

LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Matthew 28:1-15

1 Corinthians 15:3-11

Session Theme:

Fulfillment

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Warm Up: Great Expectations

Ask kids to think about tasks that they really dread. Write these on the board. (Ideas might include cleaning a room, taking a test, going to the doctor, etc.) Next, ask kids to think about the best surprises they have had. Write these on the board as well. Tell kids to imagine that they were expecting something awful, but were suddenly surprised by something wonderful instead. Erase all the words on the board and replace them with one large word: "JOY." That's how they would feel!

In today's Bible story, Jesus' friends were expecting something terrible, but received great news instead. What was it? Let's begin our lesson and find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, no matter how dark things may seem at times, we never need to fear. You are in control, bringing light and giving true hope in Jesus. Help us to trust you even when we can't see the way forward. We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- *"Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (hymn)*
- *"I Know That My Redeemer Lives" (hymn)*

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the New Testament
- Scripture Section: Resurrection

On the third day, when the women went to the tomb, they found it empty. They were told by an angel that Jesus had risen from the dead. Later, the living Jesus appeared to many of his followers over a period of 40 days before he ascended into heaven.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help students think about details of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format

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Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Matthew 28:1-15

1. Mary and Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb "after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week." What do we call this day of the week? If the day Jesus died was the first day, what number was this day?

   Jewish people celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday (the seventh day of the week). "Dawn of the next day" would therefore be Sunday. This is why Christians celebrate Easter on Sunday, and worship on that day, as well.

   The Creed uses the phrase "on the third day". If Friday was the first day of Jesus' death, Saturday was the second, making Sunday the third day.

2. What happened when the women arrived at Jesus' burial site? How did they move the stone away from the entrance to tomb?

   The women didn't have to move the stone at all! God caused a huge earthquake to shake the earth, and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven. As the earthquake rumbled, the angel descended and rolled the stone away from the tomb and sat on it.

   Matthew is the only Gospel account to describe the actual descent of the angel. The others just speak of the open and empty tomb.

3. Describe the angel. How was he dressed? What did he look like? How did the guards respond to the sight of him?

   The Bible tells us that the angel was shining brightly, like lightning, and his clothes were white as snow. The guards who saw him were so afraid at the sight that they shook and "became like dead men" (fainted and fell to the ground).

   This may also indicate a spiritual deadness (dead in sin), explaining why this miracle only served to harden the hearts of the guards even further.

4. How did the angel greet the women? How did they react to him?

   As often is the case when angels appear in the Bible, the angel immediately told the women not to be afraid. According to Scripture, the appearance of an angel is frightening to human beings (for an example, see Numbers 22:31). The angel's primary message to the women was that Jesus had risen from the dead, and he invited them to see for themselves the empty tomb.

5. What task did the angel tell the women to do? What promise did the angel give?

   The angel said: "Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you." Immediately, the women ran to tell the other disciples the news of Jesus' resurrection.

   This is similar to when Jesus told his followers, "Go and make disciples" several verses later. Our job remains the same today: To go and share the Good News with all!

6. About how much time passed before the women saw Jesus? What things did Jesus say that were the same as what the angel had said?

   The women did not wait at all. As soon as they began running, the risen Jesus appeared before them. He also told them to let his other disciples know that he would meet them in Galilee. He promised that the others would see him there.

7. What emotions do you imagine the guards were feeling after all this took place? What did the chief priests tell them to do?

   The guards not only appeared terrified when confronted by the angel, they seem to be nervous about what would happen to them after that. They had no excuse to give to their superiors.

   When the chief priests heard what had happened, they bribed the guards with money so they would spread the false story that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body. The priests promised to vouch for them to the governor, Pontius Pilate.

8. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3-11. Here, the Apostle Paul recounts what happened after Jesus' death. Was it only the women that Jesus appeared to? Who else saw the risen Jesus? Why did Paul think it was so important to let us know this (v. 11)?

   Paul tells us that there were many who saw Jesus alive after his resurrection — hundreds, in fact. Paul mentions Peter and James, the Twelve, and "all the apostles." Paul himself was one who encountered the risen Jesus. (Read the story in Acts 9:18.)

   Paul knew that it is the Word of God — the promise of Jesus' death and resurrection — that creates faith. He states his goal is our faith: "Whether then it was I or they, so we preach and so you believed" (1 Corinthians 15:11).

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Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Go and Tell Activity

Materials Needed:

- Colored index cards
- Colored markers
- Sandwich bag or elastic band



Instructions:

Give each person five colored index cards and several markers.

Invite them to write an encouraging message on each of their index cards. Explain to the class that they will be tucking these uplifting message cards in different corners of their homes for family members to find unexpectedly.

Ideas for messages might include Biblical phrases such as:

"Trust the Lord!" "God is good!"

"Hope in the Lord." "My help comes from the Lord."

"My peace I give you." "Be strong and courageous."

If kids want to write their own messages of encouragement, let them do so, but check them quickly before the next step. The kids may just surprise you with their wisdom!



Once kids have written a message on each of their index cards, invite them to decorate around the messages with Christian symbols and designs of different kinds. Images could include crosses, butterflies, doves, Bibles, churches, hearts, angels, etc.

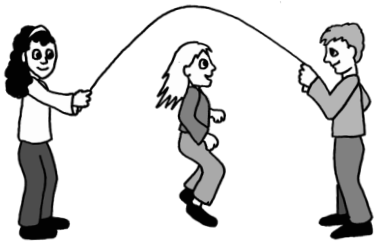
When everyone has finished, give kids a sandwich bag or elastic band to keep their cards together. Encourage them to take their cards home and hide them around the house where family members will come upon them unexpectedly. Their message may be just what someone needs to find on a difficult day.

The angel at the tomb told Jesus' followers to share the good news of Jesus' resurrection with others. With our messages of hope, we can do the same!

Activity 2: Jump for Joy Game

Materials Needed:

- Long jump rope
- Space to play a game



Instructions:

Go to a large open area where kids can play an old-fashioned game of jump rope — with a Biblical twist!

Choose two volunteers to be the rope holders. These two will spread out and begin swinging the rope slowly and rhythmically. (If kids have never jumped rope with others holding the handles this way, you may want to look up an example on YouTube to show them how this is done.)

Everyone else will line up. One person at a time will enter the jumping area (this is easiest when the rope is just on the upswing). As that person jumps, the teacher will say one word of the rhyme below per jump. If the student stumbles or stops, he or she has to step out of the jump rope and go to the back of the line. Then, the next student will have a turn. The goal is for a student to be able to jump without stopping until the entire rhyme is complete

Here is the rhyme the teacher will read, word by word, with each jump:

An/angel/rolled/the/stone/aside.
He/stood/on/top/and/said/with/pride,
"Do/not/fear/he/is/not/dead.
Christ/has/risen/as/he/said."

If someone is so good at this that they can complete the entire rhyme in one try, feel free to add another stanza:

Just/then/right/before/their/eyes,
Jesus/came/he/was/alive!
They/ran/back/to/his/friends/and/said,
"The/Lord/has/risen/from/the/dead!"

If a student struggles with entering the jumping area, ask those swinging the rope to stop so that the student can get in place. Then the rope holders can start swinging and the student can begin jumping from that point.

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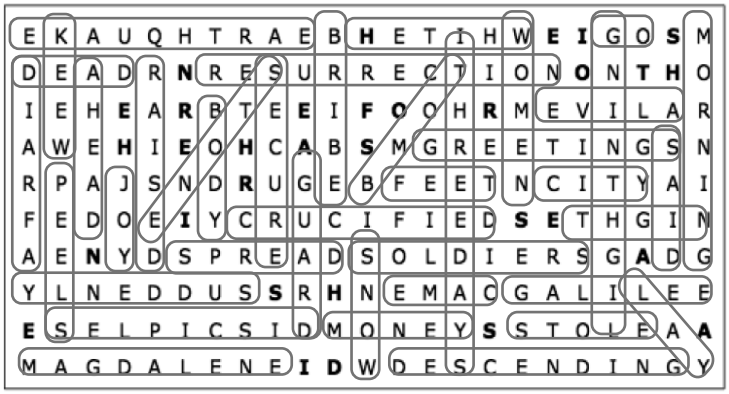
Worksheet Answer Key

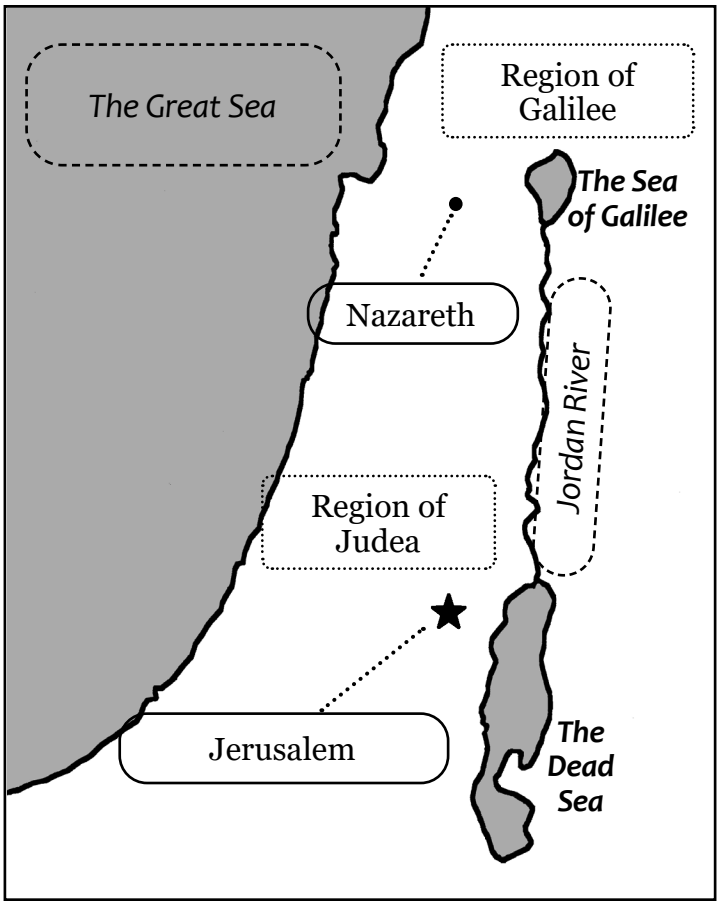
Shown below are the answers and solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



The word that does not appear in this story is SNOW.

The secret message from the Angel:
"He is not here, for he has risen as he said."

Map Answer Key:



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

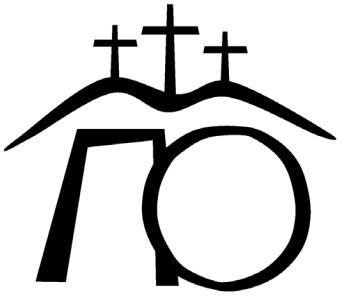
Fulfillment

when something important happens; a promise that has been kept

Jesus' resurrection was the fulfillment of his promise that on the third day he would be raised to life.

Reflection for the Week Ahead

Think of something that you had looked forward to for a long time. If you thought that wasn't going to happen, and then it did, how would you feel? Pretty excited, most likely. You might even want to find your friends and share the good news!



That's what happened in today's story as well. Mary and Mary Magdalene were so overjoyed to see Jesus that they rushed off to tell the other disciples what they had seen and heard. How did people respond to this news? Some believed, others (like the temple leaders) did not. Did people's reactions change what happened? No! Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day — a fulfillment of God's promise to his people. This amazing news was worth sharing back then, and it is still worth sharing today!

What is the best news you ever received? Why is Jesus' resurrection good news even today?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer thanking God for the ways — big and small — that he reveals his presence in our lives. Ask God to keep your eyes open to what he is doing in the world and in your neighborhood. Pray to be a part of it.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.

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