questions:

What is the difference between knowing what happened and placing your faith in Jesus? (Draw your students out and help them to see that as sinners we must recognize our need for salvation which can only come through the sacrifice of Jesus. Believing in Jesus requires that we understand our condition as sinners and that God's Son came down to die in our place. Then, our trust and belief is in Jesus as Savior, not simply a man in history.)

Is it possible to know about Jesus and yet not truly believe? (Yes, it is possible to know about Him and not believe. The guards and the chief priests are perfect examples of this.)

What affected the guard in the skit? (What affected him were the words that Jesus said about God being our Father.)

How did these words affect the guard in the skit? (The guard went from simply knowing the facts of Jesus' resurrection to knowing Jesus. There is a difference. He didn't just believe something took place, he believed that Jesus rose.)



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### PRAYER

Pick several children to pray based on the day's scripture passages.

### IN CLASS PROJECT

**Supplies:**

pencil and paper

Draw a picture of the angel of the Lord rolling the stone away.

### FOR THE OLDER GRADES

#### UNITED WITH CHRIST

**Supplies:**

- a drinking glass
- twenty quarters
- a hard table
- two large bags of bite sized chocolate candies (enough for at least two chocolates per person)
- two large bowls

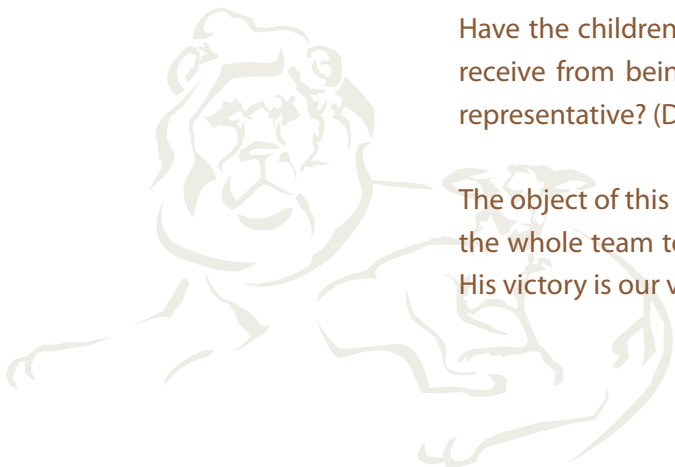
Practice bouncing a quarter on the table so that you can get it into the glass.

Divide the class up into two teams. Demonstrate bouncing the quarter into the glass. Then have each team choose a person to be their "representative." Explain to the class that each time their representative gets the quarter in the glass, their team will be awarded 10 chocolates. Each time their person misses, they lose five. Start each team with ten chocolates.

Explain to the class that because the person is representing you, you get to share in their reward. Play until all the chocolates are rewarded and talk to the class about how Jesus is our representative.

Have the children look up the passages from "A Little Extra." Talk about what we receive from being represented by Christ. What did we get from Adam as our representative? (Death and sin.)

The object of this exercise is to illustrate what it means for one person to represent the whole team to help the children understand how Jesus is our representative. His victory is our victory.



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### A LITTLE BIT MORE

**Raised with Christ** – The resurrection has great significance to the believer. The Bible uses the term “in Christ” to describe our relationship with Jesus. Jesus is our representative. In Adam, we all sinned, so through Christ we rise to new life. What Jesus did is given to us. So, in Christ we have His blessings. Consider the following descriptions:

“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1)

“For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in his own turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” (1 Corinthians 15:21-23)

“And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you.” (Romans 8:11)

“If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.” (Romans 6:5)

