



## EASTER LESSON

All Grades



**PERSONAL PREPARATION:** Before this weekend, read John 20:1-31. Jesus has conquered sin and death through His resurrection – the resurrection is a sign of His victory – and now He calls His disciples to make disciples of all people by preaching the Gospel. We see early glimpses of these things in John 20 through His interactions with Mary Magdalene, the disciples, and then Thomas. Jesus’ desire is for us to believe and share that belief in the good news with others.

As you prepare, consider ways God may be using you to spread the news of His triumph over death through the cross. Do you struggle with sharing your faith with others? Why? What fears do you need to turn into trust and dependence on God in order to give of yourself for the sake of the Gospel? What are ways that you have learned to fulfill the Great Commission, despite fear or other obstacles? Has the change and growth you have experienced in your life through Christ given you the desire to share your faith with those around you? Spend a few minutes in prayer, asking God to reveal how you can grow in your confidence to share your faith. Also ask God to prepare your camper’s hearts for this lesson.

### PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today’s principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

### What Makes Easter Special

#### Supplies:

Plug In Time pictures (1 set per bin)

As you lay the four pictures out on the table, tell the campers that you want them to look at the pictures and tell you which one or ones represent what makes Easter special, or different, for those who believe in what Jesus has done for us. Once the kids have had a chance to respond, talk to them about how the TOMB is what makes Easter special for Christians. We want to make sure that campers leave today understanding that while Jesus dying on the cross was real and serious (and sad and painful, etc), it’s not what we consider the “good news” or the gospel. Many people died by crucifixion back then. What makes Jesus different from those people (among other things) was that

he rose from the dead and THAT is what we celebrate on Easter – that He is risen and gives us new life!



## **BIG GROUP Time - 35-40 minutes**

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

**\*Take your cabin flag to Big Group.**

### **The Bridge to Small Group**

Today we will spend time considering Jesus' death and resurrection and what that means for us as followers of Christ. Jesus' desire is for us to believe and share our faith in His life, death, and resurrection with those around us. We will be reminded along the way of Jesus' desire for us to have peace.

## **Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes**

### **Getting Started**

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

**What did you learn in Big Group? What happened to Jesus?** (He was crucified on the cross, buried in a tomb, and rose on the third day.) **What does this mean for us?** (Jesus did everything He said He would do; our sin has been paid for; we can live forever with Him if we put our faith and trust in Him as our Savior.)

**Did Jesus deserve to die?** (No. He was innocent, but He hung on the cross and experienced unbearable suffering.) **It was our sin that Jesus died for so that we don't have to. We have the choice to believe that Jesus is the Son of God or to believe that he is not.**

At the end of Big Group, we heard about Mary Magdelene and another Mary who went to the tomb and found the stone had been rolled away from the opening. **Did they find Jesus' body there?** (No.) **What had happened to His body?** (It was gone. Jesus had risen from the grave; He was no longer dead but alive instead!)

But what happened after we find out about the empty tomb?

### **Empty Tomb Keepsake**



The purpose of this activity is to create a reminder that Jesus rising from the grave and defeating death is what gives us reason to celebrate.

#### **Supplies:**

Craft Instructions (2 per bin)

Tangerine - sized piece of earthy colored Model Magic (not white) (1 per camper)

Toothpick or ½ coffee stirrer (1 per camper)  
“HE IS RISEN!” flag (1 per camper)  
Bottle of white glue or tape (1 per bin)

Give each child a tangerine - sized piece of Model Magic. Explain that they'll be making an “empty tomb” while you talk through the rest of the Bible lesson. Use the craft reference guide to help them along the way. Campers can refer to the picture of the tomb from Plug In Time for additional direction/inspiration.

## Lesson Continued

What do we know about Jesus and what He did after he was raised from the dead? (Allow time for responses.) What happened after the angels told Mary that Jesus was alive? (Allow time for responses.) Let's begin reading in the Bible from John 20 (NLT):

### John 20:14-15

*14 She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. 15 “Dear woman, why are you crying?” Jesus asked her. “Who are you looking for?”*

*She thought he was the gardener. “Sir,” she said, “if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him.”*

Did Mary recognize who Jesus was at first? Who did she think was talking to her? Can you imagine seeing someone who was dead come back to life? Do you think you would recognize them at first? (Allow time for responses.)

Let's keep reading.

### John 20:16-18

*16 “Mary!” Jesus said. She turned to him and cried out, “Teacher!” 17 “Don't cling to me,” Jesus said, “for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” 18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, “I have seen the Lord!” Then she gave them his message.*

Jesus tells Mary that it is really Him – He is alive! She is so overjoyed and overcome with emotion that she grabs hold of Jesus. But Jesus really wants her to go do something quickly. What is it He asks Mary Magdalene to do? (To go and tell the disciples that He has alive and will be ascending to the Father). Jesus wants her to spread the good news – that Jesus is not dead any longer. He has actually beaten death and come back to life! And not only has he come back to life, he soon will be going to be in the place of eternal life – with God the Father in heaven!

So Mary goes and tells the disciples what? (That she has seen the Lord.) She tells them she has seen Jesus. Just as Jesus asked her to do, she goes and shares the message of His resurrection with others.

We, too, are called to share the message of His resurrection with others. The early church was all

about telling others what Jesus had done – the book of Acts tells us that the apostles continued to tell others about the resurrection of Jesus, and God’s great blessing was upon them all (Acts 4:33). Jesus’ words to Mary help us remember that we should also go and tell others about Jesus’ resurrection – because the resurrection is proof that Jesus did everything He said He would do. Our sin has been paid for; we can live forever with Him if we put our faith and trust in Him as our Savior. This – the resurrection – is why we celebrate Easter.

### John 20:19-23

*19 That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! “Peace be with you,” he said.*

*20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21 Again he said, “Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” 22 Then he breathed on them and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone’s sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven.”*

The same day Jesus rose from the dead, after He told Mary Magdalene to appear to the disciples, Jesus appeared to them himself. Why do you think Jesus decided to appear to them? Notice that it says that before Jesus came, the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders who had put Jesus to death. Jesus appears to them when they are worried and afraid.

How do the disciples respond when they see Jesus? (They were filled with joy when they saw him.)

He said to His disciples “As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you.” What do you think He means? In Matthew 28 right before ascending to Heaven to be with God the Father, Jesus tells His disciples: “Go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”

Does anyone remember what this command or commission was called? (The Great Commission). Jesus wanted His followers to know that He is with them through His Holy Spirit, and that they have been given a job or mission to do – to go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them and teaching them to obey Jesus’ commandments. Out of the joy and peace that Jesus gives, disciples are to go and share the gospel message with others! At the center of that gospel message is Jesus’ resurrection from the tomb.

## Wrapping Up

We see the big picture, but do we all believe it and see how it changes our lives? When we believe that Jesus died for us and rose again, we can also die and become alive again. New life.

When we believe and trust that Jesus died and rose again for our sins, we become a new creation. God changes our hearts. Jesus forgives our sins and we are made alive in Christ. It changes our whole life!

And if it changes our whole life, we will be like Mary – who had reason to rejoice when she found out that Jesus wasn't dead, but He was in fact alive! Like Mary, we will go and tell others about the truth that Jesus has risen!

And like the other disciples, we will be sent by Jesus to go and make disciples. Jesus' resurrection is proof that sin and death have been defeated; there is good news in Jesus' resurrection, and our mission is to go and share that with other people. Can you think of anyone you could share the news of Jesus' resurrection with? (Allow answers).

Does anyone have questions about any of this? You can ask me or talk to your parents if you have questions. (Give the campers plenty of time to share their thoughts and questions about all of this.)

As time allows, read through the following verses to finish small group time:

**John 1:12**

*But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.*

**John 3:16-17**

*For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.*

**Romans 5:8**

*But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.*

**Ephesians 2:8-9**

*8 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. 9 Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*

## **Prayer Time**

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Ask God to help each of us recognize the sin in our lives and ask Him for forgiveness. Pray that each camper will accept the free gift of eternal life by believing in Jesus.



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