

LESSON 39

The Resurrection

MATTHEW 27:62–28:16



BIBLE TRUTH

EVEN THOUGH JESUS TRULY ROSE FROM THE DEAD, NOT EVERYONE BELIEVES

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 27:62—28:16 from the Scriptures or read story 117, “The Resurrection,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

I Was a Guard

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ guard costume consisting of a plastic or cardboard sword and a cape made from a brightly colored solid tablecloth (a red paper table covering could work)

4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

United with Christ

SUPPLIES:

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

6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 39—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

I Caught a Baby Pegasus

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a clear glass jartowel or two

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

The Pharisees tried to stop him—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. They asked Pilate to order the tomb guarded and sealed until the third day (Matthew 27:64).

Consider that around the time of Jesus’ death, the sky grew dark. Also, at the moment of his death the earth shook and rocks were split (Matthew 27:51). In addition, many holy people who had died were raised to life and appeared throughout 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 many were raised, these reports likely reached the ears of the religious rulers as well.

Jesus rose with great power—A wax seal and a Roman guard could not stop Jesus from rising 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 and an angel bright as lightning rolled the stone away and sat upon it (Matthew 28:2). What a glorious moment—death was defeated! The guards were so afraid that they shook and fell to the ground (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 Magdalene 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 worshiped him. The response of these two women demonstrates their faith. Jesus commissioned them in the same way he commissions all believers: “go and tell” (Matthew 28:10).

Only those who believe will be set free—Some of the guards returned to the chief priests and reported to them everything that had happened. 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. The soldiers heard all of this and the chief priests heard their report and yet neither the soldiers nor the chief priests believed. Instead the chief priests hatched a scheme to keep the guards quiet. They spread the very rumor they were trying to stop, that the disciples had stolen the body. The soldiers accepted the money and agreed to lie (Matthew 28:12–15). This shows us that you can know the facts of the gospel and still not really believe. Today people read the story of Jesus rising from the dead, but like the religious rulers and soldiers, they refuse to believe.

Where Is the Gospel?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Jesus is no longer in the tomb! This is one of the most critical parts 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 an add-on to the cross. It is an integral part of the gospel message without which the gospel would have no power!

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Matthew 27:62—28:16 from the Scriptures or read story 117, "The Resurrection," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

I Was a Guard

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ guard costume consisting of a plastic or cardboard sword and a cape made from a brightly colored solid tablecloth (a red paper table covering could work)

Retell the story of the resurrection from the perspective of a guard. Assume the guard witnessed Jesus speaking to Mary and add the details from John 20:11–18 where Mary thinks Jesus is the gardener. Have the guard tell about going back to the chief priests 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 ascending 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?

(Help your students to see that 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 in Jesus as an ordinary 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?

(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 from the dead for him.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESON 2 10 MIN

United with Christ

SUPPLIES:

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

Before class, practice bouncing a quarter on the table so that you can get it into the glass.

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

Divide the class 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 ten chocolates. Each time their person misses, they lose five. Start each team with ten chocolates. Play until all the chocolates are awarded.

Explain to the class that because the person represents them, they get to share in the reward. Talk to the class about how Jesus is our representative. Talk about what we receive from being represented by Christ.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

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.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Color a Picture

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page for NT Lesson 39—one for each child
- ✓ markers or crayons

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- What is happening in the picture?
(Jesus is rising from the dead with great power.)
- What day of the week did Jesus rise from the dead? How do we celebrate that day?
(Jesus rose on Sunday. We follow the example of the early church, gathering together for church on that day. Sunday has since been called the Lord's Day.)
- What holiday celebrates Jesus rising from the dead?
(Easter)
- What should we celebrate on Easter—Jesus or Easter bunnies?
(Easter bunnies do not point to the resurrection of Christ. It is Jesus rising from the dead that makes this day special. The resurrection of Christ tells us that Jesus was victorious. He died for our sins and rose that we could also one day rise and be with him in heaven.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

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

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

I Caught a Baby Pegasus

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a clear glass jar

Tell the class that you were walking in the forest the other day and you saw a tiny horse with wings flying through the trees and you took this jar (hold it up) and caught it.

Then ask the class how many believe and want to see it. (Some will raise their hands but many will say they don't believe.)

Ask those who don't believe why they don't believe you. (They will likely say that they don't believe you because there is no such thing as a flying horse and they don't see anything in the jar.)

Then ask them what if they could see a tiny horse with wings inside the jar, would they believe then? (They will likely say they would believe.)

Go on to talk about how the soldiers saw Jesus rise from the dead and still did not believe. Since Jesus died and returned to heaven before we were born, there is no way we could ever see him. So how can we believe? (Explain that the only way we can believe is if God gives us the gift of faith. Even the soldiers, who saw the resurrection, could easily make up an excuse not to believe their own eyes.)

Tell the children that faith means believing in something you can't see.

Show them the jar and say you made up the story about the horse with wings, but you are not making up the story about the resurrection. Read 1 Corinthians 15:3–8 and talk about all the witnesses to the resurrection and how they can help us believe—have faith—that Jesus rose from the dead for real.

LESSON 39 - THE RESURRECTION

