



## EASTER LESSON 2

*The resurrection of the Son of God*

JOHN 20:1-31



**Jesus is the risen Lord.**



*“But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31).*

## Supporting Truths

1. Jesus rose from the dead.
2. Jesus’ resurrection shows He is the Messiah, the Son, and God.
3. Because Jesus is alive, He sends His followers on a mission.
4. Because Jesus is alive, He is able to bring us to God in peace and joy.
5. Because Jesus is alive, we can trust Him to give us life.

## Objectives

1. State that Jesus’ tomb was empty and count how many times Jesus appeared.
2. Compare Thomas’ confession (20:28) to the point of John’s gospel (20:31).
3. Compare a Christian’s mission to Christ’s mission.
4. Describe the way Jesus talked about the disciples and their relationship to God.
5. Define what it means to believe.

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

*The resurrection of the Son of God • John 20:1–31*

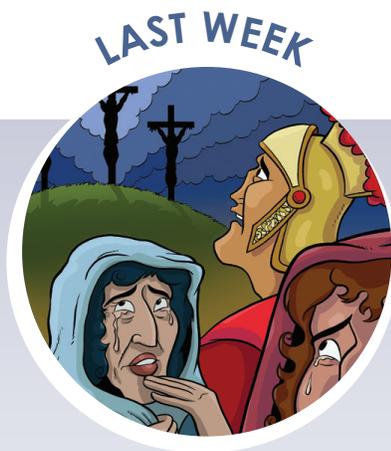


## Lesson Summary

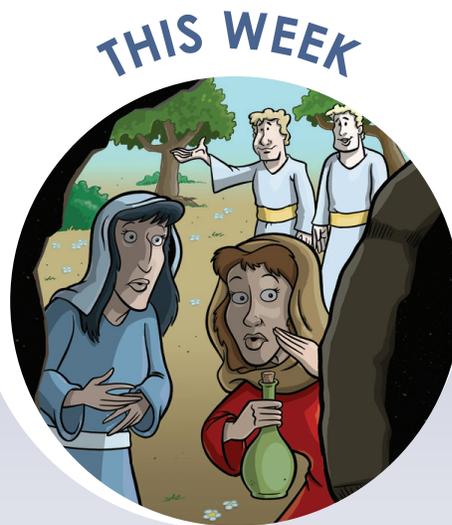
On Friday Jesus was buried, and on Sunday Mary Magdalene came back to the tomb. But the stone was gone, and Peter and John went in and saw that there was no body in the tomb. Jesus soon made it clear why the tomb was empty: He was alive, and He appeared to Mary and then twice to the disciples. As the risen Lord, He gave them peace, joy, a new mission, and power to do their mission.

## Spotlight on the Gospel

Thomas realized what Jesus' resurrection meant: it meant that Jesus is God and not just a man. He is the true God who brings us to God. Even though we have not seen Him like Thomas did, we have eyewitness testimony recorded for us so that we can believe even without seeing. If we do—if we accept the truth that He is alive and trust Him as our Lord and God—then He will give us life with God forever.



**The crucifixion of the Son  
of God**  
*John 18:28–19:42*



**The resurrection of the  
Son of God**  
*John 20:1–31*

# Lesson Commentary

## *Jesus is the risen Lord.*

Do plastic eggs and chocolate rabbits have anything to do with the first Easter morning? Actually, they do, a little. Eggs symbolize the hope of new life, and rabbits represent the fullness of multiplying life. In a much greater way, new and full life became possible on that first Easter. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He is able to offer new and full life to everyone who believes.

### Jesus was not in the tomb (20:1–10)

But that first Easter started with grief, fear, and doubt. Jesus' followers did not yet see that even His death was victory, fulfilling so many prophecies and opening the way for sinners to come back to God. When Mary Magdalene came to the tomb, she expected to find a dead body (John 20:1–2). So it is not true when some say that Jesus' followers expected the resurrection so much that they imagined it or made it up. Since they did not expect it at all, they would only say that Jesus rose from the dead if He actually did.

Peter and John did not expect a physical resurrection either, but they couldn't deny the evidence. If robbers had taken the body, they would not have unwrapped it and folded up the head wrapping (20:5–7). These details convinced John that Jesus had risen from the dead (20:8), but he still didn't realize that both Jesus and the Old Testament had

predicted this (John 10:18; 20:9; Mark 8:31; Ps 16:10; 22:15–26; Isa 53:9–10).

Although neither the disciples nor Mary understood it all yet, they were three witnesses that the tomb was strangely empty (Deut 17:6).

### Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (20:11–18)

Mary was still sad because she was still confused (John 20:11). Her grief shows her deep love for Jesus. She had been devoted to Jesus ever since

Jesus had cast seven demons out of her (Luke 8:2; Mark 15:40–41). Despite her devotion, she still did not fully comprehend who Jesus really was. Both the angels (John 20:13) and Jesus (20:15) asked Mary if she had good reason to be sad, but she did not grasp their questions. She didn't see yet that this Jesus was much greater than she ever imagined—great enough to conquer death.

This explains why she wanted to cling to Him (20:16–17a): she had lost Him once, and she did not want to lose Him again. But she needed to let go and realize that He was much more than a physical human being. He was God Himself (1:18). He had broken into the world to make the Father known, and now that His mission on earth was done, He needed to ascend back to heaven. He would soon depart from Mary physically, but as God, He would be with her spiritually forever. Also, Mary had to let go so that she could carry out her own mission (20:17b). She had to tell the others that they were now brothers of Jesus, sharing with Jesus the same Father—God Himself. In other words, Mary was sent to say that the way to God is open. His risen life proved that His mission was successful and acceptable to the Father. Through Jesus believers can now come to God as His very own children (Rom 8:15–16; Heb 2:11–12; Ps 22:22).

#### THINK ABOUT IT

For the first time, Jesus calls the disciples “brothers” (John 20:17).



#### THINK ABOUT IT

A wrapped and spiced body would be easier and much more pleasant to transport.

### Jesus appeared to the disciples without Thomas (20:19–23)

Despite the news, the disciples were still afraid that evening (John 20:19). Jesus came to change that, twice speaking peace to them (20:19–21a). **Peace** is more than *quietness*. It is also *freedom from fear, wholeness of life, well-being, and true prosperity*. The disciples could be *at rest, no longer worrying*, because Jesus' risen life proved that His death was victory. His death justifies sinners so that they can have peace with God (Rom 5:1), and His risen life destroys fear of death (1 Cor 15:55). Imagine the disciples' relief! They had abandoned and

# STUDY THE BIBLE LESSON

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denied Jesus a few days earlier, but now Jesus was saying, “Don’t worry. All is forgiven. All is well.” And He proved it: His scars proved He really was Jesus, and they also proved that He really did suffer. His suffering shows that He knows and sympathizes with our pain. Even more, His suffering shows that He bore our pain to give us peace (Isa 53:5). No wonder the disciples’ fear turned into joy!

Now that they had peace with the Father, they could begin their own mission according to Jesus’ own example (John 20:21b). The Father sent Jesus to make the Father known, display His greatness, and bring

people to be with Him forever. This is the calling now of every believer (Matt 5:16; 2 Cor 5:20). Since this is a hard calling and impossible by human effort, God gives believers the power of the Spirit, just as He had given

the Spirit to Jesus (John 1:32). To show this, Jesus breathed on the disciples (20:22). His breath showed that He was alive and that the new covenant—the promise of new life by the Spirit—was coming true (Ezek 37:9–14). By rising again, Jesus proved He has the same power of life as the Father, and therefore also the same authority to send the Spirit (John 14:15–18). This would happen about 50 days later (Acts 2). Now, every believer is equipped by the Spirit to live out his calling (1 Cor 12:4–7, 13).

In addition to the Spirit’s power, God also gave them confidence to complete their mission (John 20:23). Jesus was not saying that humans have authority to forgive sins, since only God can do that (Mark 2:7; Dan 9:9). Instead, He was saying that when they preach that all who believe in Christ are forgiven, they certainly are forgiven. When they preach that all who refuse Christ are condemned, they are certainly condemned. No one will slip through the cracks or

sneak in the back door. Jesus gives all His followers certainty in the gospel, so that they can accomplish their mission with confidence.

## Jesus appeared to the disciples with Thomas (20:24–31)

Mary’s grief and the disciples’ fear had been replaced by peace and joy, but Thomas still doubted. He didn’t necessarily doubt more than the others, since he simply wanted the same evidence (John 20:24–25). Eight days later, Jesus gave it to him (20:26). Seeing the evidence, Thomas **believed**. He accepted the truth that Jesus was alive and humbly submitted to Him, gave allegiance to Him, and relied upon Him. In fact, Thomas was the first to express exactly what the resurrection proved: Jesus was in fact the true God, reigning as Lord with power over all (20:28). Jesus did not correct him, for Thomas honored Him exactly as Jesus had said to do (5:23).

We do not get what Thomas got. We have not seen Jesus physically standing right in front of us. But we can still believe. We can believe because eyewitnesses like Thomas saw Him, and because eyewitnesses like John recorded the signs for us (20:30–31). The most important sign of all—the bodily resurrection of Jesus—confirms that the Messiah is in fact the Son of God, the One sent by God but also equally God (1:14). And the resurrection confirms that the Messiah and Son (Ps 2) is in fact the man named Jesus. Whoever believes in Him receives life from the One who has life in Himself. Thus, Jesus did what He came for: in giving us eternal life, He is allowing us to truly know God (John 1:18; 17:3). It is true that we have not seen Him, but we still love Him and trust Him to save our souls (1 Pet 1:8–9).



### THINK ABOUT IT

We are ambassadors for Christ, imploring everyone to be reconciled to God (2 Cor 5:20).

### THINK ABOUT IT

Thomas’ doubt is more evidence that the disciples did not expect or make up Jesus’ resurrection.



# Lesson Outline

*Jesus is the risen Lord.*

## AGES 3–5 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus is alive—His empty tomb and three appearances prove it (20:1–29).
2. Jesus is alive—so He brings us to God in peace (20:11–21a).
3. Jesus is alive—so He sends us on a mission (20:21b–23).
4. Jesus is alive—so He is God (20:24–28).
5. Jesus is alive—so He gives life to all who believe (20:29–31).

## AGES 6–11 LESSON OUTLINE



1. Jesus was not in the tomb (20:1–10).
  - Mary Magdalene saw the stone was moved (20:1–2).
  - Peter and John entered and saw an empty tomb (20:3–10).
2. Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (20:11–18).
  - Mary was sad that someone took Jesus' body (20:11–15).
  - Mary saw Jesus and wanted to keep Him (20:16–17a).
  - Mary was sent to tell the others (20:17b–18).
3. Jesus appeared to the disciples without Thomas (20:19–23).
  - Jesus' appearance brought peace and joy (20:19–21a).
  - Jesus gave them a mission (20:21b).
  - Jesus gave them power and confidence (20:22–23).
4. Jesus appeared to the disciples with Thomas (20:24–31).
  - Thomas wanted to see too (20:24–25).
  - Thomas saw Jesus and believed (20:26–28).
  - We can read, believe, and live even without seeing Jesus (20:29–31).



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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## Lesson Questions

*Use these questions to teach or to review this week's lesson.*



### Ages 3–5 Lesson Questions

- 1. Who went to the tomb first?**  
Mary Magdalene.
- 2. What did Peter and John see in the tomb?**  
The cloths that had been wrapped around Jesus.
- 3. What word did Jesus use to greet the disciples?**  
Peace.
- 4. What did Thomas call Jesus when he saw Him?**  
My Lord and my God.



### Ages 6–11 Lesson Questions

- 1. Why was Mary surprised and sad when she saw the tomb?**  
The stone was rolled away. She thought someone moved Jesus' body.
- 2. Why was Mary still sad after seeing the angels?**  
She still didn't realize that Jesus was God and able to rise from the dead.
- 3. What did Jesus call His disciples?**  
My brothers. They could now have a relationship with God as their Father.
- 4. How is a Christian's mission like Jesus' mission?**  
Both are sent to make God known and bring people to God by humbly obeying to the point of death.
- 5. Why did Jesus breathe and say, "Receive the Holy Spirit"?**  
By breathing, He showed that He was alive and had the power of God to give them life and power in the Spirit.
- 6. Besides the Spirit, what else does Jesus give to help His followers do their job?**  
He gives them confidence that their message of forgiveness is absolutely true.
- 7. Why can we believe even without seeing Jesus?**  
Because eye-witnesses recorded the signs—especially His resurrection—for us to believe.
- 8. If we believe that the Messiah and Son is Jesus, what will He give us?**  
Eternal life, which is to live with and know God forever (John 17:3).

# Lesson Activities

Choose from the following ideas to introduce, illustrate, and apply this week's lesson.

AGES 3–5



INTRODUCE

### PEACE WITH GOD

Bring a boxing glove to class. If you can't find a boxing glove, just clench your hands into fists. Have the children do the same. Explain that every person is born God's enemy because of sin. But Jesus died on the cross and rose from the grave to give us peace with God (Rom 5:1). Open your hands and have the children do the same. Next, begin shaking hands with the children, showing them that the battle is over. In today's lesson, Jesus rises from the grave and speaks peace to His disciples, showing that He is able to make God's enemies His children.

### ALIVE AGAIN

Bring in some dead insects. Let the children inspect them. Ask if the insects are dead. Ask if the children think the insects can come alive again. Explain that dead things and dead people don't just come alive again. But there is one person who did: Jesus!



ILLUSTRATE

### COUNT WITH ME

Jesus appears to His followers three times in today's lesson (20:14–17, 19–23, 26–29), proving that He is God and showing that the Father accepted His payment for sin. Have the children number each appearance of Jesus during the lesson by raising their hands and using their fingers to identify which appearance you're describing.

### FOLLOW MY EXAMPLE

Jesus gave His disciples the same mission His Father had given Him: to make the Father known, display His greatness, and bring people to be with Him forever. This is the calling now of every believer. Illustrate this by having the children copy everything you do and say for the next minute. The disciples were to follow Jesus' example, doing just as He had done.



APPLY

### HE IS RISEN

*See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.*

**Materials:** Craft sheet/Foam coffee cup, craft page, crayons, brad, tape.

**Directions:** Color the coffee cup to make it look like a tomb. Cut a little piece to have an entrance into the tomb. Cut a circle from a brown/grey copy paper to make the rolling stone. Connect the stone to the cup with a brad. Tape inside the tomb the rectangular "He is Risen".

*He Is Risen*  
*See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2*



# TEACH THE BIBLE LESSON

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AGES 6–8



INTRODUCE

## THAT FIRST EASTER MORNING

Bring some colored, plastic eggs and chocolate rabbits to class. Ask the children if any of them received any of these this morning. Do these have anything to do with the first Easter morning? Explain that they do, but only a little. Eggs symbolize the hope of new life, and rabbits represent the fullness of multiplying life. Yet eggs and rabbits are nothing compared to the living hope of that first Easter. Because Jesus rose from the dead, He is able to offer new and full life to everyone who believes.

## NOW WHERE DID I PUT THAT?

Have the children ever lost something? Did that make them feel sad? Tell the class about a time you lost something important and how you felt. In today's lesson, Mary Magdalene is sad because when she arrives at Jesus' tomb the stone is rolled away and Jesus' body is missing. Was Jesus' body lost? No! Even though Jesus' body was not there, He was not lost. He had risen from the grave and would soon appear to Mary and the disciples.



ILLUSTRATE

## MY BROTHERS

Did you know that every Christian has a brother? How can this be? Do the children know any Christians that don't appear to have a brother? Explain that every Christian has a brother because when a person trusts Jesus for salvation, Jesus becomes his brother (John 20:17). Because of Jesus' death and resurrection, we are able to become part of God's family.

## HE BREATHED ON THEM

Illustrate Jesus breathing on the disciples (John 20:22) by spraying a fine mist of water on the children from a spray bottle.



APPLY

## RESURRECTION SCENE

See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2.

**Materials:** Craft sheet, crayon, brad, paper bag, tape, scissors, paper plate.

**Directions:** Cut in half the paper plate and color it as a tomb. Cut a circle to make the entrance of the tomb. Tape the two sides of the tomb. Color, cut and tape the angel at the tomb. Use the paper bag to do the rolling stone and connect to the tomb with a brad. (You can also write inside the tomb "He is risen" or "It is empty".)

Resurrection Scene  
See Year 3 Craft Book, Book 2



AGES 9–11



INTRODUCE

**ONLY ONE**

List a variety of the most important people in all of history. Ask the children if they know who each one is. Ask them if any of these important people is able to give them eternal life. Why not? Because they all died (and stayed dead), they do not have the power of life. Our story today shows that Jesus does have life in Himself. Because Jesus did not stay dead, we can trust Jesus for eternal life.

**WHO AM I?**

Using the internet and a mobile phone, tablet, or computer, play a number of recordings of well-known people speaking or singing. Can the children recognize who they are just by their voices? In today's lesson, we're going to learn about a voice that made all the difference: the voice of Jesus after He rose from the dead. While Mary was unable to immediately recognize Jesus after He rose from the dead, she immediately knew who He was when she heard His voice.



ILLUSTRATE

**LET GO!**

Have the children ever seen a young child cling to their parent's leg? No matter what the parent did, the child would not let go! Sometimes this can be funny to watch, but it teaches us something about the child's relationship with their parent: they desperately love them and do not want to be separated from them. Mary does something similar in today's lesson, showing her deep affection for and desire to be near Jesus.

**ALL ACCESS PASS**

Bring or show a picture of an all access pass. Have the children ever been given a pass like this? This type of pass gives full access to an event, such as a concert. While most people are not allowed backstage at a concert, someone with an all access pass would be able to go there. Use this pass to illustrate the access we have to God through Jesus' death and resurrection.



APPLY

**WHY ONLY THEM?**

Did you know that Jesus only appeared to believers (John 14:19; 16:16, 22)? Why only them? Why not to unbelievers? Wouldn't His appearance have convinced many to trust Him as Lord and Savior? Jesus didn't appear to unbelievers because His appearance would not have convinced them of His deity, just as His miracles had not (Luke 16:31). Jesus appeared to His own in order to strengthen their faith and prepare them to be witnesses of His glory.